METACOMET LAND TRUST

The Metacomet Land Trust is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of open space and natural resources in South Central Massachusetts. Metacomet proudly serves the communities of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Franklin, Hopedale, Mendon, Millbury, Millville, Norfolk, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, Webster, and Wrentham

Please Join Us for Our Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 26, 2025
at 6:30 at Upton Community Center, 9 Milford Street (Route 140) in Upton.

The business meeting will be followed at 7:00 pm by a program on
How are the Birds?
presented by Brandi Van Roo and Beth Milke

The program is free and open to the public
The Community Center is handicap accessible

2025 Annual Meeting Agenda

I. Meeting Called to Order
II. 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes
III. 2025 Annual Report, Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
IV. Election of Directors to the Board
V. Adjourn

Proxy Vote:

If you are not able to join the annual meeting, please fill out and return this portion as your proxy. This will count toward the required quorum of 20 voting members or 20% of all dues-paying members (whichever is larger). Your proxy instructs Lisa Mosczynski, President, or Russell Holden, Vice President, to act on your behalf.

METACOMET LAND TRUST 2024 ANNUAL MEETING MEMBER PROXY. I authorize MLT Board President Lisa Mosczynski or Vice President Russell Holden to exercise my vote at the 2025 Annual Meeting for the ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS, APPROVAL OF 2024 MEETING MINUTES, APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL REPORT, and any MOTIONS that come before the membership.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

SIGNATURE:: _____

Please mail your proxy to Metacomet Land Trust, PO Box 231, Franklin, MA 02038 to arrive no later than **Wednesday June 18, 2025**. You may also simply photograph the signed form and email the photo to **info@metacometlandtrust.org**.

We Love Where We Live – And We Know You Do, Too!

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

It's in times like these that we experience a range of emotions both expected and unexpected. The excitement of concluding a project that preserves over 100 biodiverse acres! The frustration of losing a beautiful property to a developer. The anticipation of months of work concluding in the preservation of nearly 200 acres for protected turtle species habitat! An appraisal comes in too high or too low. The madness of funding being turned off for grants, and project partners (and often friends) losing their jobs. Do you get the picture? Pursuing our mission -- to protect open space and natural resources -- has become more of a roller coaster ride than ever before.

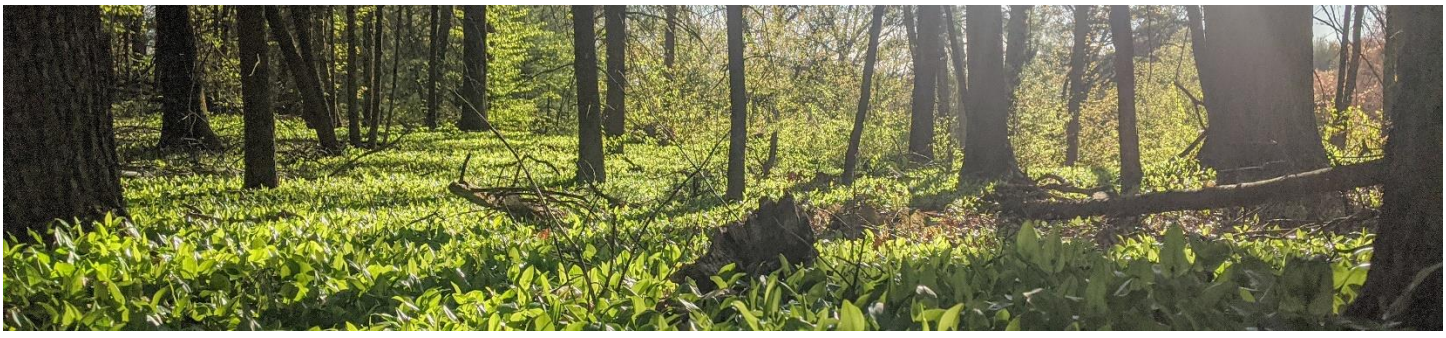
Our stability is found, however, in many places. You, readers, are our rock. Your dedication to our mission to conserve land and our natural resources steadies us time and time again. You remind us that what we do is important. Getting outside grounds us. Appreciating our beautiful properties soothes our souls. Giving more people access to our preserves shares that salve, enriches our communities and strengthens our resolve.

As Metacomet grows we face many challenges and planning for the land trust's future will be critical to our long term success. Thanks to a generous grant from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, we hired Paper Crane Associates to guide us through the process of updating and expanding our Strategic Plan. We may call on you to share your thoughts on how we are meeting your expectations and needs during the coming year. Your feedback will be greatly appreciated.

