



23 South Main Street
Hanover, NH 03755
603.643.3300

Over 2,300 Acres of Forestland in Western Massachusetts' Quabbin Region Purchased for Conservation

For Immediate Release: January 7, 2025

Contact:

The Lyme Timber Company, Peter Stein, Managing Director, 603-643-3300,
peterstein@lymetimber.com

Kestrel Land Trust: Kristin DeBoer, Executive Director, 413-549-1097, kristin@kestreltrust.org

The Trustees of Reservations, Mary Detloff, Director of Public Relations, 413-663-0575,
mdettloff@thetrustees.org

North Amherst, MA: W.D. Cowls has added 2,396 acres of conserved forestland to its 5,500-acre conservation achievements to date, having just sold five parcels of timberland to an affiliate of The Lyme Timber Company for conservation purposes.

"I'm proud of all we've done to fight climate change - conserving a third of our timberland, maintaining working forests, and hosting adjacent large scale solar farms," says Cowls President Cinda Jones. "In 2024, when we were presented with new development opportunities, we called Kristin DeBoer at Kestrel Land Trust to discuss our options. Kestrel and Lyme helped Cowls achieve the conservation outcomes we wanted."

The Lyme Timber Company is working with the Kestrel Land Trust and The Trustees of Reservations (The Trustees) to keep the properties open to the public for recreational use, and permanently protect the land for wildlife habitat, climate resiliency, and water quality benefits.

The parcels are located in six towns of the Quabbin region; include two of the largest unprotected contiguous forested tracts in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; several miles of the Robert Frost Trail; and offer the opportunity to return miles of the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail, now National Scenic Trail, to its original route.

- **950 acres in the Pelham Hills.** Critical for wildlife habitat, carbon storage, climate resiliency, and water quality, this parcel contains the headwaters of Amethyst Brook. It also offers access to miles of trails including 3 miles of the Robert Frost Trail. The forest lies between protected farms in Amherst, and conservation lands owned by the Towns of Pelham and Amherst and Kestrel Land Trust.

- **1,050 acres in north Belchertown.** This land is a critical wildlife corridor between the Mount Holyoke Range and the Quabbin Reservoir. Adjacent, are the Holland Glen waterfalls and numerous other conservation areas created by the Town and Kestrel Land Trust over the past 20 years. The property includes 1 mile of the Hop Brook, a designated Coldwater Fisheries Resource.
- **77 acres in the Cushman section of North Amherst.** This tract hosts a trailhead for the Robert Frost Trail and is critical for drinking water protection as it is within the Atkins Reservoir watershed. This forest is the latest in a series of generational Cowls family donations and proactive sales of land to the Town of Amherst for watershed conservation purposes.
- **229 acres in Orange and New Salem.** This parcel has frontage on Lake Rohunta - a 255-acre Great Pond open to the public for fishing, and is adjacent to the Quabbin Reservoir and the New Salem State Forest.
- **40 acres in Gill.** This parcel is adjacent to the Connecticut River Greenway State Park and conservation land owned by the Nature Conservancy. The forest includes a portion of Stacey Mountain, a prominent landscape feature along the Connecticut River.

“The Lyme Timber Company is thrilled to acquire these significant forested tracts for conservation, adding to the hundreds of thousands of acres of land we’ve permanently protected with partners, across New England. All these newly acquired properties are adjacent to other permanently protected conservation land and are critical to maintaining connectivity to benefit wildlife habitat and water quality in the Connecticut River Valley,” said Peter Stein, one of Lyme’s Managing Directors. “We greatly appreciate the initiative that W.D. Cowls has taken to conserve these and other important tracts of forestland over the last fifteen years. Additionally, we would like to thank the Kestrel Land Trust for helping to make this project possible.”

Two previous landscape-scale conservation successes with Cowls, Kestrel, and Mass Department of Fish and Game set the stage for this latest acquisition. In 2011, the partners conserved 3,486 acres creating the Paul C Jones Working Forest in Leverett and Shutesbury. In 2020, together they conserved over 2,050 additional acres in Shutesbury and Pelham, creating the Walter Cowls Jones Working Forest.

“Kestrel Land Trust is grateful to W.D. Cowls for proactively seeking ways to permanently conserve their forests for the future.” said Kristin DeBoer, Executive Director, Kestrel Land Trust, “Over the last two decades, Kestrel and W.D. Cowls have collaborated to find the best paths to conserve forestland at a landscape scale. The largest forested tracts in Pelham and Belchertown are enormously important to the people and to the wildlife who live in and near these forests—these woods are the heart and soul of this Quabbin region. Kestrel is also delighted by the opportunity to secure several miles of the 47-mile Robert Frost Trail for hiking, and we look forward to partnering with Trustees of Reservations to permanently

conserve these forests, as part of their refocused statewide strategy to embrace landscape scale conservation.”

"Protecting this land and the regional trail networks it connects will enhance people's ability to get outside and enjoy nature. This is the heart of our mission at The Trustees -- to protect special places for everyone, forever. It is a cornerstone of our new strategic plan," said Katie Theoharides, President and CEO of The Trustees. "We're proud to partner with Kestrel Land Trust, Lyme Timber, and Cows to do more than we ever could alone to protect large landscapes that are critical to climate resilience and adaptation across the Commonwealth."

About the Partners:

Founded in 1976, The Lyme Timber Company is a private timberland investment management company that focuses on forest-related investments in the US and Canada. The Company's current portfolio includes approximately 1.3 million acres of third party certified working forest in New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Lyme is a leader in land conservation, sustainable forest management, and ecosystem services, having conserved over 800,000 acres of working forest over the past 20 years.

<https://www.lymetimber.com/about/>

Kestrel Land Trust was founded in 1970, and has conserved more than 28,000 acres of wildlands, woodlands, farmland, and riverlands in the Valley in partnership with willing landowners, communities, and state and federal agencies. Kestrel's strategic priorities are guided by science, inspired by the desire to make conservation meaningful to communities, and designed to build momentum to conserve more land with landowners and partners.

<https://www.kestrreltrust.org/about/>

The Trustees is one of the oldest land conservation organizations in the U.S. It has protected over 47,000 acres and cares for more than 120 special places of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological resources across Massachusetts. Partnering with other organizations to further the conservation of large landscapes and to connect people with nature is a priority for the organization as it launches a new strategic plan.

<https://thetrustees.org/what-we-do/>

###