THE PATH FORWARD
A FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2018
The Trustees of Reservations preserve, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value.

JUST OVER A CENTURY AGO, The Trustees’ founder, Charles Eliot, changed the face of conservation and preservation in Massachusetts. He saw, firsthand, what industrialization was doing to Massachusetts’ landscapes — and how its people, especially in rapidly urbanizing Boston, were losing their vital connections to the land and their heritage.

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FROM LEFT: Notchview Reservation, Windsor; Norris Reservation, Norwell; The Old Manse, Concord; Crane Beach, Ipswich; Boston Community Garden; Rocky Woods, Medfield.
The Trustees of Reservations preserve, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value.

Just over a century ago, The Trustees' founder, Charles Eliot, changed the face of conservation in Massachusetts. He saw, firsthand, what industrialization was doing to Massachusetts' landscapes — and how its people, especially in rapidly urbanizing Boston, were losing their vital connections to the land and their heritage. He believed in saving land not just for its own sake, but for its power to refresh and renew the body, the mind, and the spirit.
ON BEHALF OF THE Board of Directors of The Trustees of Reservations, I am pleased to present this five-year strategic plan, *The Path Forward*. This plan outlines The Trustees’ goals, aspirations, and strategies for expanding the reach and visibility, and, ultimately, the impact of the organization.

As stewards of Massachusetts’ iconic landscapes and landmarks, we take seriously our responsibility to the public and to future generations. In the convening years, The Trustees will further our work of conservation and preservation with a focus on the impact on quality of life in the Commonwealth. As we continue our important work of protecting and conserving natural, historic, and cultural places for public use, this plan provides a roadmap for growth.

I am thankful for the collective efforts of staff, board, and volunteers who participated and led stakeholder input throughout the past six months as we developed this plan. Their time and efforts are reflected in the following pages. More importantly, that same passion and energy will guide our continued progress. We are excited to be working with you on the path forward.

David D. Croll  
Chair, Board of Directors

Our connections to our heritage and our open spaces are more tenuous than ever, but they have never been more needed.
CHARLES ELIOT’S SIMPLE but bold idea of connecting people to place has a new urgency in today’s world. More than 120 years after Eliot founded The Trustees of Reservations, we own and care for more than 100 special places on more than 25,000 acres from the Berkshires to the Cape and Islands. These are our irreplaceable landscapes and landmarks, where more than 1 million people like you come to be inspired, nourished, and restored every year. Since Eliot’s day, many more thousands of acres and cultural treasures have been protected in Massachusetts through state and local agencies, private organizations, and countless volunteers.

Yet the work that we will do in the years ahead – the work we must do, together – will matter even more. As Eliot foresaw the impacts of an industrialized world, our most pressing challenges today are those of a digitized and even more urbanized one. Our children – and most of us – spend hours in front of a screen every day, but only minutes outdoors. Our farmers’ faces are anonymous to us, with our food grown a thousand miles away on industrial-scale farms. Our history is being forgotten, left behind for the diversions of 24-hour news cycles and the Internet. Our connections to our heritage and our open spaces are more tenuous than ever, but they have never been more needed.

For The Trustees to meet the challenges of our busy, noisy world, and to continue to grow and thrive, our work must evolve. We must be more visible and vocal, more relevant, more welcoming, and more accessible. We must actively reach out to many more people in new communities, especially our cities, and invite them to get out, unplug, and reconnect – to nature, to history, and to each other. We must not just be in communities, but integrated into the fabric of those communities. We must open our arms to collaboration with new friends, partners, and allies to expand and strengthen our collective reach and impact.

We are pleased to present The Path Forward, which moves The Trustees forward in a way that emphasizes thoughtful growth with a focus on the issues and values that shaped our beginning. To succeed, we need you and many people like you to get involved. We hope that we can count you among our ranks as we tackle the important work ahead.

Barbara J. Erickson
President & CEO
OUR CORE VALUES

The strategies and goals in *The Path Forward* outline key initiatives that will shape much of our work for the next five years. At the foundation of everything we do are these core values, which guide our decision making and inform how we carry out our priorities.
COMMUNITY
Our reservations and gardens serve as community centers for civic engagement. We are empowering staff to embrace a community-minded practice.

