

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

NEWSLETTER



Volume XXXII, Summer

June, 2011

A Word from the President

David Goldman

My lead in this newsletter is the announcement that this year's scholarship recipient is **James Sands-Berking, 2011 graduate of Hopkinton High School**. James's educational goal is to become a Marine Biologist with his "focus based in conserving marine life and their respective ecosystems".

A film on oceans and their inhabitants sparked his interest in marine biology when he was in elementary school, and his interest became even more focused when he learned to scuba dive at age 14. In his junior year he took a semester abroad at the Island School in Eleuthera, Bahamas. During this semester, he participated in original research on the effects that lionfish have on the biodiversity of the Patch Reef ecosystems. This research was presented to both the Bahamian government officials and the Cape Eleuthera Institute scientists. Being able to make a valid contribution to the scientific body of knowledge concerning conservation of oceanic ecosystems was a major sense of accomplishment to James, and he savored the excitement of being able to make this his life work.

The Board of Directors applauds James for his determination and accomplishments to date, and wish him the best in his educational pursuits.

Starting last September, the Trust has changed its structure to a membership organization. As such, the Trust re-branded itself with a new logo (see above) and a new website (<http://www.hopkintonlandtrust.org>). I urge you to take a look at the site because there is a lot of information about the Trust that might interest you. In addition, the website allows you to join as a member of the Trust. One of the first orders of business will be to hold the **Annual Meeting of the Trust on September 25, 2011 at the Hopkinton Fire House Conference room between 2 and 4 PM**. The Agenda for the meeting will be: a short presentation about the Trust, followed by the election of a new director (hopefully one of you reading this article), formation of three committees; membership, Trails/Geocaching, and website. This will be followed by a short discussion of Conservation Restrictions, a Q &A, and a drawing for those who attend ,for several door prizes. Please **mark your calendar now** so that you will not miss this event.

As I write these words, summer is fast approaching. Now is the time to get outside and enjoy the gifts of nature that are so abundant in Hopkinton. Take a walk on one of the Trusts trails. The Whitehall Conservation Area, Wiley Woods, The DeGozzaldi trail, the Andersen's Trail, the Sand Trail, Center Trail and several others that can be found on the website

As always, I must come to you with hat in hand, and plead for your support and to ask you to join us as a member.. We all know that economic times are tough, but if you think about it, the Trusts' open space in town provides some very real benefits to each of you. So please help support the Trust so that we can continue to provide this value to you the residents. Thanks for the time you spent reading my letter and please enjoy the summer season.

Very truly: *David Goldman*, President

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Quabbin Reservoir: A Hidden Jewel in Central MA and the Pioneer Valley

By Jeff Furber

History

In the latter half of the 1800s, the City of Boston needed a more reliable source of drinking water, so it proposed reservoirs along Route 9 in the Boston suburbs. In just a few short years the need again increased, and Worcester County's Wachusett Reservoir was built with a capacity of sixty five million gallons. The water was sent to Boston via aqueducts.

Boston's increased need for water soon outgrew that source. One day a State engineer was fly fishing in one of the arteries of the Swift River. He looked up the valley and conceived the idea of a large freshwater reservoir that would finally serve the needs of the city of Boston. Two requirements for the project were that the water could be delivered by gravity and no filtration would be required.

The State then proceeded with plans to acquire the four towns of Enfield, Prescott, Dana and Greenwich. The townspeople were bought out, and all buildings, cemeteries and railways, etc., were removed. There were 34 cemeteries and 7500 bodies that were moved during the undertaking. Most of them were reinterred at the Quabbin Park Cemetery in Ware.

Two earthen dams were built in the southern area of the valley. These were approximately 2500 ft in length and 170 ft high, and are known as the Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike, named after the project engineers. The first phase began in 1926 with the diversion of the Ware River, and eventually the Swift River in the 1930s, to Wachusett Reservoir via the newly made Quabbin Aqueduct. In 1939, the flooding of the Swift River Valley was started, and completed 7 years later.

Quabbin Today

The reservoir is home to bald eagles, hawks, moose, foxes, bears, wildcats, coyotes, deer, and loons. Fishing is mostly restricted to the northern section of the lake.

Due to restrictions by the State, access to most of the watershed area is only by foot from entrances at the 55

gates surrounding the watershed. Many old roads, stone walls, and cellar holes are still located within the watershed and are popular with hikers. Those wishing to use the observation towers to view the complete reservoir and the former Swift River Valley, should enter the watershed via Route 9 at Quabbin Park .

Visitors can take advantage of the picnic facilities, fly fish in the catch and release area below the dam, and view scenic overlooks.

Quabbin Facts

Quabbin Reservoir is 18 miles in length, with an average depth of 151 ft. There are 118 miles of shore land and a reservoir capacity of 412 billion gallons.

The reservoir was engineered so that, if a drop of food dye was placed in the reservoir, it would take 7 years for the dye to exit the lake, thus ensuring adequate filtration of the water in the reservoir.

The State agencies that control the watershed are very conscious about invasive species entering the lake and water quality checks are performed monthly.

Author's comment

As a fisherman I have observed deer swimming across the lake, hundreds of loons, and many beaver. I have seen deer in coves walking down to the water to drink within 50 ft of my boat. I have seen great horned owls, hundreds of hawks, and many bald eagles fly overhead with fish in their talons.

Quabbin Reservoir is a wonderful place to picnic and walk all of the terrific trails while still viewing the reservoir. It is a wonderful place to learn about the history of the central part of our state and doing so in the wonderful environment of a pristine reservoir.

