



P.O. Box 106
Sterling, MA 01564

(508) 277-5368

slt@sterlinglandtrust.org
www.SterlingLandTrust.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- Dan Mongeau, President
- Jim French, Vice President
- Carol Houde, Secretary
- Laurie Picard, Treasurer
- Ken Cranson
- Emily Merlino
- Jacob Mongeau
- Peder Pedersen
- Mike Pineo
- Ashley Edwards, Counsel

2022 MEMBERSHIP

Donating stock to Sterling Land Trust is a Win-Win

If you would like to support the mission of Sterling Land Trust, consider donating stock. Stock donations may make sense as you avoid the capital gains and thus get to contribute the full value of the asset. You may then deduct the full value of the donation. SLT gets a larger donation, and you get a larger deduction! It is a simple process to get started. Contact our financial expert Nicky from Edward Jones at Nicole.Groskreutz@edwardjones.com or call 978-342-2033.

For now and future generations, you can help protect the natural beauty of Sterling, engage others in learning about the land, water, and wildlife in the community, and encourage the conservation of historic, natural, and aesthetic treasures of Sterling. Membership in the Sterling Land Trust is open to conservation-minded residents from Sterling as well as other communities. Join us today!

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Street Address (if different) _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Annual Membership Categories:

Individual— \$20	Household— \$35	Donor— \$100
Sponsor— \$250	Conservator— \$500	Patron— \$1,000

SLT is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation and donations may be tax deductible.

Please make you check payable to:

Sterling Land Trust, P.O. Box 106, Sterling, MA 01564

Or donate online at: www.SterlingLandTrust.org

The Sterling Land Trust welcomes your membership, involvement, or any additional contribution. Sterling landowners should be aware that the SLT also qualifies as a recipient of charitable donations of land.

LandLines



SPRING / SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER of the STERLING LAND TRUST

The Nelson Conservation Area and the Nickerson Conservation Area are two prominent, recent additions to SLT's land holdings.

The recent 19-acre land donation by Mr. Herbert Nelson, Lucas Road, is an historic treasure placed in a scenic setting overlooking Stuart Pond. According to Herb Nelson, the farm was established in 1797, and parts of the farmhouse and some of the farm buildings contain original structures dating back to this early part of Sterling's history. An 1830 map of Sterling shows the farm and lists R. R. Stuart as its owner, presumably the same Stuart that later created Stuart Pond and built the associated sawmill.

Herb Nelson's family has farmed here for over a century, starting with Herb's grandparents, who purchased the farm in 1917. They acquired additional land, and in 1929 made it a dairy farm, having between 20 and 40 milking cows. The milk was delivered to different dairies over the years, including Pinecroft Dairy in West Boylston. Herb grew up in Leominster, but his dad still spent his

days working on the farm on Lucas Road. With Herb's grandfather's passing in 1969, he and his parents moved into the farm house. After finishing High School in 1970, Herb worked full time on the farm and later took it over.

Herb Nelson has long demonstrated his concern for land protection. In 1997, he sold a substantial part of the farm land on the west side of Stuart Pond to DCR for watershed protection, and in 2009 DCR also acquired the development rights of the remaining land.

The 19 acres of farmland that Herb is donating to the Sterling Land Trust includes both the land on the uphill side of Lucas Road and the land between Lucas Road and the Stuart Pond. It is Herb's wish that the land and the farm setting be preserved, and Sterling Land Trust is honored to be the stewards of the *Nelson Conservation Area*. Thank you, Herb.

Near the intersection of Justice Hill and South Nelson Roads stands a prominent, lovely – and truly historic - farmhouse, The *Ephraim Roper House*, which for the last 40 years has been the home of Bob and Kathy Nickerson. While the farmhouse has all the intriguing features of an old house, such as wide well-worn floorboards and a large cellar with fieldstone walls, it is the farm itself with the horse paddocks and the more distant woodland that gives pleasure to the local folks as well as visitors driving by. And it is this quintessential character of the Sterling landscape which is being preserved with the donation of their 19 acres of woodlands to the Sterling Land Trust from Bob and Kathy Nickerson.