DIVERSITY
We embrace and welcome diverse perspectives and viewpoints within our ranks. Viewing our work through an expansive cultural lens strengthens and revitalizes our mission.

SUSTAINABILITY
We must lead by example and communicate the importance of valuing our environment, minimizing waste, reducing carbon use, and understanding the needs of the Commonwealth’s ecosystems.

EXCELLENCE
We seek to be exceptional in everything we do, making excellence our standard and expectation, always.

COLLABORATION
We seek out collaboration that leverages our strengths, promotes efficiency, and values expertise.

FOCUS
We are decisive and strategic when setting priorities, and we maintain the focus needed to achieve them.

ACCOUNTABILITY
We expect excellence and trust our colleagues and partners to deliver it. If we fall short, we hold ourselves and each other accountable in a professional and constructive manner.
WE’VE BEEN CONNECTING people to the places they love, and to each other, for more than a century. But the need for open space and community gathering places is greater than ever. That’s why we focus on protecting special places near significant numbers of people and with deep ties to the communities they benefit. We will seek, for example, to secure new properties within reach of significant population centers or that are compelling destinations for locals and visitors alike. We will also build on the success of our affiliations and partnerships with such like-minded organizations as Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN), Hilltown Land Trust, Bay Circuit Alliance, and Westport Land Conservation Trust by seeking new relationships that strengthen the conservation and preservation movement, extend our support to more communities, or expand our capacity to be a nonprofit leader in the Commonwealth.
WE BELIEVE THAT THE collective history and influence of The Trustees moves us beyond being a conservation organization; it makes us an institution dedicated to improving the quality of life of our communities.

Places like the Governor Ames Estate in Easton, with its beautiful grounds and storied history, have been a staple of The Trustees’ land protection efforts for the last 120 years. But it wasn’t just for its beauty and history that we worked so hard to secure its protection – its location in the center of Easton and close proximity to Brockton present opportunities for us to engage with new communities and create new ambassadors for our work; its rolling grounds are perfect for walking, running, biking, and picknicking; and it’s a rare example of a New England village estate that offers an important window into the role the Ames family played in Massachusetts’ history, making it worth protecting permanently.

In New Bedford, the future Allen C. Haskell Park addresses two critical issues facing communities today: loss of green space that’s critical to healthy city neighborhoods, and the dwindling amount of time our children spend outside in nature. Located on the site of renowned horticulturist Allen Haskell’s nursery, this urban reservation features public buildings, landscaped grounds, and open space that make it an ideal public park. Its gardens, greenhouses, and grounds will support a range of horticultural and agricultural activities while an Outdoor Discovery Garden, with spaces for growing plants, creating art, climbing, crawling, and playing, will offer a unique and fun way for the children of New Bedford and the South Coast to connect to nature.

Together, these two reservations will connect more people to our natural and cultural heritage – while helping to nurture healthy neighborhoods and communities.
Thanks to a Massachusetts Gateway Cities Park Grant, the former Haskell nursery in New Bedford will become our newest urban park. “It is a unique combination of horticulture, history and open space, planted firmly in an urban neighborhood,” commented Rep. Chris Markey.

FROM LEFT: Symphony Road Community Garden is just one of nearly 60 owned by BNAN; walkers enjoy the historic landscape at the Old Manse in Concord; a local farmer tends his plot at our Land of Providence reservation in Holyoke, where a unique partnership gives urban residents access to land to cultivate.
working together

steward

WHEN WE PROTECT A RESERVATION, we commit to stewarding it forever. That means lovingly caring for its well being and ensuring that our children and our children’s children share our joy and our dedication. But it’s a commitment we can’t fulfill alone. All who live and play here have a stake in preserving our quality of life. We’re grateful to the many volunteers and partners whose contributions to property care and planning already help turn our special places into vibrant, welcoming, relevant community resources. As we reach out to new audiences in diverse communities, engage new partners and embrace old friends, and encourage more volunteers to get involved, we’ll seek to broaden and deepen those relationships in the years ahead. ■
Stewardship dollars spent per Trustees acre owned or managed in 2012, reflecting a 12% increase from 2008.

