



## Expanding Hubbardston's Conserved Lands Corridor

By Cynthia Henshaw

More than a year ago, a 'For Sale' sign popped up on the land next to Henry's Grove on Lombard Road in Hubbardston, advertising 275-acres available. Yikes! That's a lot of land, and adding houses across from and next to Henry's Grove could seriously impact the conservation values of our existing 94-acres of woods and wetlands. It's taken months of negotiations, discussions and debate, but the first steps towards conserving those parcels are done. We purchased the land in February, and we're now working to permanently conserve the 245-acres, the actual amount of land that was purchased.

From the map you can see the important east-west corridor that is assured once permanent conservation is achieved. There's also designated priority wildlife habitat, water supply protection, and additional miles of walking trails possible once these acres can stay as woods, rather than be converted to houses.

What's next? Several things still need to happen to assure the land is conserved. A small group of Hubbardston residents are combining forces to guide our

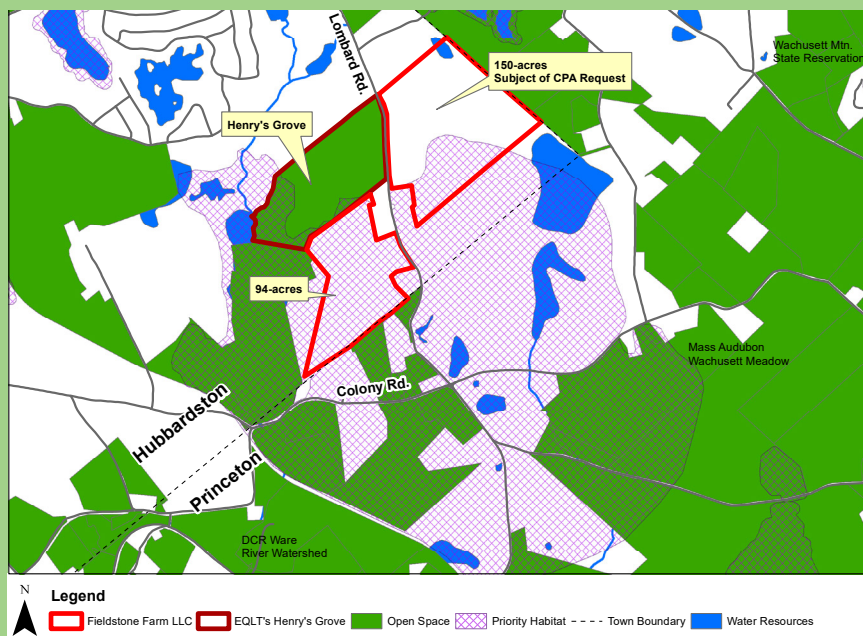
next steps. First, a request for \$75,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding is on the June town meeting warrant. We are planning a series of walks on the land and mailings to let residents know about this terrific conservation opportunity, and of course, encourage their YES vote. The CPA dollars are part local tax dollars and part state-matching dollars. The CPA funds can be spent on conserving land, historical projects, affordable housing, and active recreational initiatives. Hubbardston uses its CPA funds to complete projects important to the community, and it's been ten years since CPA funds assisted with conserving land in town.

A second step is raising additional funding to fully cover the purchase costs. The purchase price is \$650,000 with an estimated \$20,000 in transaction expenses. We are seeking \$120,000 in funding from private foundations and individuals. If you'd like to support the permanent conservation of this land, please make a designated gift through the Support tab at eqlt.org or contact us at (413) 477-8229.

If you're doing the math, you'll see

a big discrepancy between the \$670,000 in estimated costs and the \$75,000 CPA funds and \$120,000 in private fundraising. We are fortunate to partner with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which committed \$425,000 towards conservation of the land. Part of this funding is designated for their purchase of 94-acres, the land on the west side of Lombard Road that formalizes the conservation corridor between Henry's Grove and the existing DCR land on Colony Road in Princeton. The other part of DCR's funding will be matched by CPA support and private fundraising to permanently conserve the 150-acres east of Lombard Road with a conservation restriction held by DCR. The East Quabbin Land Trust committed \$50,000 to retain ownership of the restricted 150-acres.

