



Greensboro Land Trust Newsletter



No. 27

Visit our website at www.greensborolandtrust.org

May, 2022

GLT Annual Meeting, Monday, August 1

The GLT's annual meeting will take place at 7:30 on Monday, August 1, in Fellowship Hall, Greensboro. The featured speaker will be Liz Thompson, director of conservation science at the Vermont Land Trust and lecturer at UVM. Liz is co-author of *Wetland, Woodland, Wildland: A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont*. She will present slides from the book.

Gray Brothers Conserve Baker Hill Summit

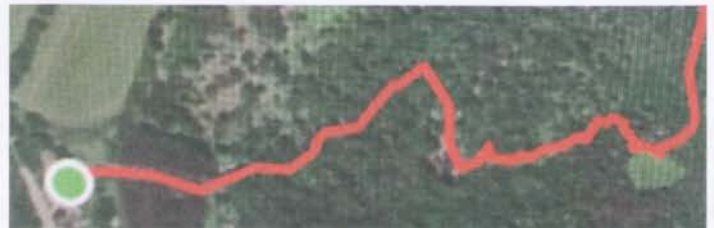
In November 1971, Philip H. Gray, Sr., a long-time summer resident, donated the 256-acre Barr Hill Natural Area to The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Vermont Chapter. Informing his six children of this step, Gray asked their cooperation in conserving a 79-acre parcel encompassing the summit of Baker Hill with two houses, of which the main one he called the 'Eyrie.' In 1976, two years before his death, PHG conveyed the parcel to a family trust, with two children as trustees.

On June 16, 2021, PHG's two eldest sons fulfilled his wish 50 years after his request by signing a conservation easement with the GLT. The property conveys a striking view of Caspian Lake from the east.



Drone shot from Gray 'Eyrie.' Portions of 7 properties conserved by GLT or VLT are visible—Gray, Paterson-Brown, Highland Lodge, Downing, Lotspeich, Knox, Greensboro Green.

The Baker Hill property also forms part of a popular hiking trail to Barr Hill (see below). The trail starts at Highland Lodge (circle at left), enters Gray property halfway along, and enters the Barr Hill Preserve at field on right, before ascending the so-called 'Mossy Trail' to the preserve. Highland Lodge and the Gray family welcome hikers on this route.



