

# Sheffield Land Trust

*Protecting Sheffield's Natural, Scenic,  
Agricultural and Rural Character*

## 2022 Annual Report



*View west toward the Taconic Mountains from Route 41 across  
prime agricultural fields on the Burns property, to be protected  
by a conservation restriction..*

**The Sheffield Land Trust, Inc.**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**December 31, 2021**

**Assets**

**Current Assets:**

Cash and equivalents	\$ 484,708
Membership receivables	680
Pledges receivable, net	11,915
Notes receivable	2,400
Grants receivable	100,000
Prepaid expenses	<u>6,122</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 605,825</b>

Board restricted cash	44,334
Pledges receivable, net of current portion	3,683
Notes receivable, net of current portion	16,517
Property and equipment, net	7,832
Land	<u>2,058,807</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 2,736,998</b>

**Liabilities and Net Assets**

**Current Liabilities:**

Accounts payable	\$ 8,063
Line of credit	4,476
Current portion of capital lease obligation	<u>1,091</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 13,630</b>

Deferred revenue	102,000
Capital lease payable, net of current portion	<u>2,558</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 118,188</b>

**Net Assets:**

Without donor restrictions	\$ 2,336,925
With donor restrictions	<u>281,885</u>

**Total Net Assets** **\$ 2,618,810**

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** **\$ 2,736,998**

*Complete audited financial statements may be obtained  
by contacting the SLT office.*

## You, Our Members, Are Amazing!

Here's what you helped make possible in 2022-2023:

- Raising over \$500,000 toward the 5<sup>th</sup> phase of the Sheffield-Egremont Agricultural, Ecological and Scenic Corridor project, this year working with families toward protecting 4 more properties.
- Continuing to partner with Greenagers and the Egremont Land Trust on enhancements to Bow Wow Woods, where youth teams will be working on the the olds woods roads this summer and fall to transition them to 2 trail segments.
- Partnering with Greenagers to successfully apply for over \$34,000 in funds as part of the over \$50,000 project to upgrade a part of the trail at Ashley Falls Woods to be universally accessible (permitting and work will occur over the next 2 years); as well as maintaining the trails and fields and removing invasive species, thanks to the efforts of dedicated volunteers.
- Providing over 750 trees and shrubs to area families through the Arbor Day Celebration tree and shrub giveaway, along with a tree-care and mulching demonstration, in collaboration with the Sheffield Tree Project.
- Helping over 100 community members to learn about our forests and the impacts of invasive species through our Winter Lecture "*Our Changing New England Forests*" presented by noted expert Tom Zetterstrom.
- Working with 2 schools to provide classes with information on wildlife and their travel corridors, including field trips to do field assessments, in partnership with the *Follow the Forest* program of the Housatonic Valley Association.
- Increasing to 9 the number of families who have let us know that they have included us in their wills and other estate planning, becoming members of our Legacy Circle.

## Sheffield Land Trust's Current Project Areas

In addition to our ongoing education and outreach work, our primary focus continues to be on land conservation work in three landscape and recreational areas, as well as conserving agricultural land throughout Sheffield and Ashley Falls:

- The **Sheffield-Egremont Agricultural, Ecological & Scenic Corridor** remains a rarity in the state—a relatively intact and unfragmented rural landscape. The heart of the Corridor is over 2,000 acres of field, forest and wetlands in southeast Egremont and northwest Sheffield, which connect to over 5,000 additional acres of protected land, including the Appalachian Trail, Mt. Everett and Jug End State Reserves, wildlife management areas, and other privately conserved land.

Most recently, you helped us close out Phase 4 of the Corridor by completing the **Batacchi** Agricultural Preservation Restriction. We are now well into Phase 5, with Greenagers having purchased **Bow Wow Woods**, a draft of the conservation restriction to be held by SLT and the Egremont land trust is being tailored to the property, and we are also working on conservation restrictions being donated by the **Burns** and **Barrett** families. We have also assisted the **Thomas** family to apply for an Agricultural Preservation Restriction.

- The **Housatonic River Corridor** protects farms and wildlife areas on both sides of the river. Since Sheffield was settled in the 1700s, farmers have prized the rich “bottom land” along the Housatonic River.

We are continuing to work with the **Wiehl** family toward an Agricultural Preservation Restriction on their land along

the river and the opposite side of Hewins Street, after you helped us complete the fundraising campaign for the **River Lea Farm** Agricultural Preservation Restriction on Boardman Street. Other farms and properties in the Corridor that we have helped families to protect include **Wolfe Spring Farm**, **Larkin Dairy Farm** land, the **Corn Crib** (now **Whalen's** tree nursery), **Balsam Hill Farm**, the former **Cavalier** property that's now part of Pine Island Farm, **Egerton Family Farm**, **Howden Farm** and half a dozen conservation and deed restrictions—more than 1,200 acres altogether.