You can see that a plan is in place, but there are still many pieces to fit together to turn the conservation vision into reality. The possibilities are exciting, and the local committee is enthusiastically working to generate support from their neighbors. Please join us on this land conservation journey! ■



Actively engaging in the care of land is the best way to ensure all of the critters and humans using it have their needs met. At Henry's Grove, the timber harvest finished last fall, accomplishing another step towards diversifying the tree age and height so more insects, birds, and animals can find the food and living space they need. Next up is opening a multi-loop walking trail network so visitors can experience the land and see how things change in the coming years. **Volunteers are needed to build the trail network. Connect with Cynthia at [chenshaw@EQLT.org](mailto:chenshaw@EQLT.org) to sign up!**

## MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



The annual land conservation conference happened virtually at the end of March and included over 28 workshops – something for everyone! If you'd like to watch any of the session videos, you can register at <https://www.accelvents.com/e/u/checkout/MARILandConf/tickets/order>.

Rachel Sayet and Russ Cohen's presentation on "Edible, Medicinal, and other Culturally-Significant Plants" will help our thinking about why and how to encourage foraging on our conserved lands. Depending on the plant, there are opportunities to harvest some of the fruit, nuts, leaves, or flowers without negatively impacting the plants or other animals that also need the food. Haven't you picked blueberries in August when out walking? I have.

Think about hickory trees. When they have a good seed year, there are massive amounts of nuts dropped. Yes, squirrels, mice and others do collect them, but there's plenty of nuts for us, too. The hickory nuts can be eaten straight out of the shell or included in baked goods.

The Serviceberry, also known as Juneberry or Shadbush (*Amelanchier canadensis*) is one of the first

flowering shrubs or small trees each spring. The purple fruit tastes like a cross between a cherry and an almond; it's easily picked from lower branches and the birds can eat the fruit from the upper branches. Native Americans used Serviceberry, along with dried meat, nuts and fat to make Pemmican, a form of energy bars. Also, Russ has shared samples of Serviceberry fruit leather during past workshops. It's yummy!

Wild strawberries are the first wild fruit available, and while smaller than commercially grown strawberries, they are delicious. As a bonus, they can grow in areas that are mowed or have some foot traffic. Keep your eyes peeled this spring for their distinctive five-petaled white flowers, which will turn into deep-red tasty bites in June.

Lots of different plant parts can be made into healthy teas or drinks. For instance, the flower clusters of staghorn sumac can be crushed in water, filtered, and served (sweetened or not). As you're out hiking, keep an eye out for plants that you can come back and forage the nuts, berries, leaves or flowers from to add nutritious, native foods to your diet. ■

## THE EAST QUABBIN LAND TRUST

works to foster the sustainable use of our natural and historic resources for the benefit of all through the conservation and stewardship of the farms, woods and waters in our region of Massachusetts.

**For more information about the land trust, to become a member, or request a change of address, please contact us at:**

### East Quabbin Land Trust

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Hardwick, MA 01037-0005

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Email: [EQLT@comcast.net](mailto:EQLT@comcast.net)

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# Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Roger Plourde

By Cynthia Henshaw

Roger Plourde still loves being a forester, even after decades of practicing his craft. “It seems like a lot of careers get easier over time, as you build proficiency and gain experience. I love it that forestry continues to challenge me. For instance, completing the Bird Habitat Plan for EQLT brought to light a whole bunch of new things to learn about.”

A bird habitat plan invites the landowner and forester to look at the woods and fields from the perspective of indicator species. What features—like food sources and nest sites—do they need to survive and thrive? For the recently completed bird habitat plan, Roger narrowed in on the needs of the Chestnut-sided warbler, White-throated sparrow and Eastern wood peewee. The plan calls for removal of existing trees in a variety of densities to increase the tree and shrub diversity, which will mean more caterpillars, insects, and birds that eat them.

Working to keep the structural and species diversity of the woods is key to biodiversity. “That’s why I get so worked up about invasive plant species. They are a grave threat to successful tree regeneration. If invasive plants are taking up all the space and light, then our native tree seedlings won’t be able to grow into mature trees.” Treatments to control the bittersweet, burning bush, and multiflora rose are all part of the bird habitat plan.

Early in his career, Roger worked for a local sawmill that specialized in pal-

let lumber from hardwoods, like oaks, maples, and birches. He worked procuring hardwood sawtimber from private landowners for the sawmill, including the low-grade lumber that was turned into pallets. They did sometimes arrange to handle softwoods, like pine and hemlock, but those options were more limited. It meant that a timber harvest didn’t always remove trees in ways that would increase the biodiversity of the woods. As a consulting forester who works for the landowner, focusing on sustainable use and biodiversity can now be a prime target.