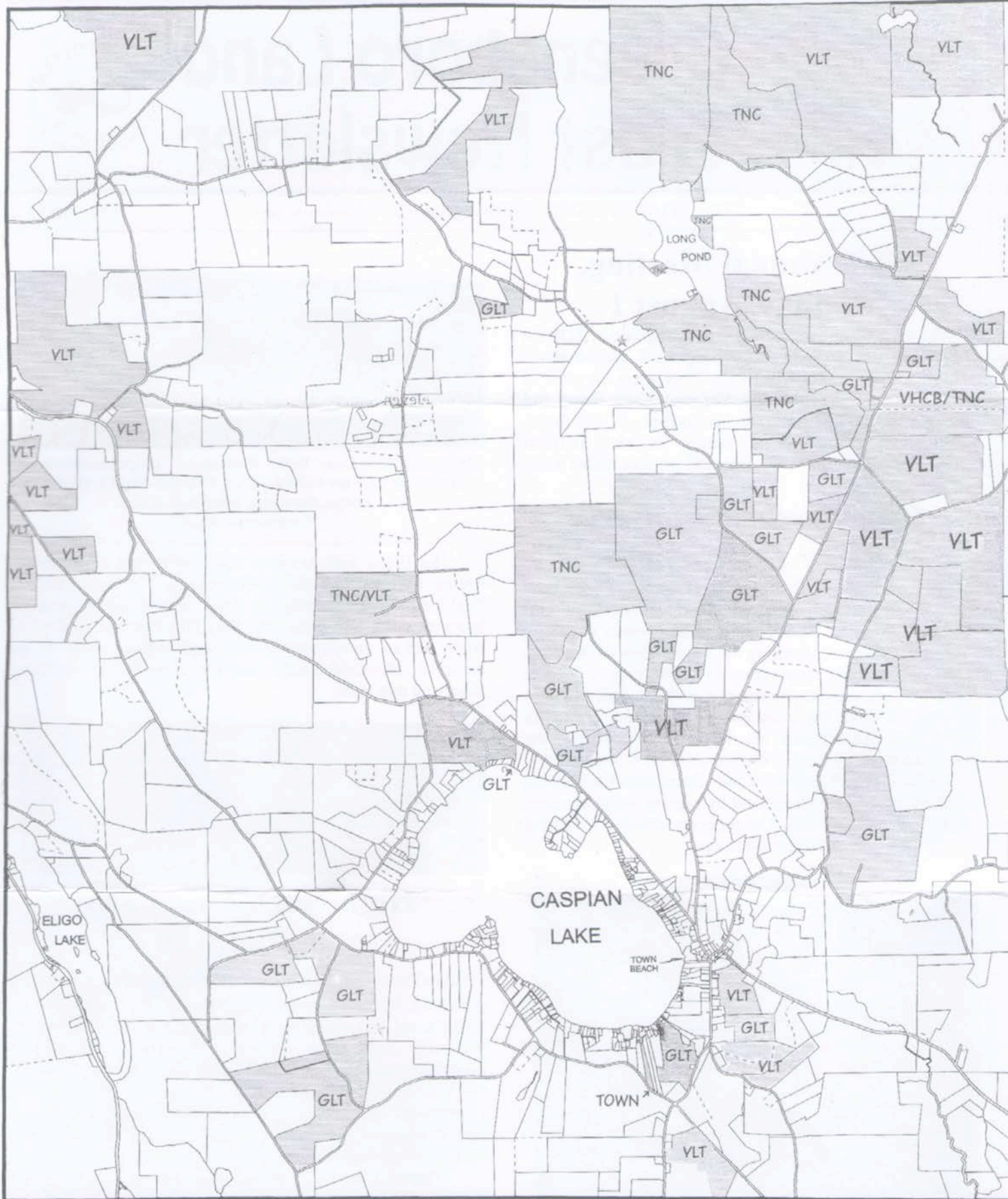
Highland Cattle Farm on Route 16

Greensboro Bend residents are familiar with a 178-acre parcel on Route 16 where Ray Shatney and Janet Steward have raised prize-winning Highland cattle for many years. Ray and Janet have moved to Plainfield, where they currently maintain the bulk of their herd. Already in 2001 the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) conserved 29 acres of their Greensboro land, which is now on the market. The land is largely forested, contains trails and a stream, and features a variety of wildlife.

The GLT is working with Ray, Janet, their long-time tenants, Christian Holland and Ornella Matta-Figueroa, the Center for Agricultural Economy, and VLT to find ways of conserving the property. Christian and Ornella have proposed a number of community roles for it.



Easement closing: Attorney Kristina Michelsen, Clive Gray, GLT vice-chair John Cannon, Phil Gray, Zoryan Ivakhiv-Gray, GLT advisory committee member Alison Gardner



[shaded] Conserved land

About GLT

The GLT is a partnership of Greensboro-area people working together to ensure that, as Vermont steadily changes, important land in Greensboro is not lost to development. We help farm families conserve productive agricultural land for future generations, preserving not only our heritage but also our economic future. We protect forestland that supports a healthy wood products industry and sustains habitat critical for moose, black bear, songbirds, deer and other wildlife. We help to permanently protect irreplaceable fields, woods and shoreline in Greensboro essential for recreation and scenic enjoyment. Preserving open land in Greensboro helps to confront climate change.

All this while recognizing the need for town planning that accommodates residential and commercial uses.

