

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

NEWSLETTER



Volume XXXIX, Winter

December 2013

A Word from the President *David Goldman*

The beautiful New England fall is almost over, the leaves are down, hopefully the raking is done, and the cold of winter is upon us. Since my last letter where the Trust disclosed that it was the recipient of the Phipps Conservation Restriction (CR), the Braden Woods CR, the Fruit Street CR and the Cameron/Whisper Way CR (an additional 288 acres preserved), the Trust has begun the hard work of preparing the baseline documentation on all these CR's. I say hard work because it means that members and volunteers have to get out on the properties, walk the land and document the conditions that exist in the field. The Trust identifies each and every corner point of the boundary, acquires the GPS coordinates, takes up to 5 photos and prepares a photo log. To do this, the Trust is **making an appeal to you to volunteer** and help us do this job properly. **It doesn't take special training**, only a willingness to get out in the field and walk the property with one of the experienced members. You get a chance to explore some of the great open spaces in Hopkinton.

We were happy to see lots of you at the recent Poly-Arts festival and enjoyed our chance to chat and catch up with many of you. It was truly a glorious day in the sunshine and the weather cooperated nicely. We had a chance to display a map of the town where we appended the locations of all of the Trusts properties and conservation restrictions. The map will be available shortly on the website and we have added a QR code at the end of the newsletter to assist you in getting there quicker and easier.

The Geo-caching-on-Trails continues to be a great success and more geo-cachers are walking the trails and finding the caches. Their feedback is most satisfying and certainly justifies the program. We will continue to create new caches on trails and properties that do not, as yet, have them.

It appears that economic times are improving, but, the economic future is still an uncertain. 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 closed in on 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 holiday 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

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WHY HOMES WITH OPEN SPACE COMMAND BIG BUCKS

Call it the flora-and-fauna effect: Home buyers will pay a premium to live near open, undeveloped land.

That's the conclusion of a Colorado State University (CSU) study of home prices in conservation developments, where residential real estate is limited and a substantial amount of land, usually 50% to 70%, is set aside as open space. "That could mean wildlife habitats, agricultural lands, important cultural sites, open space for scenic vistas," says Sarah Reed, co-author of the study and associate conservation scientist with the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Researchers compared 2,222 home sales in five counties in Colorado between 1998 and 2011. The conservation developments set aside an average 64% of land as open space, while traditional rural subdivisions set aside 4.9%. Based on the analysis, homes in conservation developments sold for 29% more than homes located in conventional residential projects

"For a homeowner, this means that the value of their home will be greater just by being in a development with open space," Prof. Reed says.

Increasing lot size in an undesignated conservation development raised the market price by 38 cents per square foot or \$16,662 per acre, researchers found. In non-conservation developments, a bigger lot size translated to only 9 cents per square foot, or \$4,062 per acre. The study, funded by the National Association of Realtors and CSU's School of Global Environmental Sustainability, was published in December 2012 in the Journal of Sustainable Real Estate.

A 2011 study in the journal Conservation Biology estimates that roughly 310,000 acres have been developed in the U.S. as conservation subdivisions, where anywhere from 30% to 70% of land is protected as open space.

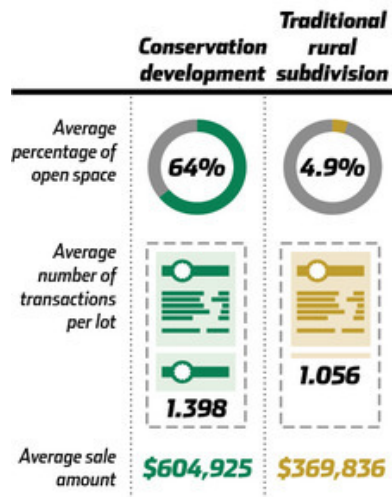
More subdivisions probably qualify, but developers haven't sought designation by the county as official conservation developments.

Regardless, the price perk is still there: Homes in undesignated conservation developments sell for 25%

more than those in conventional subdivisions, the Colorado State researchers found. Wall Street Journal, May 3, 2013

Open Secret

Researchers evaluated 2,222 home sales in five counties in Colorado from 1998 to 2011. The findings: properties located conservation developments sell more frequently and for a higher price than those located in traditional developments.



Source: Journal of Sustainable Real Estate, 2012
The Wall Street Journal

Ladybugs In Houses

The lady beetles seen in huge numbers during the fall, both in and outside homes, are non-native lady beetles (*Harmonia axyridis*) from Asia. The history of their introduction into this country depends on who you ask. One theory is that they were introduced here in the early 1900's by the USDA to combat aphids on fruit trees, but it is believed that this population did not survive. They were then discovered in Louisiana, prompting the theory that they may be arriving in cargo ships from Asia. A third theory is that they were introduced to reduce aphids in pecan groves. In any case, they are now found in all New England states and apparently are not doing any harm to our native lady beetle species.

These ladybugs are similar in size to our native species, but their color and patterns are more variable, ranging from yellow to red; and from no spots to up to a dozen spots.

