

From the Field

EASEMENT STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER •
 SPRING 2017

MAINE FARMLINK

We often hear from farmers that are thinking of leasing a portion of their land, looking for extra help around the farm, or searching for additional fields to use themselves.

We also hear from farmers that have been working the land for many years and are ready to start transitioning the farm to someone new.

In each of these situations, MFT's FarmLink website can help connect farm owners with farm seekers—and it's free to all. The website provides detailed property information as well as contact information for both owner and seeker and MFT's FarmLink Coordinator, Sue Lanpher, can help walk you through it all.

Visit mainefarmlink.org or contact Sue at 338-6575 to connect today.

AERIAL MONITORING

MFT is continuing to utilize aerial monitoring services in limited areas to supplement on-the-ground visits. As you may recall from last year, we contracted with a flight service called Geovantage (now Aeroptic) to fly over a few farms to take high-resolution aerial images.

With a new Land Steward for southern and western Maine this year, these flights will occur only in central and eastern Maine for this monitoring season. We'll be sure to let each landowner know the results of the aerial monitoring "visit" and will be happy to provide a copy of the aerial image, if requested.

If your farm has been aerial monitored and you don't expect to see a MFT Steward for another year, please feel free to contact us anytime with questions and notifications for new changes.

- Maine FarmLink
- Technical Assistance
- New Land Steward
- MFT's Stewardship

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WHAT STEWARDSHIP MEANS TO MFT

As many of you know, MFT has grown in leaps and bounds over the past few years, and our land protection efforts have spread throughout many portions of the state. We currently have nearly 160 easements on more than 26,500 acres, and we have plans to protect more farms in the coming years.

We don't consider ourselves to be a traditional land trust, as our mission is to protect farmland, support farmers, and advance the future of farming. This difference is evident in our programs and within our easements which are typically much more flexible than other types of easements in order to accommodate farming needs long into the future.

Our approach to easement stewardship is not only to consider the land, but also to know each farmer and each farm operation, as best as we can. We want the easement to help support your success, and to ensure that your farm is available for many generations to come.

To MFT this means using best management practices, keeping fields open, managing forests sustainably, and minimizing structures to only those necessary to support the farm. We try to take the "long view" on each property—while we want to address your specific needs, we also need to think about the next landowner and those who will be there in 50 years, or 100 years.

Stewardship is not just enforcing easement terms. That is one aspect, but we hope you'll consider it to be more than that: an important relationship and an ongoing conversation with MFT. We encourage you to reach out anytime you have a question or an idea. We'll let you know what may be possible (or what clearly isn't), and we'll be happy to explore all available options with you.

TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** provides technical service assistance for Maine landowners as well as cost-share opportunities to help implement new agricultural, forestry, and wildlife practices. There are several local service centers throughout the state with District Conservationists and Soil Conservationists in most locations. Visit www.nrcs.usda.gov to find your local service center and see what programs they may have in your area.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide workshops, demonstrations, and technical assistance for landowners on topics ranging from water quality and invasive species, to woodlot management and wildlife habitat. To learn more or find info on your county SWCD, visit maineconservationdistricts.com.

The **Maine Forest Service** has 10 District Foresters that are available to provide technical assistance to individual landowners as well as to the greater community. If you're thinking about a timber harvest or developing a forest management plan, your District Forester can meet one-on-one to help get you started. Visit www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs to find your local contact.

LAND STEWARD

MFT is pleased to introduce you to April Costa, our new Land Steward who will be responsible for both easement stewardship and property management in southern and western Maine.

Prior to joining MFT, April worked with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and Upper Saco Valley Land Trust, and has a long history of fieldwork both locally and abroad. When not at work, she spends her time in the mountains, baking, knitting, painting, and dreaming about what she might do someday with land of her own.

April will be visiting several farms with Lyndsey over the coming weeks and will then begin scheduling visits on her own for the summer season. For those of you in her service area (shown in green on the map below), don't be surprised when you get a call from April instead of Lyndsey this year. We hope you'll join us in welcoming April to the MFT family.