GLT Board

Lise Armstrong • Palma Bickford, Treasurer
John Cannon, vice-chair • Bob Fairbanks
Clive Gray, chair • Kyle Gray • Nancy Hill
Erika Karp • Jennifer Lucas • Mike Metcalf
Nat Smith, secretary • Nancy Sullivan
Rick Yeiser

GLT Advisory Committee

Alison Gardner • Tim Howes
Larry Lumsden • John Mackin
Naomi Ranz-Schleifer • Wilhelmina Smith
Anne Stevens • Jim Sutton
Peter Watkinson • Mary White

Conserving Your Land

Using legal tools called “conservation easements” or “grants of development rights,” we help landowners to voluntarily limit development while keeping the land open for forestry, farming, and recreation. The property remains in private ownership, ensuring that it is protected in perpetuity. The landowner decides whether to allow public access.

Easement donations qualify as charitable contributions for federal income and estate tax purposes, but ordinarily do not affect liability for real estate taxes.

In 2021, 98 households donated \$37,147 to the GLT’s general fund and 14 donated \$31,725 to the Mary Downing Witherbee account. In 2015 Congress made permanent a concession whereby easement donations can be deducted from adjusted gross income (AGI) at a rate up to 50% of AGI per annum, and spread over 15 years, as opposed to 30% and five years for other charitable contributions.

We are volunteers and work with landowners who love their land and want to see it conserved. The GLT buys development rights or accepts them as gifts. We have shared eleven projects with the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), which receives funding from The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Freeman Foundation, and private donors. But mainly we rely on funds raised from residents and friends of Greensboro.

We incur expenses for appraisals, surveys, purchase of easements, and monitoring. You can help by sending your tax-deductible contribution to **GLT, PO Box 135, Greensboro, VT 05841**. Call any trustee or advisory committee member with questions. Our website, www.greensborolandtrust.org, provides details and photos of conserved land.

Town of Greensboro, Vermont

Our map of Greensboro illustrates the lands conserved by the Greensboro Land Trust (GLT), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), and the Town of Greensboro.

Map key

Conserved areas, shaded, comprise the 48 parcels listed below. Total conserved area amounts to 8.4 square miles (= 5,350 acres), or 23% of total town area of 36.7 mi².

1. GLT’s 19 conservation easements, totaling 1,320 acres: Circus Smirkus, Cleveland, Dean, Downing, Edsall (2 easements), Gray Eyrie Trust, Shaun & Darren Hill, Warren Hill, Kehler, Knox, Mann, McGrath (2 easements), Paterson-Brown, Perham, Peters-Gribetz, St. Louis, and Porter Brook Nature Trail. Subsequent to the original easements, Cleveland, Dean, Mann, Kehlers, Warren Hill, Paterson-Brown, Peters-Gribetz, and Perhams have acquired parcels conserved by previous owners (Sullivan, Clive Gray family, Buckley, Lewis & Nancy Hill, Pinkney and von Hessert.)
2. Long Pond (767 acres) & Barr Hill (256 acres) Natural Areas, owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC); Green Mountain Monastery (133 acres), easement co-held by TNC and VHCB.
3. 30-acre ‘Greensboro Green,’ 362-acre ex-Murdock property on Glover town line, and 30-acre ex-Brassknocker parcel on Craftsbury Road, owned by Vermont Land Trust (VLT).
4. Eleven VLT easements to which GLT has contributed: two Todd Hardie farms (ex-York & ex-Fontaine--260 & 157 acres); two Shaun & Darren Hill farms (73 & 207 acres); Kehler farm (51 acres); Murdock homestead (150 acres); Lowell Urie farm (of which 145 acres in Greensboro); Black Hills tract (of which 189 acres in Greensboro); Highland Lodge (76 acres); Michaud (ex-Lumsden—81 acres); and Wilson Farm (ex-Hazendale) co-held with VHCB—41 acres.
5. Nine other VLT easements: Shatney farm (313 acres) & hayfield in Greensboro Bend (29 acres); Circosta homestead (85 acres); Kehler lot on Garvin Hill Rd. (37 acres); and five parcels on Craftsbury town line, totaling 323 acres.
6. Former Barton Tree Farm on Gebbie Road (now owned by John Downing--121 acres).
7. Two 3.5-acre strips owned by the Town of Greensboro, one on Lake Shore Road donated by Currier & Dill, the other, the former Willey property next to the town beach, purchased by the town with federal assistance.



