

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

NEWSLETTER



Volume XXXXV, Spring

April-May 2016

A Word from the President

David Goldman

During 2015 the Trust was blessed with four young men, **Boy Scouts, all from Troop 1**, who decided to dedicate their public/community service Eagle Projects to aiding the Trust in building new trails or refurbishing existing trails as well as assisting with baseline documentation field work.

In 2014, the Trust was the recipient of conservation easements on the Town Whisper Way and Cameron Woods areas. Although Cameron Woods had some beautiful trails, there was no parking area for visitors. Enter Whisper Way with a potential parking area of up to 6 vehicles. **Trevor Perkins, a Life Scout** needing an Eagle Public Service project, decided to undertake preparing the parking area, cutting in a connector trail to the Cameron Woods property and assisting in baseline documentation field work. This now provides the Town with off-street parking and access to over 400 acres of protected lands with many great trails. The 400 acres consist of the Whisper Way property, the Cameron Woods property, the Phipps Open Space and the Town Forest. It also provides access to the states Whitehall Reservation and beyond.

Sam Darkow, a Life Scout, needing an Eagle Public Service project, decided to undertake preparing a new trail in the Fruit Street Conservation Area. The trail is accessed from either of 2 locations. From the parking area adjacent to the gate to the Towns Waste Water Treatment facility or along the entrance road behind a large boulder on the right about ½ way to the fields. Parking is limited here so we suggest the other entrance.

Roderick Landrith, a Life Scout, needing an Eagle Public Service project, decided to undertake preparing a new trail in the Deneen-Autsin Powder Conservation Area at the juncture of Deneen and Scarlata Roads in the Lake Maspenock area. Parking for this trail (that joins the trail around Lake Maspenock) is on street and we suggest on Scarlata Road. Walk along the driveway until the Trailhead sign is observed and then follow the trail markers.

Matthew Paolucci, a Life Scout, needing an Eagle Public Service project, decided to undertake refurbishing the deGozzaldi Trail in the Trust Brook Hollow Conservation Area. The trail is now undergoing a further upgrade with interpretative trail signs/markings that will be installed later this year.

The Trusts' open space in town provides some very real benefits as you will see when you read on in the newsletter. By maintaining the open space, the Trust is helping to preserve and increase the value of your property in Hopkinton and maintain the rural character of the town. **We have over 1000 acres of open space land in the Trusts ownership or under Conservation restrictions**, which provides for the preservation of that rural character we all want in Hopkinton. We are at the beginning of the spring season and if you enjoy the use of the open space please remember to **help support the Trust, by becoming a member or by making a tax deductible donation**, so that we can continue to provide this value to you the residents. So have some fun, get outdoors and enjoy nature's wonders. Find a geo-cache, take a walk in the Trusts properties, **welcome home**. For those that are members, look for a membership renewal letter in the mail very soon.

Very truly: *David Goldman*, President

PO BOX 56, WOODVILLE MA 01784

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

HOPKINTON TRAILS REVISITED

No matter where you live in town, there are plenty of trails to explore in Hopkinton and most likely there is one close to your home. Now that the weather is improving, it's time to explore some of Hopkinton's diverse geography. Some of the land is owned by the Hopkinton Area Land Trust, some by the town and some by the state. There is not enough space to list all the trails here, but additional information can be found on these web sites: www.hopkintonlandtrust.org; www.hopkintontrailsclub.com ; and www.masstrails.com

1) **Center Trail** - The 1.1 mile Center Trail is the crown jewel of the 68.4 acre Terry property. The trail head is located on Main Street directly across from Hopkinton Lumber (but is easier to enter from the High School loop road). The trail generally follows a railroad line to Milford that was built in 1863 and removed in 1950. The trail head features a landscaped, crushed stone foyer surrounded by wood rail fencing. A large trail sign designates this trail entrance. The trail is well marked and comes out at the High School loop road and then continues to Chamberlain Street.

2) **Karl Mighton Trail** - Named for Karl Mighton, a well loved supporter of the Hopkinton Area Land Trust, this 3/4 mile walking trail is located opposite 64 North Mill Street. The trail crosses an intermittent stream via a wooden foot bridge and winds through pine forests, stands of oak, and many other natural wonders. Extend your walk for more than 1.5 miles using connecting trails to another great Hopkinton Area Land Trust property with access on East Street near the Mass Laborers training facility.