Yours in conservation,

Lisa Mosczynski, President

Metacomet Land Trust



Volunteers Welcome!

Please Volunteer! We need your help! The land trust depends on the generosity and spirit of volunteers to educate young and old about the environment around us and to help with due diligence in conducting stewardship inspections. Sign up at our website at https://tinyurl.com/jcuhdevw or email us at info@metacometlandtrust.org if you can help.

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Board of Directors

The Metacomet Land Trust is governed by a Board of Directors elected by our members to three-year terms. Our Board of Directors includes representatives from towns throughout the service area, each of whom brings years of experience in local conservation and planning. You are welcome at all Board meetings; please email us to receive advance notice.

President - Lisa Mosczynski, Douglas	(term expires 2026)
Vice-President - Russell Holden, Uxbridge	(term expires 2025)*
Treasurer - Susan Speers, Franklin	(term expires 2025)*
Secretary - Tom Bik, Blackstone	(term expires 2027 **
Kelly Phelan - Franklin	(term expires 2025)*
Larry Rettman - Franklin	(term expires 2026)**
Peg Rothwell, Hopedale	(term expires 2027)
Patrice Murphy, Mendon	(term expires 2027)
Barbara McNamee, Northbridge	(term expires 2025)*
Steven Gniadek, Northbridge	(term expires 2025)*
Michael Rodriguez	(term expires 2026)
Mike Penko, Upton	(term expires 2027)
Christine Scott, Upton	(term expires 2025)*
Ann Hanscom, Uxbridge	(term expires 2026)

The Board and members at a White Barn Farm event

* Members' terms expiring, ** Founding Board Members
There is an open seat on the Board

How Are the Birds? - Our Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 26, 2025

The Metacomet Land Trust will host Brandi Van Roo, Ph.D. and Beth Milke for a presentation on the health of our wild bird populations when they speak at our annual meeting on June 26th. The program will be held at the Upton Community Center at 9 Milford Street (Rt. 140) in Upton.

Brandi Van Roo is a professor of wildlife biology at Framingham State University. Her research includes bird breeding behavior as well as migrant bird banding for conservation purposes. She trains undergraduate students at banding stations in Ashland, Uxbridge and Douglas.

Beth Milke currently serves as a Volunteer-in-Parks with the National Park Service, leading bird walks and maintaining River Bend Farm's Pollinator Garden for Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc.

Metacomet's annual meeting will start at 6:30 pm followed by the program at 7 pm. A silent auction (with wild bird-focused items), refreshments and information on land preservation will also be offered. The event is free and open to the public. The Community Center is handicap accessible and all are welcome. For more information visit www.metacometlandtrust.org.

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2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

The 2024 Annual Meeting was held on June 20, 2024, and having a quorum present, the meeting was called to order by President Lisa Mosczynski at 6:35 p.m. Lisa welcomed the audience and recited the organization's mission.

A motion was made by Tom Bik and seconded by Larry Rettman to accept the 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Peg Rothwell and seconded by Ann Hanscom to accept the 2024 Annual Report, Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement. Motion was approved.

The meeting's business then moved to the Election of Directors to the Board. Tom Bik, Peg Rothwell, Patrice Murphy and Mike Penko were all nominated for re-election. A motion to elect the slate was made by Russ Holden and seconded by Ann Hanscom. The motion passed unanimously. There were no nominations from the floor for empty board seats.

A motion to adjourn was made by Shirley Mosczynski and seconded by Tom Bik. The motion passed and the meeting concluded at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Mosczynski, Annual Meeting Secretary

Community Members and Liberty Mutual Volunteers Join Metacomet for Trail Work at Stevens Pond

On the morning of May 12, 2025, Metacomet Land Trust board members Lisa Mosczynski, Tom Bik, and Russ Holden welcomed four enthusiastic volunteers to the Stevens Pond property in Sutton, MA for a half-day of trail work and land stewardship. From 8:30 a.m. to noon, volunteers joined efforts to create two new trails and reestablish several lesser-used paths across the scenic 50-acre conservation area.

Stevens Pond, donated to Metacomet Land Trust in 2020, is a treasured landscape in Sutton and one of 30 properties the Trust now stewards. Although Metacomet is run entirely by volunteers, this particular workday was made possible thanks to a volunteer with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and others from Liberty Mutual Insurance's "Serve with Liberty" initiative. The program, part of Liberty Mutual's broader Liberty Torchbearers effort, empowers employees to contribute a full paid workday each year to volunteering at nonprofits in their communities.

