

Vote YES on Article 24!
Community Preservation – Open Space

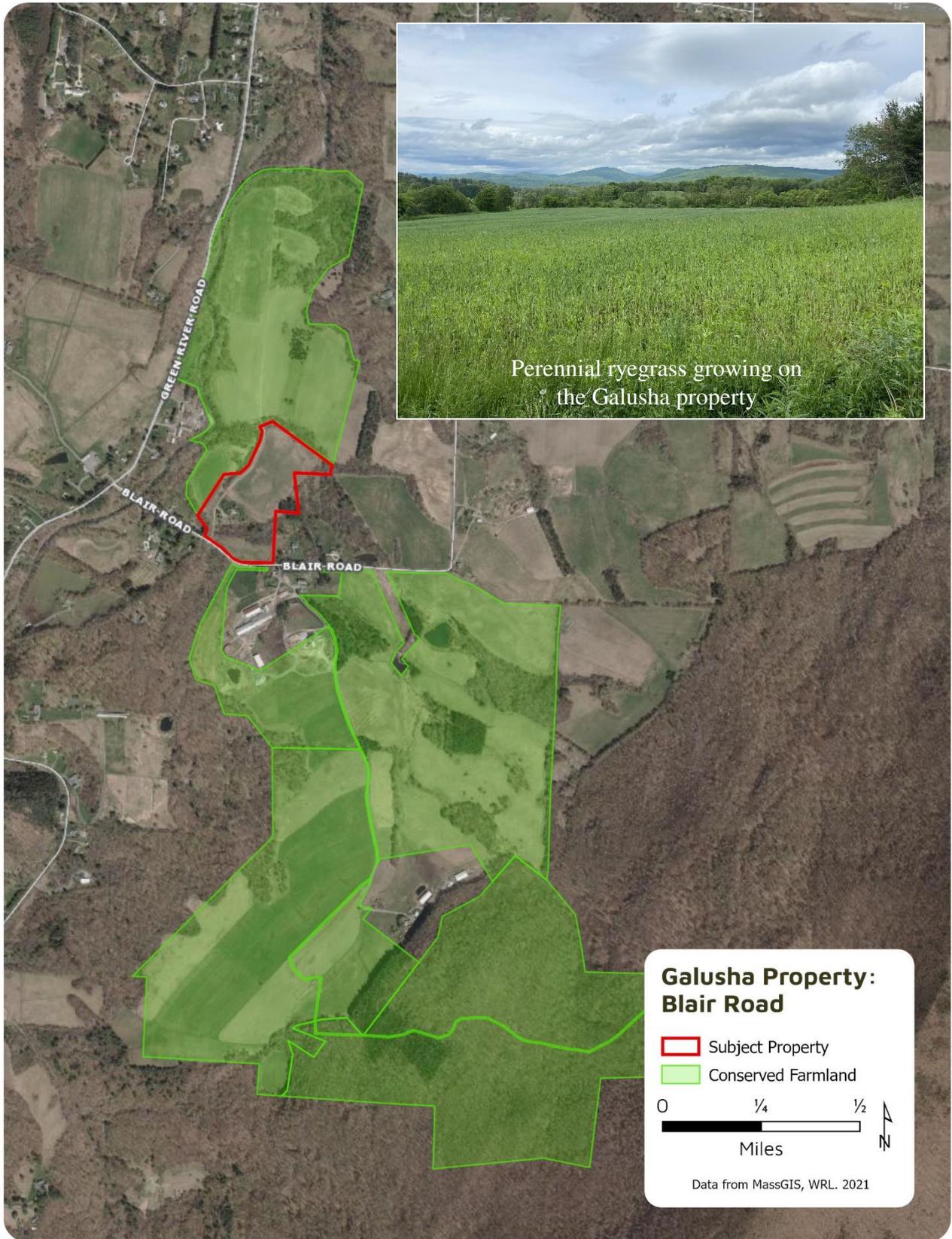
Article 24: Protect Prime Farmland to Ensure Farming Now & in our Future

- The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resource (MDAR) has identified **prime farmland soils** and soils of statewide significance on 18 acres of land owned by Bill and Kelly Galusha off Blair Road.
- Fairfield's Dairy Farm is an important part of Williamstown's **business community and local economy**.
- The land is an integral part of the Fairfield's Dairy Farm/Galusha family agricultural operation. Conserving the land contributes to the **local and regional economy and helps ensure our food security**.
- MDAR will contribute \$327,450 towards an **Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)** on the property that will ensure its permanent protection for the current owners and future farmers. The farm will remain a community resource forever.
- **Financials:** Article 24 asks town residents to approve \$56,000 from Community Preservation funds so the town can provide the local match required by MDAR; the Galushas are contributing \$66,550 to the project by selling the APR for less than its appraised fair market value; WRL is contributing \$10,000 to show its support for the project. For every 1 dollar the town is contributing to the project, 7 dollars are coming from other sources. **This is a great deal for the town.** The modest local match is an investment in the farming future of Williamstown.
- In supporting the previous Galusha farmland protection measures, the town has shown that it appreciates **the rural character, open space, and grazing cows** that their land supplies, a quality that Williamstown residents and visitors highly value.
- In future generations, this farmland parcel could provide an **affordable farming opportunity** for a stand-alone farm such as a CSA, growing vegetables, herbs, flowers and small fruits and other intensive farming uses.
- **The State of Massachusetts' contribution to this APR purchase includes federal funds.** Therefore, marijuana may not be cultivated on this APR land. (Only one APR farm in Williamstown was not purchased with any federal funds, and that is the only one on which marijuana could potentially be cultivated).

Farming in Williamstown: Williamstown has about 15 farms, including stables and maple producers, and hundreds of acres of working farmland. These farms contribute to the local economy and are an integral part of our culture and landscape. They help maintain the views we know and love, keep land open, produce food, provide habitat and ecosystem services, and train our next generation of farmers. Our community has deemed farms both critical and valuable, a sentiment that is embodied in the Right to Farm bylaw. **But, the continued existence of our farms cannot be taken for granted.** Farming is a challenging endeavor on all fronts, and Williamstown has been losing farmland and local food at a steady clip since farming activity peaked in the mid 1800s, when there were about 138 farms and sheep grazed on the Williams College campus.

Article 24: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION – OPEN SPACE.

“To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund FY 2022 estimated annual revenues, for open space purposes, under the Community Preservation Act, the sum of \$56,000, which funds shall revert to the CPA fund if not expended by June 30, 2022, to fund a grant to the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation for a portion of the local share of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' purchase of an Agricultural Preservation Restriction for approximately 18 acres of agricultural property in accordance with the application submitted to and recommended by the Community Preservation Committee, and to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement with the organization upon such terms and conditions as may be appropriate and to authorize the Select Board to accept property interests as may be appropriate, or take any other action in relation thereto.”



Please join the Williamstown Rural Lands & the Williamstown Agricultural Commission in supporting a farming future for Williamstown.

Williamstown is a Right to Farm Community!