3) **Deneen-Austin Powder Trail** - One of the newest parcels obtained by HALT is the Deneen-Scarlata property adjacent to Lake Maspenock. Although this property is only 5.53 acres, it allows Hopkinton residents access to large amount of open space in Upton on Peppercorn Hill. The trail begins on the right side on an easement of 50 or so yards of a driveway extending south from Deneen Street. Continuing further down the driveway beyond the trailhead is private property and is not open to the public. The HALT property extends to the west of the driveway/easement and around the houses at the end of Deneen Street, and also extends east of the driveway entrance. This land was gifted to HALT by Jean Scarlata and family trust, who is a lifelong Hopkinton resident.

4) **Whisper Way-Cameron Woods Trails** – Known as the Whisper Way, Cameron and Phipps property, this land is owned by the town. It features a trail network that can be accessed from multiple locations: The access point with the best parking is Whisper Way, which is off of Wood Street. You can also access from Winter Street or Pond Street near Erika Drive. From this trail network, you can also access Whitehall Reservoir area.

5) **Whitehall Conservation Area** - There are many trails in this property. The property is accessed on the south side of Wood Street (at 273 Wood) and there is a parking area for several cars. The Spine Road is accessed just beyond the gate at the south end of the parking area. The road can be followed all the way to Lake Whitehall. There are several other side trails to the boat ramp, the old Shepard house (since demolished and removed) and Piazza Lane. Size: 21.0 acres.

This property also connects to the state owned Whitehall Reservoir area, consisting of 592 acres. Other access is easiest from the boat ramp on Wood Street (Rt. 135). A walk around the entire lake is about 6 miles.

6) **Brook Hollow** Trail - Accessible from Frankland Rd. or Cross St., this property contains the Susan DeGozzaldi Memorial Trail & the Margot Foster Overlook. The trail is a one-half mile hiking trail with large beech trees providing a unique landmark. This trail is open and accessible to horses. There are 13.6 acres here.

7) **Fruit Street Property** – The Fruit street property, home to Hopkinton's athletic complex, consist of 145 acres. Trails start beyond the soccer fields near the pumping station.

8) **Sands Trail** - This is a beautiful trail along a wooded ridge that overlooks a deep ravine. The trail was named after Douglas Sands, a Hopkinton science teacher who was a natural raconteur and passionate observer of nature. The trail is relatively short, but rugged in places. At the upper end of the trail, look for a path that rises to the right towards a rocky overlook with dramatic views to the northwest. Saddle Hill road and the Saddle Hill Country Club were named after this promontory which is shaped like a horse saddle about the size of a house foundation. The trail head can be accessed from a stone parking area

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

at the intersection of Saddle Hill Road and Geenwood Road.

9) **Amy and Rolf Andersen Memorial Trails** – This trail surrounds the Deer Run/Brickhill Estates subdivision. The trail entrance is from the right side of the cul-de-sac on Fawn Ridge Road. From the Andersen trail, you can walk to the deGonzzaldi Trail (Brook Hollow property) off Cross Street and then cross over Franklin Road to the Wiley Woods trail.

10) **College Rock** – The trail is accessed from a small parking lot on College Street. The trail loops around the rock, proceeds into Holliston, where it is well marked.

SPRING PEEPERS ARE BACK

Near the end of winter, when New England gardeners are sick to death of snow and mud and dead vegetation, they despair of spring ever coming. The catalogs are worn, more plants have been ordered than the budget allows, yet the garden just sits and sulks.

Then one night comes a chorus of "peeping" from the distant woods that brings hope into the heart, and knowledge that there WILL be a spring this year, and SOON! Even New Englanders who've lived in the middle of a city for 20 years will respond joyously to the peepers.

Northern Spring Peepers spend the winter burrowed into soil or under logs and leaves. They survive the freezing temperatures of winter by producing an anti-freeze like substance, glycerol, in their tissues. This prevents ice crystals from forming inside of their cells. They thaw and come out of hibernation when warm temperatures return in the spring.

