



Together, protecting forever
the land we love

Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2025



Jen Weirner

The future of conservation

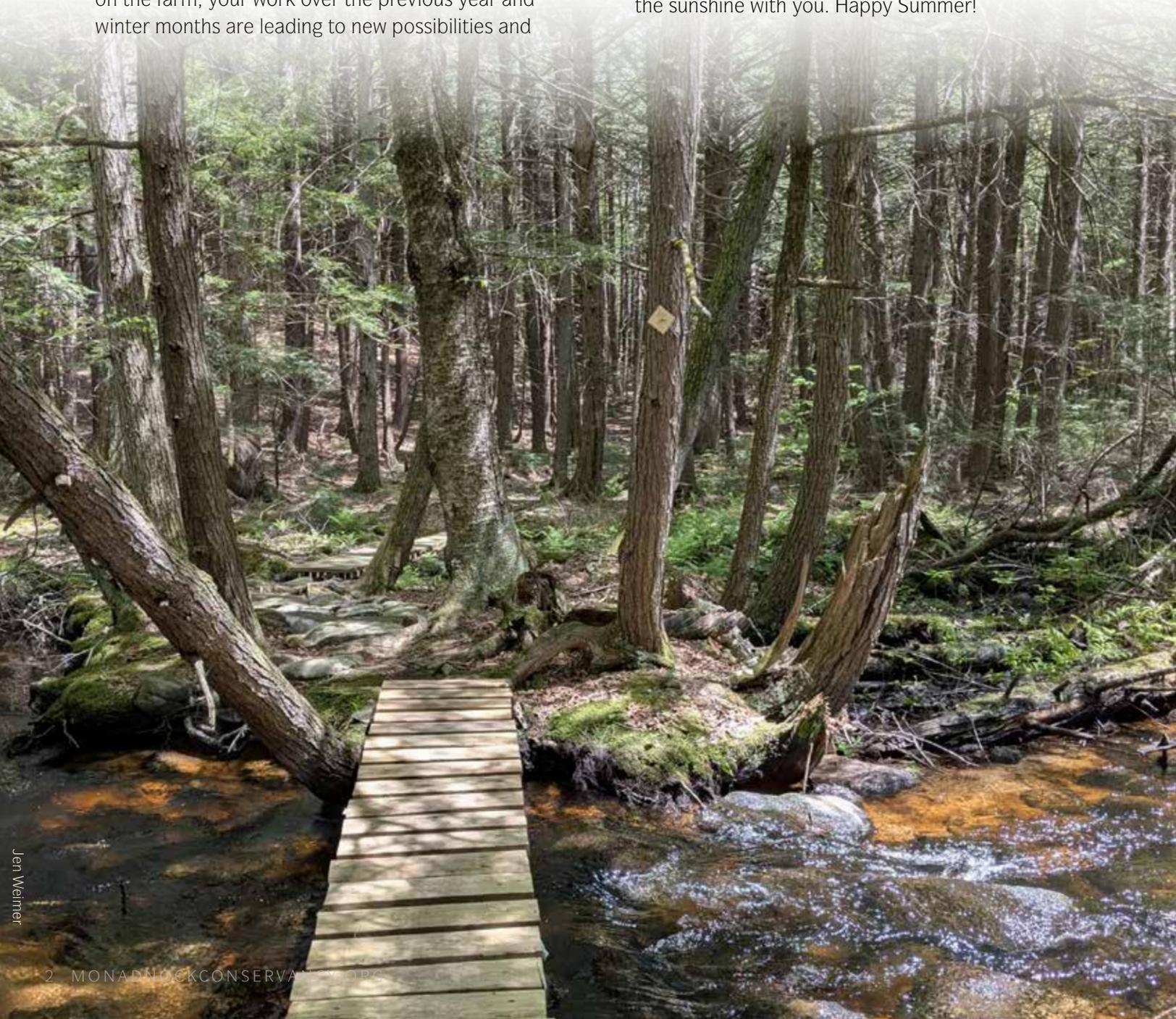
The future of conservation...

Congratulations — you made it through another winter in the Monadnock region!

Spring and summer, these special times of renewal and regrowth, is here in all its verdant glory, along with gratitude for the friends and loved ones who made the winter months bearable!

For the Monadnock Conservancy, the warmer months bring new beginnings and deep appreciation for all our supporters. Like flowers in the garden, or crops on the farm, your work over the previous year and winter months are leading to new possibilities and

growth. That progress takes many forms: Our new executive director, Amanda Littleton, has officially joined the team, bringing decades of experience working with the region's local farmers, and ideas on how to maximize the Conservancy's impact. The Conservancy has broken ground on a new, permanent, headquarters! In the following pages, we invite you to learn more about Amanda and our new sustainable building. Your support has made this growth possible and we are so excited to be back in the sunshine with you. Happy Summer!



