

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

NEWSLETTER



Volume XXIII, Winter

November 2007

A Word from the President
David Goldman

Dear Friend of the Hopkinton Area Land Trust,

Now that we are in the middle of November and another year has almost passed we should look back and review what has been accomplished with your help. The Trust has just completed an extension the Mighton Memorial Trail, out to East Street. We hope to have a Grand Opening and dedication next spring so watch for an announcement. For the second time the Trust has obtained a Greenways Trails Grant from the Commonwealth to prepare another trail in one of our properties.

The Trust is about to take possession of 64 acres of land in the Hopkinton Highlands/Eagle Farms subdivision. There are trails that already exist in this parcel of land and come next spring and summer we expect to open another area with trails for your enjoyment and use. Toll Brother has donated this property to the Trust and at the same time will be placing a Conservation Restriction on the property so that it remains as conservation land forever.

The Trust was given stewardship of the High School/Terry property in the form of a Conservation Restriction. We have been working with the Trails Club, the Open Space Commission, and the Conservation Commission to clear a lovely trail known as the Center Trail. This trail begins on Main Street across from Hopkinton Lumber and is identified by a fence that opens into the trail. The trail is now open for use and runs from Main Street to the High School loop road and thence out to Chamberlain Street. It is open for walking, hiking, cross country skiing, snow shoeing and bicycles. However, **NO MOTORIZED VEHICLES** are permitted on the trail. Hours of operation are sun up to sun set.

The trust has also awarded scholarships this year to two Hopkinton High School seniors that graduated in 2007. We hope that they are doing well at college and expect to see their grades in the next six weeks.

Now that we are at the end of the year and are planning our end of year giving, I would like to make a personal appeal to you to continue your generous support for the Trust. In the past you have opened your hearts and wallets with generous donations. The Trust needs your help and generosity to continue the kind of work that I have enumerated above. So please consider making a donation of any amount to the Trust. Remember that the Trust is a 501(c)(3) federally deductible charity and a state Chapter 180 deductible charity.

Let me take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a health, happy, merry Holiday Season and a prosperous new year.

Very truly yours,
David Goldman, President

PO BOX 56, WOODVILLE MA 01784

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GOLF COURSE WILDLIFE

By Betty Fitzpatrick

Most wildlife I see these days are ones on the golf course. This is great for me. Playing my favorite game and seeing all the animals and birds at the same time is a treat for me. Because of heavy development in our area, many of the animals have moved on except the deer, which still are around, and I see them frequently on Saddle hill Road. We also see a large number of wild turkey on Fruit Street.

The three ladies I play golf with have no interest in wildlife whatsoever. They wouldn't know a robin from a moose. So, we just put up with each other.

A few weeks ago, while playing, I noticed a mother squirrel and her half grown baby running on the fairway. I thought it odd that they were still together, as the grey squirrel keep their babies around for about six weeks, then go their separate ways. As I observed them, I thought the baby was an only child; therefore the mother may have kept him longer. The baby was running all over the place, seeing what trouble he could get into, with mom traveling along behind him.

The baby ran over to a group of geese who were sleeping in the shade, and proceeded to dart at them, to get them up and flapping their wings. Sensing danger, mother ran over to him and picked him up by the nape of the neck and shook him severely, and then threw him down on the ground. She squawked at him, as he lay dazed on the ground. She started to move away, the baby got up and shook himself and followed her dutifully. I always wondered how the squirrel disciplined their young. Dogs and other larger animals teach the same way. To be shaken and thrown to the ground is the worst kind of disgrace.

When we got to the seventh hole, which is a long par 4 that proceeded over the river and up a large hill. It is about 170 yards to the top of the hill. The tee box to the river is about 60 yards. There was a group of geese right near the river as I got up to hit my drive. I miss hit the ball and it went like a bullet about a foot off the ground, and hit a young female goose in the back. She flopped to the ground and fluttered around. She couldn't seem to stand up. One of my playing partners said, "She'll be all right, let's go". I said "Thank you doctor, remind me to get someone else if I'm ever in an accident." I told the others to go ahead, as I was going to stay to see how badly she was hurt. With tears running down my face, I watched her try to get to her feet. She obviously was in shock. Two men golfers arrived at the tee box, and noting my distress asked if they could help. I told them if she couldn't get up soon, I wanted to take her to Tufts, but we would have to tie her wings so I could get her into the car.

I will never be able to thanks those two guys enough, for their kindness to me and caring for an injured bird. They stayed with me until the young goose seemed to recover. We decided to go down and flush the birds to see if she could fly. Off she went flying beautifully as is nothing had happened.

The guys went on with their game. I was too wiped out to finish mine. I walked back to the clubhouse, so relieved I could never put it into words. Here's to Eddie and Steve, my friends forever.

2008 HALT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Every year HALT offers scholarships to graduating seniors who are interested in studying environmental sciences and/or conservation of land and natural resources. Students must be residents of Hopkinton and graduating from Hopkinton High School, Keefe Technical High School, Marian High School, or St. Mark's High School.

Applications for these scholarships are available from the Guidance Department of your High School after January 15, 2008, or from the HALT section of HopNews.com. Completed applications must be submitted to HALT by March 30, 2008. Winners will be announced at your school's Award Ceremony.

