

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

NEWSLETTER



Volume XXIII, Winter

December 2006

*A Word from the President
David Goldman*

Dear Friend of the Hopkinton Area Land Trust,

Another year is coming to close and it is time to review the Trusts accomplishments for the past year and the past 11 years that we have been in existence. With respect to land protection, the Trust has prepared an inventory of all of its land held "in-fee" (direct ownership) or conservation restrictions. To date, over the past eleven years we have protected approximately 650 acres of property in Hopkinton. The Trust has approximately 400 acres "in-fee" and 250 acres in conservation restrictions. This year we expect to receive 64 acres in the Estates at Highland Ridge (Hopkinton Highlands II) and 54 acres in the Commons (Rocky Woods Road) by December 31st. These acquisitions are included in our totals. In addition, the Trust is working on future acquisitions which should add significantly to the totals.

With respect to endowment, the Trust now has approximately \$35,000 in endowment for the purposes of stewardship of the properties that the Trust holds. As the acreage held by the Trust increases, so must the endowment in order to provide the stewardship and protection of the land, maintenance of the trails and of other aspects of land conservation. The Trust also has provided two scholarships to Hopkinton High School student in the past year. We continue to encourage our "best and brightest" with the awarding of the scholarship.

At the present time, the Trust is in the planning stage of extending the Karl Mighton Memorial Trail in our North Mill property, out to East Street. This was made possible by the donation of 22.5 addition acres adjacent to the property by Bill & Mary Terry last December. We hope that Jon Taros, an Eagle Scout candidate will complete the trail extension by the early summer of 2007.

As the year comes to a close it is time to request support of the Trust by planning your year end, tax deductible donation to the Trust. We are making a special effort this year to attempt to raise funds. To that end, many of you have received a special mailing recently and many of you who have, have responded generously. We want to thank you for your generous support and hope that others in the town will join you, in providing further support to the Trust.

In closing, I would like to wish each and every one of you a Happy Holiday season, Merry Christmas, and a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Very truly yours,
David Goldman, President

PO BOX 56, WOODVILLE MA 01784

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Hunting Trip

By Betty Fitzpatrick

My husband and I raised English Springer Spaniels on Saddle Hill Road for 35 years. We used them for show and hunting. Hunting is an interesting sport, which we enjoyed for many years.

We hunted only grouse and native pheasants. You can tell a stocked pheasant easily. They are raised on stock farms and then released in the wild just before hunting season. They flush quickly when the dogs approach, and are slower in flight. But the native pheasant is a very clever guy! He knows his habitat well and uses it to his advantage. He seldom flushes immediately, instead he runs. They run fast through the underbrush for long periods of time. Unless you have a good dog, you could be looking where they started out, not where they really are. They will fly only as a last resort. And, to us there lies the sport.

One late October day, we were heading to Gardner, to an area we had come upon, while fly fishing the year before. It was a vast forest area, with a field or two in the distance.

Upon arriving, we found an old logging road that led in. We had three dogs with us. Two seasoned hunters and a young pup we brought along to learn from the older dogs.

As we entered the forest, which was located on a large hill, we were in the midst of a stand of beautiful hemlocks and pine trees. It was the perfect spot for grouse. Almost immediately, the dogs got the scent and started up the hill. With flushing dogs the hunter must keep up, or the dogs will flush the birds with no one there. About half way up the hill the dogs flushed a grouse in front on me. He went up between two trees, I fired, but he was faster and darted behind a tree. Then, many birds flushed wild out of the top of the trees. Since we could not see them, we did not get a shot. By the time we reached the top of the hill, we had shot at six birds, and we had zippo. Hunting birds requires patience and a heck of a good sense of humor. If you don't have these qualities – Stay Home.

We rested a bit on the top of the hill, and then started down the other side. We were all having a great time. Lots of birds, lots of misses! I spotted a pond in the distance and suggested we head there to give the dogs a swim. As we walked toward the pond, the dogs

circled around behind us. Then we heard them barking excitedly. If we had been paying more attention, we would have stopped them. But, they were on the scent of a rabbit, which is great fun for the dogs, but a horror for the hunter. Before we could yell at them, they were gone. Rabbit scent is very strong and it is great fun for the dogs to chase.

Knowing the dogs would track us eventually, we carried on to the pond. As we looked through the trees on the edge of the pond, we noticed small animals swimming. I said, "I think those are beavers." My husband watched a bit and said, "My God, those are otters." I had never seen otters in the wild before. They are more abundant in the north. There were four of them, two adult otters and two much younger ones. The two adults were swimming on their backs; the younger two ran up a steep, grassy knoll, playfully biting at each other, rolling and sliding down the grassy hill into the water. Just like a couple of kids. What a thrill to watch!

When we heard the dogs coming back, we steered them away from the pond. They had already disgraced themselves; they did not need to add chasing otters to it.

On the way home I was thinking there would be no grouse breast on toast points tonight. My husband said "What to say to hamburgers all around." What a great day!!

It Pays To Save

Six reasons why land conservation makes good economic sense:

- 1) Parks and open space often increase the value of nearby property, along with property tax revenue.
- 2) Parks and open space attract businesses and trained employees in search of a high quality of life
- 3) Parks and open space boost recreational spending.
- 4) Parks and open space reduce obesity and health care costs by supporting exercise and recreation.
- 5) Working lands, such as farms and forests, usually contribute more money to a community than the cost of the services they require.

