

## Article 17 – Peaceful Acres Conservation Project, 311 Drift Road



### **The Opportunity:**

The Westport Land Conservation Trust (WLCT) has secured the opportunity to purchase 28 acres of open space containing ecological significance, rural character, historical relevance, and passive recreational value. This landscape is located on at 311 Drift Road and contains the remnants of what was once a small orchard producing fruit for the community. In addition, the parcel hosts a wealth of ecological resources including, Kirby Brook (a NHESP designated Coldwater Fishery Resource), several vernal pools, productive wetland, and upland forest. The property is also located adjacent to 24 acres of permanently preserved land with the potential for future public access. WLCT's purchase of the property will preserve

these vital resources and create a new destination for the community to explore.

WLCT will acquire the 28 acres from the current landowners, create new trails and historical interpretation for the public to enjoy, conserve the property's special resources, and permanently preserve it through the sale of a Conservation Restriction (CR) to the Town of Westport ensuring perpetual public access.

### **Public Enjoyment:**

The Westport community takes pride in the ability to explore the outdoors and connect with history. If this property is purchased by WLCT it will be opened as a public destination in perpetuity for all to explore. With its combination of resources and location on upper Drift Road, it is an ideal landscape to be conserved for public enjoyment. In addition, the property's history will be interpreted for greater public connection to the land- celebrating the family's history on the property and the Town's connection to it.

### **Preserving a Coldwater Fishery Resource:**

The Westport community values its connection to the water- both the river and the ocean! These resources are used for a variety of recreational purposes, but are also key to the public health in our community. There are a number of freshwater streams across the Town that continue to supply cold, fresh, clean water to the river supporting recreation and health. Some of these resources are designated as Coldwater Fisheries by the Commonwealth for their special ability to host native brook trout and other coldwater fish species. These species are often rare or of special concern in the state and are part of the broader fishing ecosystem in the river. This Drift Road property preserves an important section of Kirby Brook and associated watershed. Preserving Kirby Brook allows for continued fishery health, while also continuing to conserve clean water headed to the Westport River.

**Maintaining Our Rural Character:**

The community of Westport prides itself on its scenic rural character and agricultural open space. As identified in both the Town’s master plan and open space plan, the protection of properties that preserve this exceptional character are a priority for protection. Drift Road is identified by the Commonwealth as a significant scenic corridor and the preservation of this property would retain over 400’ of this scenic view.

**The Request:**

Westport Town Meeting is being asked to approve the Community Preservation Committee’s recommendation of \$300,000 towards the purchase of a Conservation Restriction (CR) on the 28-acre property on Drift Road simultaneously with WLCT’s purchase of the land from the current family. This CR ensures permanent preservation of the property for conservation and public access.

**What happens if Article 17 does not pass?**

If Article X does not pass, the property will NOT be purchased by WLCT and the land will potentially be utilized for other purposes in the future potentially threatening the valuable resources on site.

**What is a Conservation Restriction (CR)?**

A CR is a legal agreement between a landowner and a public agency or land trust designed to permanently preserve the conservation values of a landscape while prohibiting future development. This CR will be held co-held by the Town of Westport and the Buzzards Bay Coalition ensuring perpetual preservation of the resources and public access.

**What’s the Total Cost of the Project?**

WLCT is acquiring the property for \$1,125,000, and the total project cost is \$1,285,500. WLCT will leverage an additional \$985,500 in funds. A complete budget is shown below:

	<b>Drift Road</b>
<b>Acres</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Estimated Expenses</b>	
Purchase Price	\$ 1,125,000
Transaction Costs	\$ 35,500
Site Work and Stewardship	\$ 25,000
Staff and Overhead	
Transfer to Stewardship/CR Enforcement Endowment	\$ 100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,285,500</b>
<b>Projected Revenue</b>	
MA EEA Conservation Partnership	\$ 300,000
<b>Town of Westport CPC - CR Purchase</b>	<b>\$ 300,000</b>
Lead Gift	\$ 250,000
Private Funds	\$ 435,500
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,285,500</b>

## Drift Road Conservation Project – 28-Acres, Drift Road