THE ONGOING CARE of our special places is one of our fundamental responsibilities. The effects of our care are cumulative and touch every detail of our properties: trees need pruning, trails need clearing, collections need cataloging, and gardens need weeding. However, some projects are transformative on a grand scale.

The Campaign to Restore Naumkeag, a 30-month, $3.3-million effort, will return the gardens of this Gilded Age–country estate in Stockbridge to the beauty and shine of their prime. The celebrated gardens at this National Historic Landmark were designed over 30 years, starting in the 1920s, by landscape architect Fletcher Steele and Naumkeag’s owner Mabel Choate. With leadership and support from many volunteers and partners, the restoration effort is one of the most detailed we have ever undertaken, involving 16 projects from the renowned Blue Steps and the Chinese Temple Garden to the Afternoon Garden and Linden Walk.

The ambitious work at Naumkeag follows on the heels of our restoration of the half-mile-long Grand Allée at Castle Hill on the Crane Estate in Ipswich – among the most significant landscape projects in recent U.S. history. With volunteers and partners also providing time, talent, and resources here, over three years we removed and replanted more than 700 trees along the grand grassy avenue, which rolls from the Crane mansion to a bluff overlooking the sea. Originally designed by landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff, the dramatic allée – one of the few remaining designed landscapes of this scale and type – is the defining feature of the landscape at Castle Hill, a National Historic Landmark.

Together, these projects represent our commitment to caring for our special places – on a large scale or small – and to ensuring that they remain as exciting and inspirational to the next generation as they are to us today.
Why does Stan Schantz volunteer? “What The Trustees are trying to do is preserve places that have significant historical, cultural, and ecological values – and that resonates with me.” Plus, he says, “I just enjoy doing it.”

THE VIEW FROM HERE...
We’ve worked hard to get more people involved in caring for our reservations and community gardens, and in planning for their long-term needs. Key accomplishments so far include:

- Committed, mobilized groups of volunteers who support reservations, community gardens, urban wilds and forests, greenways, and public programs.
- Comprehensive management plans and stewardship initiatives that guide staff and volunteer care of reservations.
- Reduction of our carbon footprint by 15% in five years by making buildings more energy efficient, managing land organically, mowing less to reduce fuel consumption, installing solar arrays on some reservations, and managing water use carefully.
- Summer jobs and leadership development opportunities for hundreds of teens around the state and in Boston through our Youth Conservation Corps, creating the next generation of conservationists and expanding our capacity to care for reservations and community gardens.

THE PATH FORWARD...
We want our special places to be important threads that help weave communities together, and we’re committed to achieving this through collaboration with partners and supporters as we:

- Create new ways for more volunteers and partners to get involved, and improve our community outreach when creating visions and plans for reservations.
- Provide training, tools, and time to make the volunteer and partner experience meaningful and satisfying.
- Continue to expand and strengthen Youth Conservation Corps, creating a new generation of young adults with a deep appreciation for the role conservation plays in quality of life.
- Balance the needs of visitor use and long-term care, a Trustees hallmark.
- Continue to “green” our properties, operate more sustainably, and prepare our special places for the impacts of climate change.

FROM LEFT: Youth Conservation Corps provides summer jobs and leadership skills for teens; a solar installation at Appleton Farms has edged the farm closer to becoming carbon neutral; volunteers play a vital role in caring for our properties.
Our properties can and should be important to daily life in the communities they serve, and we are coming up with new ways to bring them to life and keep people coming back again and again – fun, memorable experiences; compelling activities; and a welcoming atmosphere for all. Working more and more with volunteers and partners, we will offer programs and events that are designed to have a meaningful impact on participants and communities. Our programming will emphasize what makes our properties so unique and exciting: beautiful outdoor spaces for play, exercise, and relaxation; welcoming working farms with fresh food and live animals; and cultural treasures that tell the stories of our collective history.
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Today, it’s more important than ever that we empower the next generation to find their voice as future leaders and advocates for quality of life in the 21st century. Our Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is just one program where we’re not only helping young people see the possibilities of a wider world, but inspiring them to accept responsibility for fashioning a better one.