continued on next page



The farm was founded back in 1760, possibly even earlier, by Ephraim Roper, but was later referred to as the Roper/Nelson Farm, after a daughter of one of the Roper descendants married a Nelson (hence the road name *So. Nelson Road*). When first established, the farm was large, with most of the land along So. Nelson Road belonging to Ephraim Roper. The Roper/Nelson farm started out as a truck farm, growing vegetables for local markets, but later it became a dairy farm. The farm stayed in the same family for 200 years, that is, until 1960. Reduced in size over its many years, the farm was just 27 acres, when the Nickerson's purchased it in 1981, but with a barn large enough to accommodate their 11 horses. In 2009, DCR purchased a Watershed Preservation Restriction (WPR) for 19 acres of wooded Nickerson property while placing Chapter 61B restrictions on the land. This wooded property is hilly, wet and rocky and thus not suited for farming.

It is the Nickersons' wish that the rural character of Sterling be preserved as much as possible. Specifically, they would like to ensure that these woodlands stay intact, with no risk of being broken up into smaller house lots. They discussed options with Sterling Land Trust and concluded that donating the 19 acres of woodland, to be named the *Nickerson Conservation Area*, to the SLT would be the simplest way to achieve their goal of keeping the woodlands in its present natural state. We sincerely thank them for their confidence in us.

For more information on Trust properties or how land is protected, contact **Jim French:**

(508) 681-2666

jmf1897@gmail.com

The Nelson Conservation Area contains 19 acres of farm land, a barn and outbuildings, open fields and woodlands on Lucas Rd adjacent to Stewart Ponds. The land was donated by Herb Nelson in 2022.

The Petit Conservation Area is 12 acres of meadows and woodland, located on Justice Hill Cutoff. The land was donated by Judy Petit in 2017 in memory of her husband, Mike.

The Hornbeam Conservation Area, an 11.6 acre tract of woodland and beaver pond located off Hardscrabble Rd., was donated by Shawn Morris and Lennie Paquette in memory of their parents in 2010; and an additional 3.4 acres was donated by Shawn Morris in 2018.

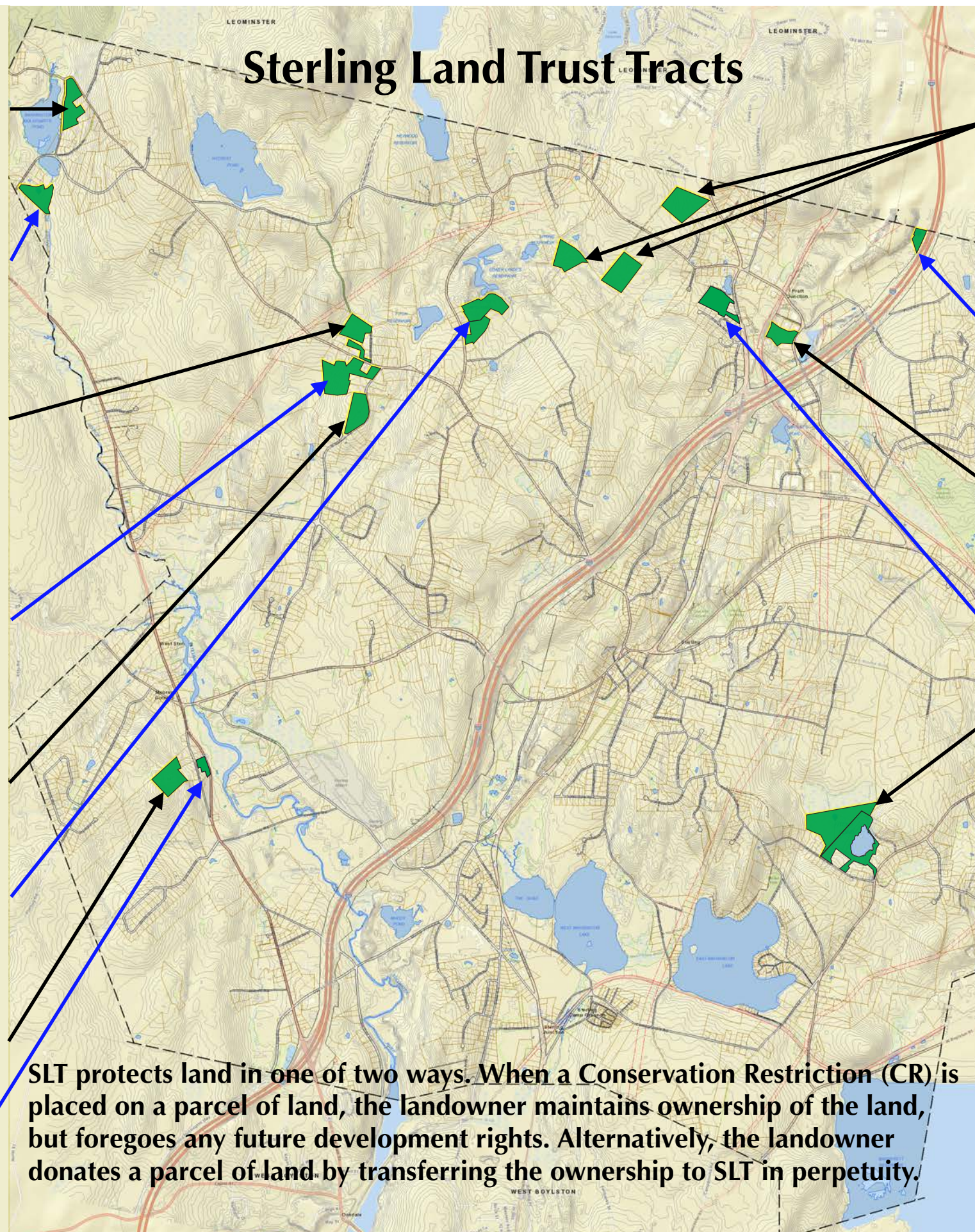
The Nickerson Conservation Area consists of 19 acres of woodland, located at the intersection of Justice Hill and South Nelson Roads. The land was donated by Bob and Kathy Nickerson in 2022.