Jen Weiner

A Little about Amanda

Big news: Amanda Littleton has joined the Conservancy as executive director!

Amanda comes to the Conservancy from the Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD), where she served as district manager for the past 18 years. Amanda's accomplishments speak for themselves: She established the NH Farm Future Fund to finance the protection of local farmland, launched Monadnock Menu — a food hub that helps local farmers access larger markets for their products — and partnered with local food sellers to improve on-farm infrastructure and encourage sustainable farming. Amanda also created the Climate Resilience grant program which has invested over a million dollars into improving the region's ability to adapt to climate change. Learn more about Amanda in the interview below.

Q *We are all so happy and excited that you are leading the Conservancy! As an organization that exists to protect the beauty and bounty of the Monadnock region, I wanted to ask about your own relationship with nature and the outdoors. When did you first become passionate about the natural world?*

A From an early age, I have felt most comfortable in nature, whether I was spending countless hours exploring the woods behind my childhood home or the seashores of Rhode Island. As I grew older, this bond with the land only grew stronger. I devote my free time to hiking, gardening, or spending time on the water. It does so much good for the mind, body, and spirit. Calling the Monadnock region home provides endless opportunities to foster this connection.

Q *You have an incredible career working with local farmers in the region. Can you tell us what drew you to this work?*

A Farmers work with the land every day to provide sustenance for our community. They are deeply connected to the rhythms of the land in a way that many people are not. Yet despite this they are often criticized for environmental degradation — and I don't think this characterization is entirely appropriate, especially for farmers in our region whose practices have evolved to balance production needs with natural resource protection. We are fortunate to have a strong agricultural community that is mindful of habitat and water quality protection in the Monadnock region. I am drawn to finding mutually beneficial solutions — the win-wins that help farmers meet their goals while also supporting environmental stewardship and strengthening the fabric of our community.

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Amanda Littleton, Monadnock Conservancy executive director

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The Monadnock Conservancy, with its regional focus, has a unique role to play in bringing together collaborators across sectors to find a path forward in reaching our vision of engaging people in land conservation and stewardship in ways that strengthen their communities and their connections to the land.

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Q *You have had such an impactful career: what accomplishments are you the most proud of?*

A Building trust in a community of people I respect. Getting to the point where farms were willing to share their wishes and needs with me, building relationships where they felt supported and comfortable knowing we could work together to seek solutions. There is no substitute for trust.

Beyond that, seeing the success of the grant programs I created with partners to support farms was extremely fulfilling. These grants allowed farmers to be in the driver's seat in defining appropriately-scaled solutions for their needs, and we were able to bring in over \$2.2 million in financial resources to help them meet their goals. These goals include protecting water quality, conserving energy, building soil health, establishing pollinator habitats, strengthening their businesses, and improving food access in our communities. The grant programs I worked on include the NH Conservation District Climate Resilience Grant, NH Farm Future Fund, Monadnock Food Co-op Farm Fund, and Conservation Opportunity Fund.

Q *Looking to the future, what do you see as some of the biggest challenges facing our environment?*

A I think the greatest environmental challenges we face are the loss of biodiversity and connectivity of our open spaces, which are vital to improving climate resiliency. We need to prioritize the accelerated pace of strategic land conservation efforts to ensure we can protect what we all love and value about this region. Hand in hand with this is the stewardship of the lands our community has already had the foresight to protect. We need to ensure that conservation values are safeguarded so they can continue to serve our community for generations to come.

Q *One of the best things about the Monadnock region is how passionate people are about conservation and protecting our forests, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and farms. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing this effort?*

A The challenges include the global impact of our changing climate, uncertainty in our economy, and poorly planned development. The people here in the Monadnock region and their endless dedication to action is what buoys me during challenging times. There is a shared commitment to invest in our community and the well-being of our home. Focusing our energy and resources locally is a powerful, and impactful, response to the uncertainty in the economy and climate.



Q *There are many environmental organizations working in the region and so much passion for the outdoors. How do you think these groups can better collaborate to achieve positive environmental impact?*

A There is a great deal of collaboration already underway. That being said, I think we can always do better at deepening our understanding of each other's efforts, working harder to improve communication, and identifying opportunities to work in partnership through collective action on shared goals. This is not a destination you reach but a continual effort in building relationships and trust. It is also about bringing in new voices to represent the full diversity of our communities.