YCC programs of The Trustees and our affiliate, Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN), have grown in recent years, now employing more than 100 teenagers from nearly two dozen cities and towns every summer. Over the years, more than a thousand young people – many of them from Boston, Fall River, Gloucester, Holyoke, and New Bedford – have gained work experience while helping to care for the open space BNAN and The Trustees protect. In 2012 alone, YCC crews logged more than 12,000 hours, harvested more than five tons of food, and maintained almost 20 miles of trails.

But YCC is much more than a summer job. The program is designed to take teens out of their comfort zones, infusing critical leadership skills and changing perspectives as they do real work that contributes to their communities. “I learned to speak up for myself, and gained a sense of determination, which I feel I didn’t have before,” one crew member noted. “I definitely want to spend more time outdoors,” another commented.

Cultivating a love for the outdoors is one of the program’s core objectives. Ultimately, YCC seeks to inspire a new generation of conservationists who recognize the connection between open space and quality of life. A number of YCC participants have gone on to work for The Trustees in other capacities, and others have joined environmental youth leadership programs or pursued environmental and natural resources studies in college.

The percent of Massachusetts students who failed to score at the basic level of proficiency in American History, according to the Pioneer Institute Public Policy Research, 2013.

50%
THE VIEW FROM HERE...
We’ve focused on mobilizing many more people to care about and advocate for conservation. Key accomplishments so far include:

- Nearly 800 programs and events on our reservations every year – concerts, tours, festivals, open houses, and workshops.
- Six community farms producing half a million pounds of food, offering unique volunteer activities, and hosting fun programs like 4-H Clubs, harvest festivals, and cooking classes.
- 59 community gardens in Boston bringing the joys of gardening and the benefits of fresh food to 1,300 families, while supporting a network of 169 gardens.
- Nearly 300 miles of trails, many maintained by volunteers, providing a source of healthy recreation and connecting hikers, walkers, runners, skiers, and more to the outdoors.
- Improved signs to make properties more welcoming and easier to navigate.

THE PATH FORWARD...
We’ll become more visible and proactively bring our properties to life in ways that create unforgettable experiences and make our mission relevant as we:

- Develop exciting new programs – emphasizing cultural, agricultural, and recreational activities and focusing on fun – and grow our visitors from 1 million to 1.5 million people annually.
- Become storytellers, helping our audiences make connections to history, heritage, and nature.
- Activate three more community farms and expand farm-based activities for volunteers and visitors. Celebrate local food.
- Expand access to services that make visits memorable, fun, and convenient, such as food, recreational equipment, lodging, wayfinding signs, parking, and bathrooms.
- Make our properties more accessible to people with disabilities and more welcoming to everyone.

“They’re given the power to speak their mind and they become part of what goes on in the environment,” say Gail Hedberg of her son Martin’s experience at our SummerQuest day camp at the Crane Estate in Ipswich.

FROM LEFT: Kids enjoy our annual Ice Cream Social at Bird Park in Walpole; 20,000 people dance at our picnic concerts at Castle Hill on the Crane Estate each year; BNAN’s Students Learning through Urban Gardening (SLUG) supports Boston public school teachers growing food with their students.
FOREVER IS A LONG TIME, but it’s the commitment we make to protecting and conserving a special place that becomes a Trustees reservation. This commitment is also to the communities those places serve. We can only fulfill this mission if we remain a fiscally healthy and strong organization. We take that obligation seriously, working hard to raise the money we need to advance our work, tirelessly controlling costs, and constantly focusing resources for maximum impact. As we work to ensure a vibrant future for the open spaces and special places our communities depend upon, we will expand the conversation and become a visible and relevant part of many more lives. We will work with supporters like you to foster a culture that welcomes new ideas and perspectives, one that is forward thinking and celebrates the creativity and innovation of staff and volunteers.
THE BERKELEY STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN has, for decades, drawn residents from throughout the South End to enjoy its leafy goodness. It’s more than a source of food; it’s an oasis of open space in one of the city’s most densely populated neighborhoods. It’s no wonder that Trustees affiliate Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN) came forward when the South End/Lower Roxbury Open Space Land Trust needed help to ensure a future for this and 15 other community gardens and pocket parks.

In the 1970s, South End and Lower Roxbury residents began gardening on vacant lots created during the Urban Renewal efforts of the 1960s. Many of these gardeners came from different cultural backgrounds, and the gardens allowed them to grow foods they couldn’t find easily in America.