GUIDELINES FOR WATCHING WILDLIFE

- Observe animals from a safe distance. Be especially sensitive to adults with their young.
- Move slowly and casually, not directly at wildlife. Allow animals to keep you in view; do not surprise them.
- Never chase or harass wildlife. Harassment of wildlife is unlawful.
- Leave your pets at home. At best they hinder wildlife watching; at worst they can chase, injure or kill wildlife.
- Limit the time you spend watching if animals appear to be stressed.
- Avoid animals that behave strangely or aggressively. They may be ill.
- Respect others who are viewing the same animals.
- Do not feed wild animals.
- Respect private property. Ask first before entering private land.

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- Be aware of creatures that reside around the trail.
- If you encounter wildlife, stand still and let it pass. Watch. Don't chase.
- If you encounter a bear or mountain lion, stay calm. Do not run and teach children not to run. Runners appear to be prey.
- Look around to make sure you aren't separating the animal from its young, then back away slowly, avoiding eye contact. Make yourself appear bigger.

From www.Americantrails.com

PATHWAYS: HOW THEY ARE IMPORTANT

Pathways provide safe recreational opportunities and practical alternative transportation routes. Pathways also have a significant positive economic impact on real estate values and local business sales.

Good community design for biking and walking should be comprehensive and integrated into overall community planning. It's not enough to just build a pathway and call especially if it doesn't lead to a place people want to go. The national advocacy group America Bikes encourages communities to build Complete Streets— streets designed for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as cars and trucks. A well-planned pathways system ties into well-designed safe streets, allowing people of all ages to travel and play. Such a system functionally ties together people's homes with real destinations.

Trails and pathways bring many benefits to a community— functional transportation, support for good development and tourism, healthy recreation, tourism and opportunities for children to explore the world safely. A pathways system is used by a broad cross-section of non-motorized users— individuals of all ages and abilities. By no means the exclusive domain of hard-core athletes, a paved pathway attracts children, mothers pushing strollers, seniors out for a morning walk, casual tourists, joggers and others drawn by the safe route.

Positive benefits of a trails and pathways system:

- Safe travel routes for children and adults
- Enhanced quality of life and health for all ages
- Good business for developers and homeowners
- Increased traffic for local businesses
- Increased sense of community
- Access to the National Forest trails system

Pathways Sell Houses!

"Trail availability outranked 16 other options, including security, ball fields, golf courses, parks, and access to shopping or business centers," according to a 2002 National Association of Realtors/National Association of Home Builders survey. Only highway access was ranked as a more important amenity by the 2000 homebuyers surveyed.

Pathways are Good Business for Land Development

A pathways system is highly desirable for the residents of a community, and it makes good business sense for individual developers, homeowners associations and local government agencies to support and contribute to the system. Pathways help accelerate real estate sales and increase the sales price of properties benefiting from a well-planned community. Numerous studies undertaken in the past 15 years support this statement.

Building Community

While pathways are sometimes built by developers as desirable amenities to speed sales and raise values, pathways are much more than mere amenities. Pathways are critical infrastructure that facilitates non-motorized transportation and recreation— biking and walking— and fostering vital face-to-face interaction between neighbors, promoting community.

Friendly, unplanned interactions between neighbors are a key part of creating and sustaining community. These chance meetings happen constantly on pathways, sidewalks, Nordic ski trails and forest trails. A well-planned and designed community encourages and generates these opportunities while meeting transportation needs. The concept of community is intangible yet profound; it is the heart of a good place to live and something tourists sense and relish immediately when they visit a walkable, bike-friendly town.

Designing neighborhoods and communities for walking and biking while adequately accommodating cars and trucks creates better communities that work for developers, residents, local government and visitors.

Excerpted from www.Americantrails.org

ONCE-RARE FISHERS MAKING A COMEBACK

Once eliminated from Massachusetts, fishers, the weasel-like creatures, have returned, big time. Outside of Framingham, fishers have been trapped, sighted or killed on the road in places as far flung as Netwon, Natick, Hudson, Wetsborough, Northborough, and Southborough, according to Colleen Olfenbuttel of MassWildlife. Hopkinton should also be added to the list.

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Sometimes erroneously called “fisher cats,” the animals are believed to have repopulated in the Quabbin Reservoir area about 10 to 20 years ago and then spread in every direction. Their favorite paths are along waterways and walls.

The downside is that fishers can prey on house cats. But Olfenbittel said fishers are not vicious, as often thought. As with all wildlife, Olfenbittel said, the rule is to “just keep a respectful distance” from fishers.

Fishers have a typical weasel shape – long and slender, with short legs and a furred tail that is about a third the length of the body. Males can reach 3 feet in length, while females average about 2 ½.

They are dark brown to black, with grizzled, grayish coloring on the head and shoulders. Some have a white patch of fur on their chest and abdomen.

Their faces are pointed, with rounded ears set close to the top of the head, like a bear.

People often mistake fishers for cats because they are slinky, low to the ground, and spend time in tress.

With sharp retractable claws, fishers are agile climbers. In the spring, females use tree cavities as dens for their young. They also seek the high branches to elude predators.

The fisher diet is eclectic. They have been found to eat small mammals, fruits, berries and garbage – all found in abundance in suburban settings.

Excerpted from The Boston Globe, December 10, 2006.

In Massachusetts, more than twice as much land has been developed since 1950 than in the previous 300 years.

See the Hopkinton Area Land Trust trails maps on www.hopnews.com

Click on the HALT icon near the top of the HopNews home page.

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.

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