Armed with rakes, pruners, and saws, volunteers spent the morning clearing brush, opening walkable routes, and preparing the property for future access and appreciation. Metacomet Land Trust looks forward to continued improvements at Stevens Pond, including the potential future installation of a stream crossing as well as trail markers, dedicated parking and informational kiosks to enhance access and education about the landscape.

The Trust expresses sincere gratitude to the Liberty Mutual employees and all community members who joined the effort. Volunteers play a crucial role in the Trust's ability to care for its lands and additional help is always welcome.

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Treasurer's Report for the Calendar Year 2024

Metacomet Land Trust, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position
As of December 31, 2024

ASSETS	Total
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Unrestricted Operating Checking Account	$ 5,738
Money Market Account	$ 106,880
Special Purpose Savings Accounts	
Bonner Property Fund	$ 3,773
CR Protection Endowment Certificates of Deposit	$ 26,798
Lake Manchaug Projects	$ 3,718
SNETT Special Projects	$ 1,147
Whitney Trail Upton	$ 1,604
Total Bank Accounts	$ 149,658
Accounts Receivable	
Lease Fees Receivable	$ 45
Total Accounts Receivable	$ 45
Other Current Assets	
CR Stewardship Investment Account	$ 26,189
Undeposited Funds	$ 279
Prepaid Expenses	$ 3,289
Total Other Current Assets	$ 29,757
Total Current Assets	$ 179,460
Fixed Assets	
Permanently Restricted Land	$ 3,045,984
Permanently Restricted Affordable House Lots	$ 328,807
Unrestricted Open Space	$ 109,100
Total Fixed Assets	$ 3,483,891
TOTAL ASSETS	$ 3,663,351
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	$ -
Total Current Liabilities	$ -
Total Liabilities	$ -
Equity	
Accumulated Funds (Retained Earnings)	$ 230,460
Unrestricted Land	$ 109,100
Temporarily Restricted Funds	$ 224,004
Permanently Restricted Land	$ 3,045,984
Net Revenue	$ 53,802
Total Equity	$ 3,663,351
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	$ 3,663,351

Financials are unaudited results for the calendar year 2024

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Treasurer's Report for the Calendar Year 2024

As the balance sheet demonstrates, a significant portion of the Trust's assets are restricted for permanent conservation or are designated for specific purposes following the wishes of the original donors. Although the proportion of unrestricted versus restricted funds varies throughout the calendar year and over time, the Trust's cash position remains strong. We have been fortunate to be able to cover our basic costs while aiming high to advance major conservation projects.

During 2024, there was no change in the value of our permanently conserved land because we received no additional donations of land. We do not record a dollar value for Conservation Restriction land for which the Trust is responsible.

Early in 2025, we moved two of our smaller special funds into our money market account to earn more interest. These accounts are the SNETT Project Fund and the Whitney Trail Fund.

At the end of 2024, our investment account, designed for long-term protection of our CR defense funds, had recovered from the losses of the past few years. However, the account has not been immune to the recent market turbulence and shed some of the gain this spring. Our Investment Committee continues to monitor the choices made for this fund and may recommend making periodic additions to the account.

Looking ahead, MLT will have higher operating expenses in 2025 due to a state requirement for a financial review when a charity rises above a set level of cash donations. This will substantially increase our cost to file the annual state charity forms. Metacomet is working with the Kahn Litwin Renzi nonprofit accounting team to comply with this requirement.

As always, Metacomet's charitable returns to the IRS and the Massachusetts Attorney General's office are available upon

Susan Speers, Treasurer

May 2025

Help us continue our conservation work for the next generation!

Have you renewed your membership for 2025? **Membership dues are $25 for a calendar year**. Your dues and donations help us to continue our work of land preservation, conservation, and environmental education.

To join or renew your membership in the land trust, please fill in below and mail to

Metacomet Land Trust, P.O. Box 231, Franklin, MA 02038

Friend	$ 25.00	_____	Forester	$ 250.00	_____
Steward	$ 50.00	_____	Protector	$ 500.00	_____
Naturalist	$ 100.00	_____	Other		_____

I would like to make an additional gift to the Metacomet Land Trust. Please apply my gift towards: Metacomet Land Preservation Fund _____

NAME(S):_____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE_____ EMAIL:_____

Yes! I am interested in volunteering! _____

Check out our Website: www.MetacometLandTrust.org. You can renew online!