Roger’s thinking takes a whole systems approach to caring for the land and community. A long time Worcester resident before moving to Hubbardston, he was involved in a number of urban environmental efforts as a board member of Worcester’s Regional Environmental Council and the Greater Worcester Land Trust. Back in the 90’s the tremendous development pressure brought forth other theories around land use planning which combined limited residential development and land conservation. This awareness lead Roger to the Conway School of Landscape Design for an intensive one-year masters’ program in 1997. His learning is integral to his forestry work and conversations with landowners about the future of their lands.

Roger practices forestry on his own land too. “Owning land is a tremendous gift and opportunity. It informs every-

thing that I do as a forester because of my direct experience as a woodland owner. I find it powerful to return to areas that we did a harvest in and see the results, to witness the changes over time.”

A couple years ago, Roger called asking why we were selling Henry’s Grove when we’d only just been given the land on Lombard Road in Hubbardston. After a frantic call to the real estate agent, it was clear that they’d installed their sign on the wrong side of the road. It was official that the Fieldstone Farm LLC parcels were on the market (see page 1). With Roger’s help, we kept track of the listing and started meeting with neighbors and Hubbardston Open Space Committee members to gauge local interest in conserving the land. Today, Roger is a member of the local committee guiding the planning, outreach and fundraising needed to assure that the 250-acres is permanently preserved.

As he thinks about the future of this expanded preserve, Roger is highlighting the tasks of controlling invasive plants, maintaining biodiversity and expanding passive recreational trails. There’s more to come, it’s sure to bring challenges and opportunities for new learning. This combination is what keeps Roger excited about forestry and land conservation, making a difference for all of us who benefit from his work and passion. ■



Roger leading a pre-timber sale walk at Henry’s Grove

*“Owning land is a tremendous gift and opportunity. It informs everything that I do as a forester because of my direct experience as a woodland owner. I find it powerful to return to areas that we did a harvest in and see the results, to witness the changes over time.”*

*-Roger Plourde*



# Gardening for Pollinators

By Jess Cusworth

As the warm weather sets in, are you daydreaming about the beautiful gardens that are about to bloom in your backyard? There are other critters who appreciate our gardens even more than we do – our native pollinators – and it's important to think about how they use our gardens, too.

own backyard spaces into conservation corridors for pollinators and other wildlife. As Tallamy puts it, "it is tempting to garden only for beauty, without regard to the many ecological roles our landscapes must perform." By being mindful about the kinds of plants we include in our

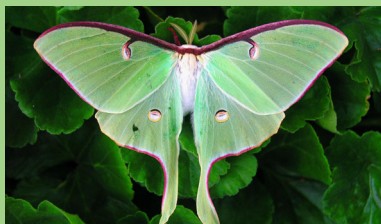
## Examples of Native Pollinators in Massachusetts



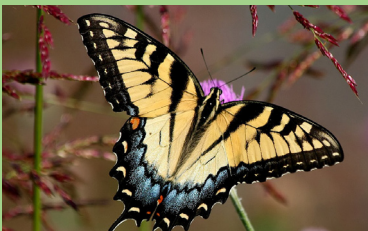
Bumblebee



Yellow jacket wasp



Luna moth



Swallowtail butterfly

Pollinators all over the world are facing massive population declines due to pesticide use, habitat destruction, climate change, and exotic plants. Pollinators are needed for reproduction of 90% of the world's flowering plants, and 1/3 of all U.S. agricultural output depends on pollinators. If pollinators were to disappear, nearly 90% of the plants on Earth would also disappear. The world and all of its inhabitants depend on these small creatures. Problems of this magnitude may feel too big for any of us as individuals to fix, but this is not the case with saving our pollinators. The key to saving our pollinators is right in your own backyard – no matter how big or how small! Even if you can only grow plants in pots on a balcony, you can be part of the solution to the pollinator crisis.