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Q *At the Stories About This Place event in March, folks got their first chance to meet you and say hello. And at the event, Chick Colony of Harrisville Designs talked a little about legacy, and how this generation of conservationists and passionate locals will be viewed in the future. How do you see your work in relation to the future health and well-being of this region and its residents?*

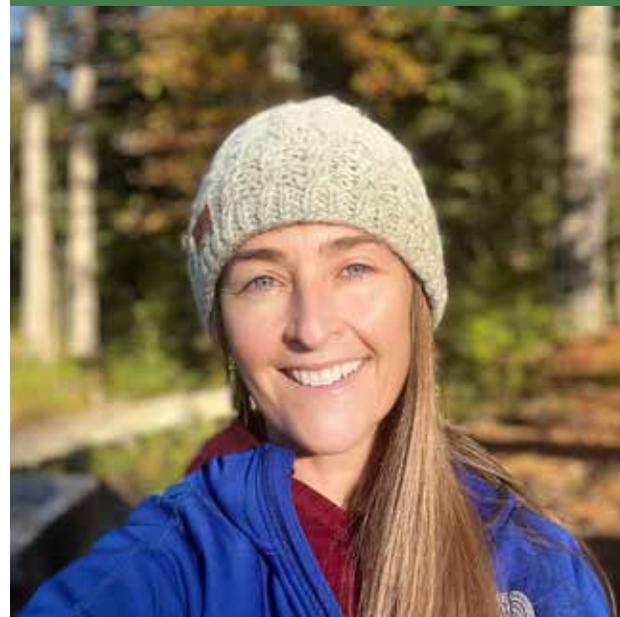
A I see my work as being of service to the region and its community members. Joining the team at the Conservancy is a true gift because I get to link arms with passionate individuals with a shared focus on community service and purpose.

I feel a sense of urgency to do more for this region with the threats of development, the climate crisis, the loss of biodiversity, and the loss of farmland. The work of this generation of conservationists is critical to protect the valuable resources we have here. The efforts put forward in this coming decade will impact the health of food systems, water quality, wildlife habitats, and community well-being for generations to come. This work will preserve and strengthen the fabric of the Monadnock Region. I really believe that a healthy landscape is a critical foundation for healthy communities.

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Amanda out in the field

The building, in Build



Renee Fair and Sheldon Pennoyer of SP Architects

When the Conservancy launched the Building a Resilient Future campaign and began planning for a new, permanent headquarters, we looked far and wide to find the perfect architects for the project. Luckily for us, Sheldon Pennoyer and Renee Fair, of SP Architects, are locally-based experts in sustainability who have designed many beautiful buildings in our region. With an eye towards aligning the design to New Hampshire's landscape and ensuring that their projects meet the highest standards of environmental stewardship, Sheldon and Renee imagined a building that is timeless, functional, and sustainable. We sat down with Sheldon and Renee to discuss architecture and the thought process that went into the Conservancy's new headquarters.

Q *Sheldon and Renee, thank you for talking to our readers about the new Monadnock Conservancy headquarters project! Can you give us an overview of what makes an architectural project 'sustainable'?*

A **Renee Fair:** Sustainable architecture should be synonymous with responsible design, using methods that reduce our carbon footprint in construction – this means minimizing the amount of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide, that our materials, construction methods, and other activities release into the atmosphere. This involves making conscious choices about your daily life, consumption habits, and energy use to lessen your impact on the environment and climate change. Net-zero energy use, and certifications like LEED or Passive-haus, are the results of creating buildings that are designed to reduce the energy needed to power them and then implementing on-site energy production through the installation of a solar energy generation system.

Q *Thank you for that. You have designed many incredible buildings for your clients. Could you tell us about a few that stand out in terms of sustainability and design?*

A **Sheldon:** The most recent example is the Headquarters for SELT (Southeast Land Trust), a similar organization to the Monadnock Conservancy, serving the coastal area of New Hampshire. The building is

Sustainable materials: Glavel

Insulation – be it spray or foam board – requires a lot of carbon to produce. Enter Glavel, a glass-based product that replaces foam board insulation, high density foam blocks, and other lightweight fill materials in construction and industrial applications. By choosing Glavel instead of other types of foam insulation, we will reduce our carbon footprint with an environmentally safe alternative to the carbon intensive materials traditionally used for subslab insulation and lightweight structural fill.



Building a Resilient Future

a Net Positive project, which means that the solar array is producing more energy throughout the year than it is using, even with car chargers and a historic renovation of a building on site that provides workforce housing.