Spring peepers are to the amphibian world what American robins are to the bird world. As their name implies, they begin emitting their familiar sleigh-bell-like chorus right around the beginning of spring.

Found in wooded areas and grassy lowlands near ponds and swamps in the central and eastern parts of Canada and the United States, these tiny, well-camouflaged amphibians are rarely seen. But the mid-March crescendo of nighttime whistles from amorous males is for many a sign that winter is over.

Spring peepers are tan or brown in color with dark lines that form a telltale X on their backs. They grow to about 1.5 inches (3.8 centimeters) in length, and have large toe pads for climbing, although they are more at home amid the loose debris of the forest floor.

They are nocturnal creatures, hiding from their many predators during the day and emerging at night to feed on such delicacies as beetles, ants, flies, and spiders.

They mate and lay their eggs in water and spend the rest of the year in the forest. In the winter, they hibernate under logs or behind loose bark on trees, waiting for the spring thaw and their chance to sing.

The Enhanced Tax Incentive for Conservation Easement Donations Has Been Made Permanent

In a great victory for landowners interested in conservation the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations has been made permanent. In strong bipartisan action, the House voted 318-109 and the Senate voted 65-33 to pass the bills that included the incentive, and, the president signed it into law on December 18, 2015, and it applies retroactively to January 1, 2015. An earlier version of the incentive expired December 31, 2014. The incentive, considered by many to be the most important conservation legislation in 20 years, encourages landowners to place conservation easement on their land to protect important natural, scenic and historic resources.

If you own land with important natural or historic resources, donating a voluntary conservation easement (also called conservation agreement) can be one of the smartest ways to conserve the land you love, while maintaining your private property rights and possibly realizing significant federal tax benefits.

This summarizes the conservation easement tax incentive and provides answers to some frequently asked questions. The incentive:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of his or her income in any year to 50 percent;
- Allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100 percent of their income; and
- Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years.

These changes apply to donations made at any time in 2015 and to all donations made after that. This is a powerful tool for allowing modest-income donors to receive greater credit for donating a very valuable conservation easement on property they own.

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

Under the previous rules, a landowner earning \$50,000 a year who donated a \$1 million conservation easement could take a \$15,000 deduction for the year of the donation and for an additional 5 years — a total of \$90,000 in tax deductions. The new rules allow that landowner to deduct \$25,000 for the year of the donation and then for an additional 15 years. That's a total of \$400,000 in deductions. If the landowner qualifies as a farmer or rancher, he or she could take a maximum of \$800,000 in deductions for the million dollar gift.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows landowners to continue to own and use their land, and they can also sell it or pass it on to heirs.

When you donate a conservation easement to a land trust, you give up some of the rights associated with the land. For example, you might give up the right to build additional structures, while retaining the right to grow crops. Future owners will also be bound by the easement's terms. The land trust is responsible for making sure the easement's terms are followed.

Conservation easements offer great flexibility. An easement on property containing rare wildlife habitat might prohibit any development, for example, while an easement on a farm might allow continued farming and the addition of agricultural structures. An easement may apply to all or a portion of the property, and need not require public access.

Send Us Your Photos

Do you have photos of Hopkinton weather, nature, animals, plants, trails, etc. Anything related to outdoors, conservation, land, or nature.

Email your photo to the Land Trust at: info@hopkintonarealandtrust.org

We try to publish as many as we can on our web site: www.hopkintonarealandtrust.org

You can take an important step for your community: Offer your leadership, political support, and charitable gifts to a land trust. Better yet, consider donating a conservation easement on your land. It is an investment in the future that offers attractive tax benefits and the satisfaction that the land you love will be protected forever.

Become a Member of HALT

Family	\$30 _____
Sentinel	\$50 _____
Centurion	\$100 _____
Steward	\$250 _____
Protector	\$500 _____
Conservator	\$1,000 _____
President's Circle	\$1,000+ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Email Address _____

All contributions to HALT are deductible for income tax purposes.

Mail to:
Hopkinton Area Land Trust, Inc.
PO Box 56
Woodville, MA 01784
508-435-6578

Or email: info@hopkintonarealandtrust.org

Choose your membership level now at:
www.hopkintonarealandtrust.org



Printed on recycled paper