

Dear Friend of Westwood Land Trust,

Westwood Land Trust (“WLT”) is committed to land preservation. We began in 1999 with the goal of conserving open space and natural environments to preserve the town’s rural character while also supporting native wildlife. Since that time, 220+ acres have been preserved because of your support. Today, we understand even more the value of protected land in our community.

A tremendous opportunity to **save the largest parcel of open space in Westwood - 520 acres of Hale Education property or 7% of Westwood** – is underway. Since 2017, Hale has been working with private donors, the towns of Westwood and Dover, and land trusts to place a **conservation restriction on Hale’s open space or 1000+ acres of unprotected land**. This endeavor is part of a long-range plan to fulfill Hale’s mission. The plan includes preserving land, additional programming, improved facilities, greater maintenance, guaranteed public access, and financial security.

As with many land preservation projects, the Hale Board of Directors is requesting financial support from interested parties to offset the value of the property that Hale will relinquish once a CR is in place. It is the fiduciary duty of any charitable organization to do so. Hale asked the towns of Westwood and Dover to contribute \$10M each to Hale’s overall \$46M campaign. Hale is taking responsibility to raise the additional funds through private philanthropy, and they have been clear that if the towns are unable to participate, they may sell land to achieve their \$46M goal.

Westwood Land Trust has been involved since the start of this initiative. We have met with Hale leadership, helped raise private dollars, discussed the details of the conservation restriction, and walked the site where land in Westwood could potentially be sold (off Twin Post Road). Conserving Hale has been one of WLT’s priorities, and the *Town of Westwood’s Comprehensive Plan* identifies protecting land as a key action item.

Westwood’s Select Board created a Hale CR Task Force that has been working on this effort for the past few years. It is time for the Town to hear residents’ opinions on the value of protecting this land. We want to encourage Town leadership to host open forums for discussion and ensure that Westwood does not miss this opportunity.

**Your help is needed!** The Town of Westwood has scheduled its first public virtual Hale Task Force meeting on Tuesday, June 14 at 6PM. The meeting will consist of an update from the Task Force, a presentation from Hale representatives, and a comment period. Please attend this virtual meeting to learn more and voice your support. Go to the Town’s website for the link or go [here](#). If you’re unable to attend, contact our Select Board at 781-326-4172 or [selectboard@townhall.westwood.ma.us](mailto:selectboard@townhall.westwood.ma.us) to voice your support to protect this large tract of open space in Westwood.

We appreciate your past and continued support. We can’t do it without you!

Westwood Land Trust Board of Directors

*Andy Bemis, Nancy Dempze, Steve Harte, Abby Homiller, Trevor Laubenstein, Karen Manor Metzold, Steve Olanoff, and Andy Walker*

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