Q *Moving on to the Monadnock Conservancy headquarters project, how did you approach the design from an architectural perspective? Even before the first shovel of dirt is moved, what thoughts did you have about how to align this project with the Conservancy's values as an organization?*

A Sheldon: We aimed to create a simple and elegant design that both staff and the community want to work in and visit, and a design that aims to reduce the amount of embodied energy and operating energy. Also, very important to us was creating a building that uses as many local healthy materials, and predominantly wood fiber materials for structure, insulation, and finishes that embody carbon throughout the life of the building. There will be a solar PV system on the south facing roof that will generate the energy needed to operate the new facility throughout the year.

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Sustainable construction: Tektoniks System

Bensonwood Homes will employ their unique construction process, known as Tektoniks, to reduce the energy it takes to construct, and run, this building. Tektoniks is a process by which wood-framed wall and ceiling panels are fabricated off-site in a controlled factory environment, including the installation of the cellulose insulation and windows, which reduces material waste and ensure quality control when installing air-barrier systems.



Photo: Bensonwood

A rendering of the Conservancy's new headquarters in downtown Keene.



The landscape design was also a major consideration in shaping a design that will share the landscape with a public park. There will be a terrace garden space that can be used for Conservancy events and staff meetings, surrounded by pollinator gardens. And of course, this site is adjacent to the Ashuelot River Park, providing opportunities for the community to connect with the Conservancy and learn about conservation.

Renee: From the beginning we knew we had to be respectful of the scale of the residential neighborhood we are building in. We aimed to create a building with proportions that wouldn't overshadow the single-family residences across the street.

Q *What steps do you think all architects and contractors need to take to foster a more sustainable and verdant world?*

A Sheldon: As we strive to reduce and eventually eliminate the carbon used in buildings to both operate and construct, it is extremely important that we collaborate with owners and contractors to achieve these challenging goals. With the Monadnock Conservancy Headquarters, we have the perfect team to achieve the goals of sustainable design: A building owner that has a clear set of goals to build sustainably, architects who embrace sustainability beyond just energy use, and Chapman Construction and Bensonwood who believe in collaboration to achieve those goals. We are so fortunate to be working with the Conservancy's Building Committee and Chapman Construction to create a building that will serve the Monadnock Conservancy well into the future to do the work of preserving special places for the public.

Sustainable operation: Solar PV system

The Conservancy's new headquarters will use virtually no fossil fuels to operate. The building will use an air source heat pump system for heating and cooling, which uses the newest technologies to reduce the impact of refrigerants. The building will also feature a Solar PV (photovoltaic) system, designed to meet the entire energy needs of the building, making it officially a Net Zero or Net Positive Project!

The Conservancy's headquarters will employ a Solar PV system, similar to the system installed at the Southeast Land Trust headquarters in Epping.



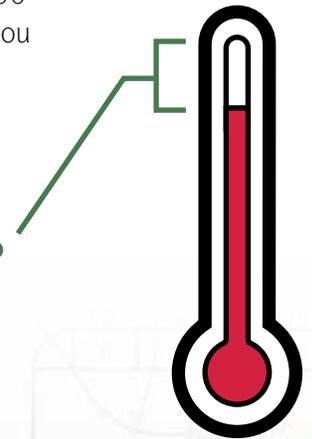
Thanks to many of you, the future of the Monadnock region is **bright**

Since the launch of the **Building a Resilient Future** capital campaign, the dream for more impactful conservation in the region is within reach. This transformative campaign will allow us to expand our staff capacity and build a new, permanent headquarters on donated land in downtown Keene.

We've already made strides in hiring new staff. It's exciting to share that Richard Pendleton has been promoted to Easement Stewardship Manager and we've welcomed Jen Weimer to the role of Conservation Easement Stewardship Assistant. At the same time, we are in the final stages of hiring a Land Protection Manager. This growth in staff will allow us to accelerate the pace of conservation and create positive environmental impact in our region. The new members of our team look forward to meeting you soon!

The response from our community has been astounding! Together we've raised \$6,000,000 million toward our \$6,800,000 goal. Our vision for a resilient future is taking shape, and you can help ensure future generations can experience the simple pleasures of the outdoors.

Do you have a donor advised fund (DAF)? You could put your fund to good use! The Conservancy welcomes DAF gifts, gifts of stock, and distributions from retirement accounts. Each donation made to the campaign is being matched dollar-for-dollar! If you haven't yet made a gift to the campaign, the time is now. **You can help us close the gap** and ensure the region's most irreplaceable open spaces and farms stay that way. Visit www.MonadnockConservancy.org/resilientfuture, or contact development director, Lindsay Taflas, Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org or 603-357-0600, ext. 113 to make your gift today!