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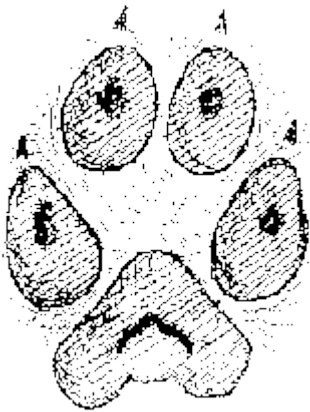
- 6) Conserved open space helps safeguard drinking water, clean the air, and prevent flooding – services provided much more expensively by other means.

From Land and People, printed by Trust For Public Land, Vol. 18, #1 Spring 2006.

RED FOX TRACKS

Do you occasionally see animal tracks in your yard. Deer and dogs may be easy to recognize. What about the red fox?

Red fox tracks show four toes and claws. The foot of the red fox is covered with hair, so toes can be indistinct. Red foxes have callous pads on their toes that sometimes show up in the prints. There is also a chevron-shaped callous pad on the heel pad of the foot. No other canine has this, which makes identification of the red fox track easier. There is usually a lot of space between the toes and the heel pad, making the track appear open. Tracks commonly run in straight lines, one print in front of the other. The hair on the foot may be visible in the track. In winter, the hair is thicker, making the tracks more indistinct.



Red foxes are primarily nocturnal, but will hunt by day. Foxes do not travel in packs as wolves do. They hunt alone or in family groups. Red foxes prefer forested or open country.

Foxes are omnivorous. They eat small mammals, birds, insects, eggs, fruit, nuts, grains, and even human garbage. Rabbits are the preferred prey animal.

From Kim A. Cabrera, www.bear-tracker.com
Beartracker's Animal Tracks Den

"HOW GREEN IS MY STATE?", GLOBE EDITORIAL

- from The Boston Globe, November 1, 2006

How green is my state?

As the home of Henry David Thoreau and Frederick Law Olmsted, Massachusetts has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the greenest states. It has buttressed that reputation with impressive private and public conservation efforts, from Mount Greylock in the west to Thoreau's own Walden Pond and the Cape Cod National Seashore in the east. But by many indicators the state's record on the environment has been middling at best.

That is the verdict of a scorecard released this fall by the Environmental League of Massachusetts. The report goes beyond headline-grabbing announcements of park acquisitions or government purchases of fuel-efficient vehicles to examine data on meat-and-potatoes issues like household garbage generation and average commuting times. Through these prisms, the state's greenness fades quickly. The next governor will have a long to-do list to better protect the state's water, air, and open land.

For example, total solid waste generation in the state increased from 9.7 million tons in 1994 to 13.9 million in 2004, while the state's population barely rose. Although the state's recycling rate for municipal solid waste at 35 percent is higher than the US average of 28.5 percent, waste generated per capita is about the US average. More investment in the recycling programs of the Department of Environmental Protection could reduce the waste going to landfills and incinerators.

Commuting times in the Boston area have also escalated. The Texas Transportation Institute, which gathers national travel data, reported that the average rush-hour traveler in the Boston area in 2003 spent 51 hours a year delayed in traffic, up from an average of 14 hours in 1982. In 2001 the Brookings Institution found that the Boston area has a worse per-capita sprawl problem than Los Angeles or Atlanta, measured by land taken for development against population growth. Partly as a result of this sprawl, transportation in Massachusetts is a bigger generator of

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greenhouse gas emissions than electric utilities or industry in general.

The Environmental League report also points to successes, like improvements in protection of drinking water, and to setbacks that are largely outside of state control, such as the decline of marine fisheries, especially cod. The overall impression is that the state cannot rest on its conservation laurels and must act aggressively to keep Massachusetts an inviting habitat for human beings.

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Feeding Birds In Winter

One of the chief pleasures of winter in a colder climate is to be inside a warm house and look out at the wild birds at the feeder.

Many of the birds we see in winter are seed eaters. They have to be: insects are hard to come by in areas that experience harsh winters. However, the trees, grasses, and wild flowers have just finished their yearly production of seeds, and this is the main kind of food our wintering birds live on.

The hands-down favorite bird seed is sunflower. It attracts cardinals, woodpeckers, blue jays, goldfinches, purple finches, chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches. Get the black sunflower seeds, sometimes called oil seeds. Birds prefer them to the grey-and-white-striped sunflower seeds sold off the candy rack for people, because they're higher in oil content. They are softer shelled, hence easier to crack open. They're also cheaper than the grey-and-white ones.

One caution. stay away from bags of mixed birdseed. These mixes usually contain a lot of filler, such as red millet. Most birds won't eat it. They rummage through the seeds in the feeder and kick the red millet onto the ground, where at best it lies until it rots and turns into pretty decent fertilizer for the grass. Mixed birdseed is not a bargain. Buy the seeds you know your birds want.

When starting up a feeding program, be patient. It may take as long as several weeks before the birds discover your feeders. While you wait, be sure to keep the feeders filled. Eventually, the birds will come.

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.

APPLICATION AS A FRIEND OF HALT

Individual Friend	\$15 _____
Senior Friend	\$10 _____
Family Friend	\$25 _____
Associate Friend	\$50 _____
Supporting Friend	\$100 _____
Sustaining Friend	\$300 _____
Corporate Friend	\$500+ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ **Zip Code** _____

Telephone _____

Would you like to volunteer your time or services HALT?

All contributions to HALT are deductible for income tax purposes.

Make checks payable to:

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST, Inc.

Mail to:

Hopkinton Area Land Trust, Inc.

PO Box 56

Woodville, MA 01784



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