Greensboro Celebrates 50 Years of Land Conservation and 30 years of the Greensboro Land Trust

Barr Hill Natural Area and Greensboro Green

Greensboro land conservation began in November 1971, when Philip H. Gray Sr. donated 256 acres on Barr Hill to The Nature Conservancy's Vermont Chapter. Gray had acquired the land in 1938. It was farmed from early in the 19th century—at least three cellar holes can be found.

It is not known when the first community hikers and picnickers visited the hill, but the wide expanse of views attracted many. See photo below of picnic 100 years ago. The Barr Hill Nature Trail was designed by ornithologist Frank Oatman and built by students of Sterling College. Among attendees at the trail's inauguration ceremony in August 1984 was long-time summer resident Whitney Landon, who said his parents brought him up there in 1898 as a toddler.



S-13 A 1912 picnic on Barr Hill - note the lack of trees

The Nature Conservancy held a 50th anniversary webinar on April 7 (*for recording, email clivegrayvt@gmail.com*). Among presenters was the donor's 11-year-old great-grandson Zoryan Ivakhiv-Gray, who read an essay saying *inter alia*, "Barr Hill has taught me what conserving a place can do. By studying the natural communities, exploring seeps and glens, keeping an eye out for deer and other creatures, and participating in annual family gatherings, I have seen the value of what Barr Hill Nature Preserve has protected."

Our town's second conserved parcel was the **Greensboro Green** along Breezy Ave. Seeking to keep the former Drown farmland open, a group of local and seasonal residents formed a committee and raised money from the community. No land trust yet existed in Vermont, so in 1973 the committee prevailed on the Fairbanks Museum in St. Johnsbury to hold the property. It was eventually transferred to its current owner, the Vermont Land Trust. Peter Gebbie hays the land and has installed a drainage network.

GLT Turns Thirty

In the summer of 1991, Wilhelmina Smith and Nancy Hill attended a short course at the Vermont Law School, in So. Royalton, about land trusts and their work in land conservation. On return they were joined by Mark McGrath and John Newburn in launching the Greensboro Land Trust, which was certified as a charity by the IRS in 1972. A board was formed and by the mid-1990s was meeting regularly.

The GLT received its first conservation easement in May 1995, when John Edsall and his sons David and Nick donated an easement on their 160-acre farmland on Cook Hill. In December of that year Bruce and Nancy Buckley sold an easement on their 165-acre property bordering Young Road. The sale was financed largely from proceeds of selling a 0.37-acre parcel on Caspian Lake donated by Joan Barton, complemented by donations from summer and permanent residents of Greensboro.

Since 1995 the GLT has acquired 17 more easements, mostly donated by landowners wishing to see their land conserved in perpetuity. (See list on page 3).



Field at northern edge of Edsall property

Summer 2022 Exhibit at Greensboro Historical Society

Together with colleagues at the GHS, GLT volunteers are mounting a summer exhibit that will display 21 of the 48 conserved properties in Greensboro. An opening reception will take place at the GHS on Sunday, July 3rd.

The exhibit will include a Kids' Corner and an illuminated storyboard. Artwork of conserved parcels by well-known Greensboro artists will be displayed. Small canvases are available on the GHS porch in advance of the opening for anyone wishing to paint some aspect of a conserved parcel for the exhibit.

GHS' journal, the *Hazen Road Dispatch*, available at the GHS or Willey's, features an opening article on land conservation in Greensboro.