Patrick-Murray Administration Marks Earth Day with Continued Commitment to Land Protection, Sets 500,000-acre Forest Conservation Goal

BOSTON – April 22, 2011 – In celebration of Earth Day and reflecting the Patrick-Murray Administration's precedent-setting commitment to land conservation,

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Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr. today announced a 500,000-acre

goal for two programs designed to “keep forests as forests.”

To meet this forest conservation goal over the next four years, the Administration will work with private woodland owners and professional foresters to augment approximately 420,000 acres of forest already protected from development. Land owners who place their properties under professional forest management plans and enter into long-term commitments to keep their land forested receive property tax incentives.

During the past four years, Governor Deval Patrick has led an unprecedented land conservation effort, resulting in the permanent protection of 75,000 acres of land – 84 percent of which is forested. Partnerships with private and community organizations have also been instrumental in safeguarding the Commonwealth’s most undisturbed large forest landscapes – 14,000 acres in ten premier forest habitat reserves.

The two state programs crucial to the Administration’s new 500,000-acre goal are the Massachusetts Forest Tax Law Program (Chapter 61) and the Forest Stewardship Program.

The Forest Stewardship Program provides state funding to professional foresters to develop ten-year forest stewardship plans for private forest landowners. Owners commit to keeping their land in forests and implementing the practices called for in the plans for the ten-year period. In addition, the plans qualify owners for additional funding and assistance to implement wildlife, trail and forest product improvements on their forests.

The Massachusetts Forest Tax Law provides property tax incentives to land owners of ten or more contiguous acres of forest land who maintain their property as working forests for the purposes of long-term, sustainable timber production. Properties are taxed only for the value the land has for forestry, not for the land’s development potential – resulting in significant property tax savings.

RECORD 107 BALD EAGLES SPOTTED DURING ANNUAL SURVEY

BOSTON - January 7, 2011 - Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Richard K. Sullivan announced that an annual survey of wintering bald eagles conducted throughout the Commonwealth today yielded sightings of at least 107 individual birds, breaking the all time state record set in 2009.

Between 40 and 50 state and federal wildlife officials and volunteers observed birds through binoculars and spotting scopes on the ground and from the air during the one-day event, which is part of a national survey. State data are pooled with national data and used by wildlife officials to track the progress of the recovery of the bald eagle, which was taken off the federal list of endangered and threatened species in 2007.

The 2011 preliminary statewide number is 107 eagles, with 77 adults, 26 juveniles and four of unknown age. The largest number of birds - 33 eagles - was seen at the Quabbin Reservoir. The sightings include 11 eagles spotted on the Merrimack River, 5 at the Wachusett Reservoir, 18 on the Connecticut River, 2 on the Mystic Lakes in Arlington, 2 on the Housatonic River in Sheffield, 1 in Orange, 5 in the Lakeville / Middleborough area, 2 at the Wattupa Ponds in Westport, 3 on the Chicopee River, 2 on the Deerfield River and 1 on the Westfield River.

Statewide, the number of birds surveyed has risen from eight birds counted in 1979 to 107 birds counted this year. Annual surveys in 2010 and 2009 spotted 72 and 81 birds, respectively.

"The successful restoration of the bald eagle population in Massachusetts has a remarkable history that extends over 30 years," said Secretary Sullivan. "This annual survey and other year-round efforts by biologists and volunteers have helped to protect these national symbols and their habitat."

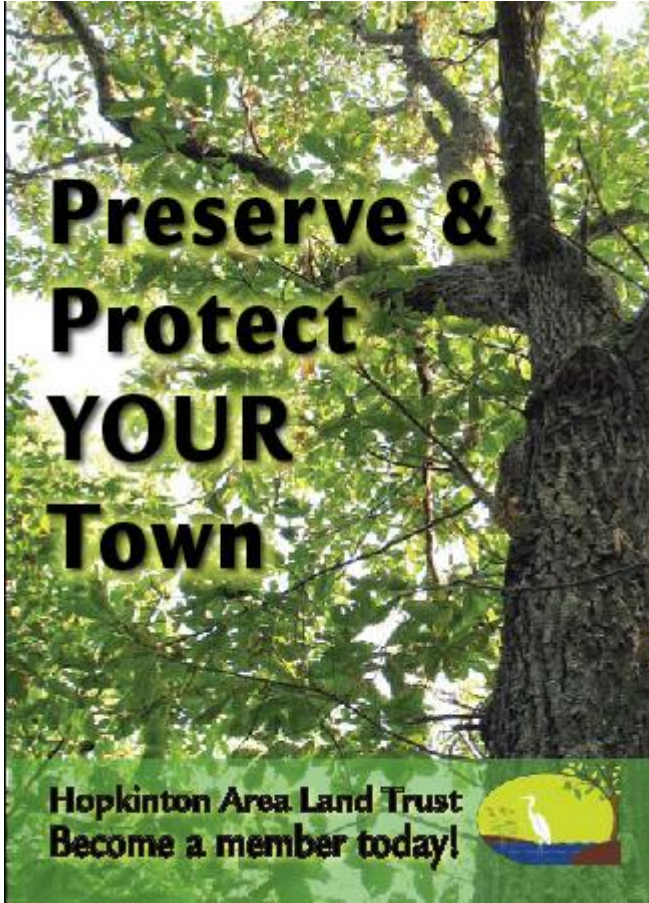
Many of you have probably seen eagles locally around Lake Whitehall and Lake Maspenock. If you are interested in seeing more, there is an eagle watch tour of the Connecticut River Valley. See “www.theaudubonshop.com” for more information.

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Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.

Rachel Carson

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_____
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Protector	\$500_____
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All contributions to HALT are deductible for income tax purposes.

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