As part of EQLT's Pollinator Pathway Project, which facilitates pollinator habitat creation and education in the community, we hosted a discussion of Doug Tallamy's book, "Nature's Best Hope." Tallamy's book explains how each of us can transform our

landscapes, we can create beautiful spaces that also function as life-sustaining habitat for native pollinators and the creatures that feed on them. Here are a few ways Doug Tallamy suggests we can improve pollinator habitat:

### 1. Reduce the Lawn

Turfgrass lawns are ecological wastelands because they don't support the habitat or nutritional needs of pollinators and other insects vital to the ecosystem. Yet, lawns dominate our landscapes around the country and have replaced diverse native plant communities on more than 40 million acres (an area the size of New England!). Think on this: if each American landowner converted half of their lawn to native plant communities, ecosystem function could be restored on more than 20 million acres. Lawn should be an area rug, not wall-to-wall carpeting! With the lawn that you do keep, mowing less frequently allows the beneficial lawn flowers like clover and dandelions to grow and support pollinators.

### 2. Plant More Native Species

"Native" plants are those present in a region without human introduction. These plants have developed specialized relationships with native wildlife over thousands of years, which is why these plants provide the best habitat and nutrition for a region's particular wildlife. For example, many native bee species can only rear larvae on the pollen of goldenrod, aster, evening primrose, blueberries, and willows. Without these plants, 69 species of specialist bees that could have used your yard will be absent. It's best to plant with a variety of natives that flower at different times of the season to ensure pollinators are nourished from the beginning of spring until the end of fall.

"Exotic" or "introduced" plants have evolved in other regions or have been cultivated by humans into forms that don't exist in nature. Because these plants have not evolved alongside our native wildlife, they are less capable of supporting our local pollinators or animals that feed on plants. Planting exotics that are marketed for "attracting pollinators," like zinnias or cosmos, may attract generalist pollinators, but they won't be helpful for many of our native specialist pollinators. Some introduced plants may even be invasive plants that destroy natural habitat, like butterfly bush. Even when planting with natives like purple coneflowers, it's important to be sure you're not getting cultivars that don't exist in nature.

### Sampling of Native Plants for:

#### Gardens

- New York Ironweed
- Goldenrods
- Milkweeds (Butterfly, Swamp, Common)
- Sundial lupine
- Spicebush
- Flowering dogwood

#### Pots & Gardens

- Black-eyed coneflower
- Purple coneflower (\*Beware of cultivars!)
- Blazing star
- Foxglove Beardtongue
- Red Columbine
- Thread-leaved tickseed
- Scotch bellflower

# Gardening for Pollinators Continued

## 3) Adjust Fall and Spring Cleanup

Bees need adequate shelter to nest and over-winter. About 70% of our native bees nest in the ground, and many others nest in plant stems. If you have perennial flowers and bare, mulch-free spaces in your yard, you've already got places where bees can shelter. The key is to change fall and spring clean-up routines.

Leave your plants standing over winter, and in the spring instead of cutting them all the way down, leave 12 – 15 inches of stalk standing. If you must cut your stems, keep them intact and leave them in an undisturbed area of your yard so that you're not throwing away the next generation of bees nesting in these stems.

Not cleaning up autumn leaf litter is another important way to create habitat for pollinators. Each fall, next summer's butterfly and moth populations are rolling up in the fallen leaves to hibernate. Where possible, leave your leaves alone until temperatures are above 50°F.

## Help All Kinds of Wildlife: Plant More "Keystone" Species!

**Keystone species** are those that support other species in the ecosystem and help them coexist. Without them, the ecosystem collapses.



Here are four keystone plants to add to your yard (from left to right):

**Oak trees** support at least 900 caterpillar species nation-wide, meaning oaks are the best plant to support the entire food web!

**Cherry and Willow trees** both host hundreds of caterpillar species.

**Goldenrod** supports 100+ species of caterpillars, provides pollen for 35 bee species, and its nectar is critical for migrating monarchs!

For more native plant resources and tips on creating pollinator-friendly landscapes, visit [EQLT.org](http://EQLT.org) ■

# 2021 Online Auction: May 19th-23rd

Support EQLT and get great services, adventures, or items!  
This year's theme is "Appreciate the Outdoors!"

More information coming soon!



*Bid on a week-long vacation rental on the coast of Maine, Celestron 25x magnification binoculars, local CSA shares, and more!*

If you have an item or adventure to donate, please email Cynthia at [chenshaw@eqlt.org](mailto:chenshaw@eqlt.org).