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Stewardship Report

In 2024, Metacomet Land Trust (MLT) continued its commitment to protecting and maintaining the ecological and recreational value of our conserved lands through stewardship, enforcement, and planning initiatives.

At the **Stevens Pond** property, board members and volunteers removed an illicit stream crossing made of logs, dismantled and removed a primitive tree shelter, and cleaned up two unauthorized campsites that included tents, firepits, and discarded camping equipment. These actions restored the site's natural character and improved public safety.

On the **Manchaug Overlook** property, an illegally constructed makeshift cabin was fully demolished, further safeguarding the conservation value of the site. We anticipate removal of all debris before the end of the next year.

At the **Szerlag Preserve** in Northbridge, the Trust sponsored our second annual “Mitigate the Mustard” event; students from Blackstone Valley Tech helped control invasive Bradford pear seedlings at the pollinator garden. A one-day invasive species control action resulted in the pollarding of all Tree of Heaven (Ailanthus altissima) in or near the pollinator garden.

At **Maple Farm Wildlife Preserve**, the trust received a generous **$15,000 donation** in support of future trail development. New signage was installed along property boundaries to mark conservation land and include "No Hunting" notices. Metacomet worked closely with the **Hopedale Conservation Commission** to plan a new railhead for improved public access to the property. The Trust also prepared a comprehensive Baseline Documentation Report for the Maple Farm Wildlife Preserve conservation project.

MLT partnered with the Medfield Conservation Commission and DPW to clean up a party spot located along the Stop River near the **Clapp Family Preserve** in Norfolk.

Eleven of the 30 parcels held in fee by Metacomet were visited specifically for biodiversity purposes during the year. Visits of this type are recorded via our **iNaturalist Project Page**. Over 750 species have been identified on our properties since 2020.

The **Board drafted and formally adopted** revised Land Use Regulations, available for perusal at our website, to guide responsible public access and stewardship across all trust-owned lands. Signage was posted at the **Szerlag and Hop Brook** preserves.

Metacomet board members also visited all 12 properties protected by conservation restrictions (CRs) as part of our yearly monitoring program.

How To Reach Us at The Metacomet Land Trust

Call us at 508-271-7131 **Email:** info@metacometlandtrust.org

Website: www.MetacometLandTrust.org **Facebook:** https://www.facebook.com/MetacometLandTrust/

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Conservation Report

Metacomet Land Trust (MLT) received a matching $175,000 Conservation Partnership Grant from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services to purchase a conservation restriction on the Maple Farm Wildlife Preserve in Mendon. Additional funding was provided by the Town of Mendon Community Preservation Committee, the Mass Audubon and private donors. The Trust and Mendon's Conservation Commission co-hold the restriction on the Preserve and are working together on a trail system that will connect to conservation land in Hopedale and other nearby protected parcels in Mendon. The trust also received a generous $15,000 foundation donation to establish and maintain the Maple Farm Wildlife Preserve trail system from John and Ute Gannett.

Late in 2024, the Trust received two Forest Reserve Grants from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services. These grants will fund the purchase of conservation restrictions on critical parcels in Upton and Wrentham with project completions expected in 2026.

MLT worked with potential donors and partners on several promising land protection projects in Bellingham, Douglas, Mendon, Northbridge, and Sutton.

Maple Farm Wildlife Preserve -- Jim and Cheri Vandersluis with Lisa Mosczynski, Metacomet, Anne Mazar, Mendon Community Preservation Committee and Megan Gordon, Mass Audubon

In Mendon we continued to work on a conservation restriction of nearly 200 acres that the Trust expects to co-hold with the Town of Mendon. Named the Oak and Wall Farm Preserve, this special habitat protection project preserves a portion of the Denton family's farm. It is a cooperative effort between Metacomet, the Town of Mendon (that will own the restriction), The Nature Conservancy and Mass Audubon, with a closing expected in June 2025.

Metacomet Land Trust currently owns 652 acres of Conservation Land and holds 13 conservation restrictions on 469 acres. The Trust also monitors a conservation restriction held by the Town of Mendon, co-owns 20 acres in Sutton with the Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation Commonwealth and owns 6 affordable housing lots in Franklin. Properties conserved by Metacomet are located in Bellingham, Blackstone, Franklin, Mendon, Millville, Millbury, Medfield, Northbridge, Norfolk, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, and Wrentham.

As a special thank you for gifts of $25.00 or more to help our trail work, we will send you a Chickadee refrigerator magnet! Please make sure we have your correct mailing address! And Thank You!

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