The Cranson CR is a 12 acres of agricultural land off So. Nelson Rd. The CR was donated by the Cranson family in 2019.

Allenwood and the Allenwood Annex are two lots, totaling 25 acres of wooded hills with walking trails and a parking area off Heywood Rd. Allenwood was donated by the late Charlie Allen in 2001.

Sagatabscot Hill is a CR of 15 acres of upland forest land, off of Johnson Rd. and donated by Arthur and Dorie French in 2001.

Arthur's Orchard Given by Dorie French in 2017, this 3.2 acre CR is composed of woodland, apple orchard, and meadow.



Poor Farm Conservation Area consists of 52 acres of woodland, fields, and beaver meadows along the Wekepeke Brook, located off North Row Road. A right of way along the edge of a private hayfield leads to the conservation area. Donated by Georgia Drenova upon her passing in 2013.

Gaw Conservation Area is an 8 acre parcel with mature forest, straddling the Sterling/Lancaster town lines, along the pristine banks of Wekepeke Brook. Donated by Vern and Vicky Gaw in 2019.

Spratt Parcel consists of 9 acres wooded land off Spratt Junction Road, with a path to the Wekepeke Brook. Donated by Bill and Betsy Spratt in 1999.

Brown Farm is a CR on 17 acres of woodland and hay land along the Wekepeke Brook. Donated by Dr. Gunter Spanknebel in 2004.

Fitch Pond is a CR of 30 acres of mainly wetlands, donated by Gary Griffin in 2005, while the **Fitch Pond Floodplain** consists of additional 30 acres of woodland and red maple swamp, also donated by Gary Griffin in 2005.

Update

The SLT is currently working with two separate landowners to acquire additional woodland acreages. One is along the Wekepeke Brook, and the other close to Rocky Brook. When finalized, these two projects will add an additional 60 acres of protected land to the Trust's open space roster. Stay tuned!

SLT protects land in one of two ways. When a Conservation Restriction (CR) is placed on a parcel of land, the landowner maintains ownership of the land, but foregoes any future development rights. Alternatively, the landowner donates a parcel of land by transferring the ownership to SLT in perpetuity.