Why we give

When we launched the Building a Resilient Future campaign, we knew it would take a lot of support to fund the staffing expansion and the construction of a new, permanent headquarters. We have been incredibly honored to receive many gifts that bring us closer to that goal, from one-time donations to folks who have stepped up and made large contributions to the cause. We reached out to some of those supporters to ask a simple question: Why did you choose to support this campaign? We wanted to share a few of these reasons, because they speak to the enormous love and generosity that exists in this special place.

John Austin Hubbard,

who died in 2021, cared deeply about the Monadnock region. A lifelong resident of Walpole, John served on the board of the Savings Bank of Walpole, ran Hubbard Farms, worked extensively with the University of New Hampshire and the UNH Foundation, and gave generously and anonymously to many local organizations, with a particular focus on education and the environment. When John passed away in 2021, he left the Conservancy with a large donation which we used as the anchor for this campaign. His daughter, Susan Johnson, had this to say about her father's life and legacy of giving:



“My father cared so much about the future of this region, particularly in terms of the environment and education. He was a quiet man, like his father before him, and he wanted nothing more than to leave the region in better shape than he found it. Whenever there was an opportunity to do so, he would buy land and piece it together so it would remain undeveloped. He gave to causes he believed would help this region in the future.”

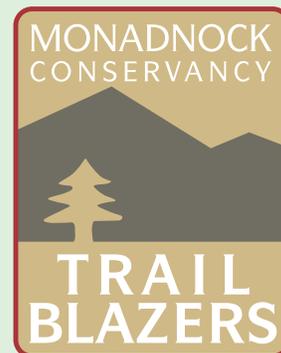
John may be gone, but his legacy lives on.

Brad Malt is the current Treasurer of the Monadnock Conservancy Board of Trustees, and in addition to his hard work helping to steer our organization into the future, he has also generously supported the campaign. For Brad, his reasons for donating to Building a Resilient Future will sound familiar to anyone who values the special place.

“We have admired and supported the Conservancy’s work since we moved to the region decades ago. So the thought of participating in a campaign to increase the staffing of the Conservancy, and thereby multiply the force of the Conservancy’s good work, was very attractive to us”, Brad told us, adding, “Conserving land is critical to preserving what makes the Monadnock region special to us—the forests, the waters, the hiking trails, the scenic beauty, and the wildlife corridors.”

Monica Lehner is an outdoor enthusiast and former president of the Conservancy’s Board of Trustees, and has served many impactful organizations in our region and beyond.

“My husband Michael and I support the Monadnock Conservancy so that, for a third decade, it can continue to conserve the wooded hillsides, farms, wetlands and rivers of the Monadnock Region. The Conservancy’s work ensures that wildlife corridors across thousands of acres are protected in perpetuity. The organization’s work also preserves the character and way of life of the rural communities scattered across the region, ensuring access to the natural world through hunting, hiking, swimming in clean water, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing or simply sitting on a rock in a quiet corner of a field. Most importantly I see the Monadnock Conservancy’s work as critical in mitigating the climate crisis.”



Meet the newest Trailblazers!

We welcome all the great people below to our Trailblazers group! These folks have committed to supporting the Conservancy with monthly donations. Thank you to everyone who donates any amount of money to our organization!

You can join the Trailblazers by making a monthly or quarterly gift of as little as \$5, and you'll be surprised how fast that impact adds up. Visit MonadnockConservancy.org/donate or contact Lindsay Taflas, development director, at Lindsay@MonadnockConservancy.org or 603-357-0600, ext. 113.

Mary Frost is an ardent supporter of the Conservancy and was thrilled to see that the campaign offered affordable options to get involved. Mary lives in Keene, owns land in Marlborough, and has always been inspired by the Conservancy's work. She has supported the Conservancy's annual fund since 1994, and when asked why she decided to go the extra mile and support the Building a Resilient Future campaign, she had these inspiring words to share:

"In this world where everything is upside down, the conservancy is something that we can believe in and trust. Donating whatever we can, it leaves a legacy in this place that is so dear to so many people".

Thank you, Mary, and everyone who has donated, for your continued support.

Paul Kotila



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|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
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Founded in 1989, the Monadnock Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust working with you and your neighbors in 39 towns throughout the Monadnock region to protect the land and water of southwestern New Hampshire.



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The public is invited to comment on the Conservancy's accreditation renewal

The Monadnock Conservancy is pleased to announce that it is applying for renewal of its accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands. A public comment period is now open. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Monadnock Conservancy complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards, please visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments, 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on The Monadnock Conservancy's application will be most useful by **September 28, 2025**.



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