- The **Community Trail Network** includes the **Deborah Reich Trail** near the center of Sheffield, which runs from Salisbury Road to the Southern Berkshire Regional School District campus, and which is also available to be used as an outdoor classroom; and **Ashley Falls Woods**, whose network of trails are loops of varying lengths, is near the center of Ashley Falls off of Route 7A (Ashley Falls Road).

These primarily forested properties continue to see a tremendous upsurge in use by people of all ages which began with the onset of the pandemic, as is the case with trails all across the country. Dogs are welcome so long as they are leashed. Both properties have a pack-in, pack-out policy, so please plan ahead.

We are continuing to make improvements to these recreational properties, including partnering with Greenagers to upgrade part of the trail at Ashley Falls Woods to be universally accessible to enable a larger portion of the community to be able to access and enjoy exploring the great outdoors.

**Volunteer with one of our working committees—  
it's a great way to make new friends while making  
a difference.**

The Sheffield Land Trust accomplishes its work through the efforts of our Board of Directors and many other volunteers. We are local residents who contribute our time and skills to manage the organization with the help of our staff. Volunteers and staff work together through three standing committees to achieve our goals.

The **Outreach & Education Committee** does many things. It is responsible for the organization's press releases, ads, displays, brochures, and other literature. It produces newsletters and invitations and provides material for the organization's website. It organizes SLT's events—and its Food Committee is famous for serving up fabulous food at events and gatherings. The Outreach and Education Committee also works with the community and the schools on educating students and the public about Sheffield's natural world, its farms, and farming opportunities. The Committee meets on one Saturday morning every other month.

The **Land Protection Committee** works with families to conserve their land, mostly using two conservation tools, private Conservation Restrictions (CRs) and the Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. APRs are a way that the state helps families get the equity out of their land without having to sell it or to stop farming it. SLT raises the required local share of the value of the APR.

Both APRs and CRs are voluntary restrictions that a family places on its land to ensure that the

family's vision for the land endures for the benefit of future generations. Both APRs and CRs restrict certain uses of the land that are incompatible with the conservation values of the property and the family's vision, restrictions that stay with the property on the deed through all future owners. Families that donate all or part of the value of the APR or CR can often realize savings on income, capital gains or estate taxes.

SLT can also protect land by owning it. We keep our land on the tax rolls and enroll it in the relevant current-use program for forestry, agriculture or wildlife (Chapter 61, 61A or 61 B). We can accept gifts of land to conserve, and gifts of non-conservation land or buildings to be sold to help fund the protection of other land. Donations of land can provide the same kind of tax benefits as with CRs and APRs. We also occasionally purchase land to protect it.

The Land Protection Committee is also responsible for monitoring the land we own and the CRs we hold to make sure that the conservation values and the terms of the CRs are being upheld. Volunteer monitors become familiar with a property, each year walking the area under protection and filing a report. (For APRs, the state monitors the land.) It also coordinates ongoing stewardship efforts to control invasive species. The Land Protection Committee meets on one Tuesday afternoon every other month.

The **Funding & Financial Management Committee** draws on its members' expertise and talents to monitor and help plan SLT's financial well-being, both long-term and day-to-day, and to organize and oversee fundraising for SLT's conservation projects, outreach and education work, and operations. The Funding & Financial Management Committee meets on one Friday afternoon every other month.

## **Board**

President: Susan Rothschild

Vice President: Ron Yaple

Treasurer: Jack Bode

Secretary: Andrea Scott

Ann Barrett

Kerry Douglas

Carolyn Fulton

Sari Hoy

Robin Kriesberg

Jane Laning

Gail Schargel

Ken Schopp

Alicia Szendiuch

Sally Cook, Emeritus

Nancy Smith, Emeritus

## **Staff**

Kathy Orlando, Executive Director, Land Protection

Bob Ronnow, Executive Director, Operations

Judy Magenis, Administrative Assistant

## **Sheffield Land Trust**

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[www.sheffieldland.org](http://www.sheffieldland.org)

and follow us on Facebook!

*Dedicated to protecting the land essential to Sheffield's  
natural, scenic, agricultural and rural character.*

*Since 1989, helping families protect almost  
5,000 acres, including over a dozen farms.*

**Please remember us when doing your estate planning!**