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CONTACTS:

Jane Calvin, Executive Director - Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust

jcalvin@LowellLandTrust.org

978-934-0030

www.LowellLandTrust.org

Bob Wilber, Director of Land Conservation, Mass Audubon

bwilber@massaudubon.org

781-925-2155

www.massaudubon.org

Jessica Wilson, Executive Director – Mill City Grows

jessica@MillCityGrows.org

978-455-2620

MillCityGrows.org

**LOCAL LAND TRUSTS AND FOOD JUSTICE ORGANIZATION ANNOUNCE
PLANS TO PRESERVE HISTORIC LOWELL FARM**

**Lowell’s “Rollie’s Farm” slated to become a wildlife sanctuary and premiere site
for urban agriculture and environmental education.**

[LOWELL, MA] – Three organizations - Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, Mass Audubon, and Mill City Grows - are working in partnership to protect a historic Lowell farm, owned by the Perron family, and known locally as Rollie’s Farm. The farm is located at 1413 and 1415 Varnum Avenue. The intent of the partnership is to create an urban wildlife sanctuary and education center dedicated to local agricultural and community-based environmental education.

The two Varnum Avenue parcels have been operated for years as a Christmas tree farm. When acquired, the parcels, comprising ~20 acres, will be managed in perpetuity as protected conservation land, open to the public. Construction of an energy efficient green building, with office and program space for the three partner organizations, is planned on the site.

Mass Audubon and the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust (LP&CT) will acquire these parcels which will have conservation restrictions placed on them. Both Mass Audubon

and LP&CT are nationally accredited as land trusts committed to permanent land conservation and program excellence.

Mill City Grows will establish a variety of programs on the space, including urban agriculture, community gardens, greenhouses, a food forest, farmer's markets, and educational programming.

“Establishing this community space will give Mill City Grows the opportunity to bring many of our food access and education programs to a single location, creating a way for people to envision and engage with all of the parts of a local food system, and intertwine them with excellent environmental education delivered by our partners. It’s a step towards greater food sovereignty for Lowell,” says Jessica Wilson, Executive Director of Mill City Grows.

“This unique partnership provides the opportunity for community-based conservation on a larger scale, enabling us to impact more people close to home. We’re excited to expand our programming and amplify our land conservation and environmental education programming for the greater Lowell community,” says Jane Calvin, Executive Director of the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust.

“During the pandemic, it has become obvious to us all just how important nature is for our health and well-being, as well as for addressing the threats of climate change,” said David J. O’Neill, President of Mass Audubon. “Protecting and enhancing Rollie’s Farm is especially important as we focus on providing more green space and greater access to nature in urban communities—work that can only be done with the type of deep partnerships this important project represents.”

The uplands will provide woodland trails for recreation, a scenic overlook, a nature playscape for children, and a connection to the Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest. These properties, combined, provide a critical corridor to the Merrimack River from the state forest. The protection of this land will provide benefits that expand beyond just the neighborhood of Pawtucketville and will benefit the city as a whole.

About Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust

Since 1990, the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust (LP&CT) has provided conservation leadership in Lowell, Massachusetts. LP&CT was founded by residents with a vision to protect the natural resources upon which the city of Lowell was built. LP&CT is a nationally accredited land trust and focuses on creating community through conservation by providing programs that focus on four major areas: land protection, stewardship, environmental education, and special places. Join us for an upcoming program. Learn more at LowellLandtrust.org, or at [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [Facebook](#).

About Mass Audubon

Mass Audubon protects more than 40,000 acres of land throughout Massachusetts, saving birds and other wildlife, and making nature accessible to all. As Massachusetts' largest nature conservation nonprofit, we welcome more than a half million visitors a year to our wildlife sanctuaries and 20 nature centers. From inspiring hilltop views to breathtaking coastal landscapes, serene woods, and working farms, we believe in protecting our state's natural treasures for wildlife and for all people—a vision shared in 1896 by our founders, two extraordinary Boston women.

Today, Mass Audubon is a nationally recognized environmental education leader, offering thousands of camp, school, and adult programs that get over 225,000 kids and adults outdoors every year. With more than 135,000 members and supporters, we advocate on Beacon Hill and beyond, and conduct conservation research to preserve the natural heritage of our beautiful state for today's and future generations. We welcome you to explore a nearby sanctuary, find inspiration, and get involved. Learn how at massaudubon.org.

About Mill City Grows

Since 2011, Mill City Grows (MCG) has worked towards food justice in Lowell, Massachusetts, using the following strategies and programs: education in and out of schools, supporting community leadership through community gardens, increasing urban agriculture through urban farming, implementing a mobile market, and empowering people to produce their own food. MCG infuses food production spaces with food education to support their belief that a community that understands how to grow, access, and prepare healthy food will have better quality of life and deeper investment in their local environment. Visit MillCityGrows.org to learn more, and follow MCG on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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