They are very beneficial; their larva eat the aphids that harm apple, peach and plum trees, as well as, maple and

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pine. A report from the USDA's Southeastern Fruit and Nut Tree Research Laboratory has found that in some pecan groves pesticide use has been reduced 50 to 75 percent since these aphid-eaters arrived.

Why are they attracted to houses? In Asia these beetles over-winter in the cracks and crevices of limestone outcroppings and it believed that this is the reason they are attracted to the white trim on houses and, when they manage to get inside, white ceilings.

What options do we have for living with ladybugs?

- Do nothing. If left alone they will soon find their way into the attic, voids in walls, or other out-of-the-way locations, to spend the winter. And, except for a rare warm winter day when a few might be confused and fly around, they won't be seen until spring. When they emerge in the spring all they want to do is get outside and "fly away, fly away," so open windows a couple of inches and let them do just that!
- If they cannot be tolerated, they should be vacuumed up rather than squished because they will leave a foul-smelling, yellow stain behind.
- Do not use insecticides. Chemicals are dangerous - ladybugs are not!

From Mass Audubon

Investment in Nature Provides a Fourfold Return in Massachusetts

Every dollar Massachusetts spends on conservation returns \$4 and supports jobs for hundreds of thousands of people, a study released Wednesday by The Trust for Public Land shows.

"These results showed conservation is an excellent investment and they are consistent with a dozen similar studies we have conducted across the nation in the past four years," said Jessica Sargent, senior economist with The Trust for Public Land and author of the report. "Over and over again, from Maine to Arizona, we see that spending money on conservation protects jobs and shows a good return on investment," she said.

Between 1998 and 2011, Massachusetts protected 131,000 acres of parks, beaches, wetlands, natural areas, and working farms and forests, Sargent said, and the state's grant programs leveraged an additional \$118 million in money from other sources, including the federal and local

governments, and private sources. The protected lands support jobs in a variety of industries, including, tourism and outdoor recreation, agriculture, forestry and commercial fishing.

"The Patrick Administration has protected over 110,000 acres of land and built over 170 parks - all of which is within a ten minute walk of approximately 25 percent of Massachusetts residents," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan. "The Trust for Public Land's report demonstrates the tremendous economic value of this investment for residents, businesses and communities throughout the Commonwealth."

Outdoor recreation provides an enormous boost to the state's economy generating \$10 billion annually in consumer spending, and \$739 million in tax revenue, while supporting approximately 90,000 jobs in the state, according to the report.

The report found that Massachusetts has about 7,700 farms covering 520,000 acres, with an annual output of \$510 million in revenue. The Commonwealth also produces about 100 million board feet of timber each year. That generates an average \$285 million in wood product revenues each year at the state's 166 forest product manufacturing facilities, including sawmills and paper mills.

"We have always known of the strong connection between the health of our economy and environment. Quantifying this return on investment provides tangible evidence of the value of public investment in protecting land - and the benefits to both people and nature that it provides," said Wayne Klockner, vice-president and state director for The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts, one of the local organizations that provided support for this important study.

WHITE TAILED DEER

Before European settlement, the deer population was checked by native predators such as timber wolves and mountain lions, both of which were soon extirpated by the colonists. Settlers, as well as native Americans, also hunted deer, and much deer habitat was eliminated as forests were converted to farm land. It is estimated that by the early 1900's, there were fewer than 1,000 deer in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife estimates there are at least 85,000 deer in the state today.

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The typical weight of an adult buck (male) is 100 to 250 pounds with a shoulder height of 3½ to 4 feet. The doe is smaller and weighs in much lighter at 70 to 150 pounds. Mature males' antlers have a main branch thirty inches long with tines growing upward every few inches. The antlers are shed each year after the breeding season.

Deer have a keen sense of smell and hearing. Their large ears are always in motion to receive the slightest sound from a possible predator in the vicinity. They are crepuscular, that is, their feeding takes place mostly at dawn and dusk, and the rest of the day is spent resting and chewing their cud. The home range of a deer is usually 2 to 3 square miles, but they will move beyond this range if food supplies become scarce.

In winter, bucks, does, and fawns gather together in "deer yards:" sheltered locations frequently under stands of coniferous trees. It is believed that this behavior helps them survive severe weather conditions by conserving body heat and discouraging predation. They reduce their food intake during the winter by 30 percent and activity by 50 percent. Therefore they usually browse within close proximity to the deer yard.

Protected locations frequented by deer during their daily inactive periods which provide cover and protection are called "bedding areas." Those used during the day may be secluded areas on high ridges where they can watch for predators. At night they will use dense thickets and groves of evergreen trees which offer protection as well as shelter from the wind.

The network of trails connecting the bedding areas or deer yards to feeding areas are called feeding trails or deer runs. If food sources remain good, these trails can be used for many years.

The mating, or "rutting" season takes place in the fall and during the rest of the year the males and females live in separate groups. In August and September male groups disband to search for females coming into estrus. In New England mating usually takes place in November or early December, after which the does return to their maternal groups.

Most fawns are born in May or June after a 200 day gestation period. A doe giving birth for the first time will usually produce one offspring, but in subsequent years she gives birth to two, and occasionally three young.

From Mass Audubon

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 _____

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State _____ Zip Code _____

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All contributions to HALT are deductible for income tax purposes.

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