The gardeners formed the land trust in 1991 to protect the gardens as rising property values spurred development.

Over the next two decades the group came to care for and manage a wide range of properties – from the Berkeley Street gardens to the half-acre Frederick Douglass Peace Park in Lower Roxbury, which the group transformed from a derelict lot into green space that now hosts a farmer’s market – that serve 30,000 residents.

Realizing that volunteers would have a hard time maintaining so many properties on their own, the land trust merged with BNAN in 2012. BNAN’s management of 43 other community gardens in Boston, and its affiliation with The Trustees, provided support and expertise that the gardens needed to continue to thrive. BNAN and The Trustees were eager to embrace the land trust’s mission – protecting and managing gardens that provide unifying common ground for some of Boston’s most diverse and vibrant neighborhoods and expanding our presence in the Commonwealth’s largest city.
THE VIEW FROM HERE...
Through careful management and with many generous supporters at our side, we’ve moved our mission forward during one of the worst recessions in American history. Key accomplishments so far include:

- A vibrant membership that now exceeds 100,000.
- A year-round staff of more than 175 working alongside a growing volunteer base.
- Generous supporters that breathe new life into gardens, landscapes, and habitats; restore historic buildings, many of them now models for preservation and energy efficiency; and fund innovative new programs.

THE PATH FORWARD...
With our mission as our foundation, an entrepreneurial culture as our vehicle, and this strategy as our map, we will grow, be proud of our accomplishments, and be honest about our needs as we:

- Reach 125,000 members as our properties, activities, and impacts inspire more people to join The Trustees.
- Better market our work and our relevance, expand our network of volunteers, and be more visible to many more people statewide.
- Encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of staff and volunteers by supporting, rewarding, and recognizing creativity and innovation.

“Our energies are headed in the same direction,” says Wil Hastings, who chaired the board of Hilltown Land Trust when the organization affiliated with us. “The Trustees add tremendous stability to our program.”

FROM LEFT: Our work is gaining broader media exposure, making us more visible to audiences across the state; Dunes’ Edge Campground & Reservation in Provincetown is our first on the Outer Cape, bringing in new people and new revenue; our new Moose Hill Farm CSA will share the joys of local food with many more people.
The Trustees By the Numbers

Founded in 1891 by Charles Eliot, The Trustees of Reservations have grown from a vibrant idea to today caring for more than 100 special places across 26,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. From our smallest reservation, Redemption Rock (1/4 acre) in Princeton, to our largest, Notchview (3,108 acres) in Windsor, we count a diverse range of spectacular properties, sites, and structures that are protected for everyone to enjoy, forever.

- 5 National Historic Landmarks
- 1 National Natural Landmark
- 95 Cultural Landscapes
- 6 Reservations on National Register of Historic Places
- 291 Historic Houses & Buildings
- 6 Community Farms
- 8 Formal Gardens & 22 Designed Landscapes
- More than 70 Miles of Coastline
- 7 Gorges & Waterfalls
- More than 270 Miles of Trails
72 Archaeological Sites
12,292 acres of Designated Core Habitat on 68 Reservations
66 Farms in Massachusetts We Actively Support
16 Food Pantries We Distribute To
72 Communities are Part of the Bay Circuit Alliance
We need many, many more people – friends, neighbors, and community leaders – like you. Here’s our invitation: Become a Trustee.

WE’RE ALL IN IT TOGETHER
As Trustees, we all share the responsibility of caring for the places and experiences that are so important to you, your family, and your community. Massachusetts is ours to love and care for, and we must be more committed to the future of our natural and cultural landscapes than ever before.

GET INVOLVED & MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Join. Membership opens a world of new experiences for you and your family while supporting our work to care for the places you love.

Volunteer. Spend an hour, a day, or make a longer commitment to volunteer with us. We can’t do it without you.

Support. Your generous support makes our work possible.
We thank the members of our Strategic Plan Task Force, who contributed their valuable time, shared their expertise, and offered advice and counsel during this planning process:

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- Brian Kinney
- Tom Nicholson

The Task Force drew upon the advice of many internal and outside experts and opinion leaders, including:

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