# Exit Winter, Enter Springtime Programs!

By Pat Allison

Many Massachusetts residents welcome the arrival of winter and fluffy snow that paints the landscape. However, I am the complete opposite! My favorite critters, from crayfish to amphibians, all hideaway for the season, and I'm left without my main educational resources. But it's not all bad news; winter is an excellent time to prepare future projects and experiment with topics outside of my comfort zone.

Back in November, TerraCorps Youth Educators were approached by the Open Space Conference Committee for collaboration. The committee asked if we could create youth activities for parents participating in the networking sessions in the evening. This would provide their children with something to do while the parents were networking. I jumped at the opportunity for this winter-time project and, to nobody's surprise, I put together a booklet about freshwater ecosystems. It is filled with fun activities such as coloring pages, a maze, and a crossword puzzle. Check out the Youth Education Corner on our website to download a copy!

While I'm quite comfortable with freshwater ecosystems, I am not very well-versed on certain terrestrial animals, like birds. February's "Great Backyard Bird Count," hosted by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Birds Canada, and

Audubon, was a great introduction to birding for participants and myself! This bird count is a very basic count that focuses on what people see in their backyards. It's also a fantastic introduction to citizen science, the collection and analysis of data gathered by the general public.

I created a scavenger hunt based on the Great Backyard Bird Count to encourage our community to participate. Spotting a particular species earned you a certain number of points, and high-scoring participants won EQLT socks! Using the Merlin Bird ID or eBird app was encouraged to document bird sightings. These citizen science apps guide you through bird identification and let you record what you found and where you saw it. Scientists from all around the world use this data to better understand bird ecology!

Perhaps the most famous citizen science app available is iNaturalist. This social network allows citizen scientists, naturalists, and biologists all around the world to map and share observations of biodiversity with each other. You can take a picture of an organism and upload where you saw it with your smartphone, or you can use your computer if using a traditional camera. Even if you don't know what the organism is, experts will help you identify the plant or animal you saw.

We are incorporating iNaturalist into several youth programs this spring and summer. In late March, we hosted night-time walks to observe the spring amphibian migration and used iNaturalist to document what frogs and salamanders we saw. In addition, a FactWalk (similar to a StoryWalk® but using fact sheets, mini-quizzes, etc.) about the amphibian migration was also set up from March 24 until April 7 at the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree.

We are also planning a Pollinator Plant Scavenger Hunt from May through July. This will be similar to the scavenger hunt we did for the Great Backyard Bird Count, but on a much larger scale. Participants will be able to go around documenting certain plants on our preserves, providing important data on our pollinator plants.

Last, but certainly not least, Brookside Adventures will also return as the weather gets warmer, and sessions are expected to begin sometime in May. This is shaping up to be a very busy spring and summer for me, but I am looking forward to providing our community these wonderful opportunities to connect with the natural world around us! ■



*Pat holding a Wood frog at the Spring Amphibian Migration Walk in late March.*



*Wood frog near a vernal pool at Patril Hollow Preserve*

# Help Meet the \$30k Online Challenge

By Richard Cavanaugh

It is still too soon to gather for the Annual Dinner & Silent Auction this spring, so instead the East Quabbin Land Trust is bringing the Annual Fundraiser and Silent Auction to you via the comfort of your own screens.

Starting at 5:30 pm on April 24, 2021, the time the Dinner would have started, we will kick off the 2021 Online Challenge with a video presentation that includes a recap of last year's activities and achievements and a preview of upcoming events and goals. There will also be several appearances by fellow EQLT supporters who will share their talents and enthusiasm in support for the land trust's mission. The online challenge will run through May 2, by which time we hope to raise enough to earn a \$30,000 Challenge Match that has been offered by Karen and Dave Davis of Petersham.

"EQLT continues to protect our resources and environment, as well as providing trails, programs and open land that we all have needed in the shutdown caused by Covid," remarks Dave Davis. "We both felt that we needed to respond to these needs of the local community,

as well as the visitors from afar who come to enjoy quality time in nature. So the generous gifts made from the multi-family challenge last year have inspired us to increase our challenge this year.

**We will match any gifts made to the online challenge before the May 2nd closing up to a total of \$30,000."**

"In addition, EQLT support of the Petersham Country Store, as an outlet for local farmers, as well as for local consumers, has been a life-saving and deeply appreciated venue. We've each had to be inventive to survive these troubling times, and giving to EQLT is an opportunity for us all to support the beauty and healthy environment that surrounds us and that has been so crucial in our navigation of the pandemic," acknowledges Karen Davis.

On April 24th, the East Quabbin Land Trust will have a page ready on its website, [www.EQLT.org](http://www.EQLT.org), where supporters can contribute online toward the Challenge. It will also be sending messages about the Challenge through



emails and social media posts. Enclosed with this Newsletter is a reply envelope that can also be used to send a gift toward the Challenge. Simply note "Challenge" on the check to make sure it is counted for the match.

**Help EQLT meet the Challenge and take this great opportunity to double the impact of your gift.** Remember, donors giving \$500 or more annually become members of the Leadership Circle. A monthly gift of just \$42 as a Sustainer gets you there! ■

# Save (many more than) Two Birds with One Car

By Richard Cavanaugh

Having trouble saying goodbye to an old vehicle? Want to know that its spirit will live on in support of *Conserving the Land, Preserving our Heritage*? Thanks to enterprising board member, Mark Mattson, East Quabbin Land Trust can now benefit should you have a vehicle you no longer need or want. Mark's son, Roger, had one such vehicle. With Mark's help, EQLT partnered with Charitable Adult Rides & Services (CARS), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that services only other nonprofits.

You can donate a vehicle to EQLT by visiting [www.careasy.org](http://www.careasy.org) and clicking on the "Choose a Nonprofit" option in the main navigation bar. Then select East Quabbin Land Trust and complete the secure, online form. You can also call toll-free 855-500-RIDE (7433) seven days

a week during CARS' regular hours of operation, and the CARS Vehicle Donor Support Team will walk you through the donation form and help arrange for your free pick-up. CARS tries to accept all types of vehicles (running or not) including cars, trucks, trailers, boats, RVs, motorcycles, campers, off-road vehicles, planes, heavy equipment, farm machinery, and most other motorized vehicles. CARS wants vehicles that are in one piece and towable, have an engine, are tow truck accessible, and have a clear title. You may also access CARS from the Support page at [www.EQLT.org](http://www.EQLT.org).

"CARS proved to be the best solution for our family and for EQLT," says Mark Mattson of Oakham. "It's an easy process. Once you complete the form and find out if the vehicle is suitable, CARS

takes it from there - from picking up the car to sending you a receipt for the charitable contribution. It was nice to know that a vehicle which was of no more use to us could still be put to good use, and it now looks like it's time to say goodbye to my son Ian's car, too." ■

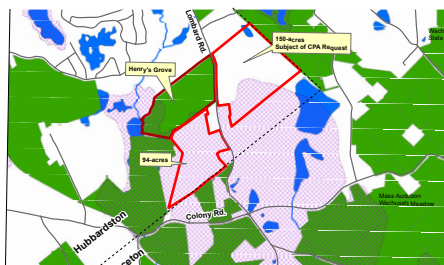




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## INSIDE: Expanding the Conserved Lands Corridor in Hubbardston



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## UPCOMING EVENTS...

### "Kiss the Ground" Film Screening

**Sunday, April 17th, 7 PM | Magi's Lawn, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick**

Join us for an outdoor film screening of "Kiss the Ground", an inspiring and ground breaking film that reveals the first viable solution to our climate crisis: regenerating the world's agricultural soils. \*Rain date: Sunday, April 18th, 7pm.

### \$30,000 Challenge Match

**April 24th-May 2nd | Virtual Event**

Take this opportunity to double the impact of your gift! Stay tuned for updates on the kick-off to this virtual event.

### Online Auction

**May 19th-23rd | Virtual Event**

We can't meet in person this year, but the auction is still on from your own home! Bid on an exciting variety of outdoor-themed experiences and items in support of the Land Trust. Stay tuned for more details! Seeking treasures, experiences, and services for the auction. Contact [chenshaw@EQLT.org](mailto:chenshaw@EQLT.org) for more info.

### Photo Contest

**Sunday, June 20th | Magi's Lawn, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick**

Submit your photos until June 1st! Photos will be presented at a curated outdoor event on Sunday, June 20th. Prizes include EQLT swag, a gift card to a local vendor, and of course, bragging rights! Stay tuned for updates on the outdoor event. Visit [EQLT.org](http://EQLT.org) for more information.

### Monthly Stewardship Activities

Join us to help with the maintenance of EQLT properties. Not getting the event emails? Contact Jess at [jcusworth@eqlt.org](mailto:jcusworth@eqlt.org).