

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.



Volume XXV, Fall/Autumn

September 2008

A Word from the President
David Goldman

Dear Friend of the Hopkinton Area Land Trust,

My hope, as you read this newsletter, is that you are sitting outside somewhere listening to the drone of late summer, insects such as crickets, cicadas and katydids. The outdoors provides some beautiful music if you but stop and listen and take advantage of it.

I also hope that this issue finds you preparing for a busy Fall season. One of the first events of this Fall is Poly Arts on Saturday September 27th. The Hopkinton Area Land Trust will have its usual booth on the Hopkinton Common. Please come by and chat with the members of the Board of Directors. We can give you a capsule view of the latest happenings with respect to the Trust.

What else is going on here at the Trust? Well we are looking for someone who can take on the task of webmaster for our planned website. It won't be a burdensome task since most of the information is ready to go. So it's set it up and then perform maintenance for about an hour per week at most. If you have any interest please contact me.

In addition, the Trust is planning a membership campaign. In the 13 years that the Trust has existed, we have not made a concerted effort to gain membership. However, we are going to do so between now and the end of the year. We hope that each of you will join us as a member of the organization. Look for information in the very near future.

Finally, as always, I must make a pitch for donations. I know that this year has been a time of economic hardship. However, in order to survive, the Trust needs your support. The work that we do benefits all Hopkinton and Hopkintonians. Land conservation for open space, trails, conservation restrictions, education, scholarship stewardship of the land and on and on. So won't you please send us a donation small or large. The Trust appreciates all donations, no matter the amount.

Remember, Fall is one of the best times in New England. Plan to get out and walk one of the HALT trails through the woods. You know where they are and if you don't, go to HopNews, select the "Community" icon, then select the HALT logo on the Community page, and voila you can now select a trail map. I know that you will have a great time on any one of our trails.

Very truly yours,
David Goldman, President

PO BOX 56, WOODVILLE MA 01784

NEWSLETTER

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

By Lauren Blake

I walk to the sink and put my water bottle under the tap. As the water cascades down into the plastic container, the transparency and distinct feel of water never ceases to fascinate me. I often think about its structure – how two molecules intricately combine to create a substance simply, yet powerful enough to sustain life. I hurriedly shove the bottle into my bag, as looking at my watch, I determine that practice starts in 10 minutes.

I walk briskly into the gym and call my team into a huddle. Yet the athletes that come at not typical players. On the contrary, most of them are shorter than average for their age. It is not the desire to win that motivates them to come to practice, it is the love of the game. They are Special Olympians and I have been their coach for thirteen seasons. My longstanding community service with this group has significantly impacted my life.

Building personal relationships with these athletes and their families has allowed me to see past their disabilities, in essence, to understand them as people. I love teaching them new sports drills but take greater pleasure in learning what the kids did at the Respite Center that day or hearing about their hobbies. In my interaction with Special Olympians, I have become a more tolerant person. While the children find great joy in learning a skill or shooting a basket, interacting with the athletes brings me unmatched happiness. There are some days that I feel frustrated that I did not do as well on a test as I would have liked or that my experiment isn't yielding reproducible results. These are the days that I need to see my Special Olympics family the most. I have seen their everyday struggles, but also have witnessed the power of a positive attitude and an open mind. These challenges put mine into perspective and they have helped me to be resilient in confronting struggles of my own, including knee injuries that ended my involvement in competitive sports. In becoming part of the Special Olympic family, I have received more than I have given, as I have become a more understanding and determined person. I share this compassion with those with whom I come in contact.

I thought that I had pondered the subject of water more than the average person, but it turns out there was much that I had not considered. For many years, I have taken the ability to receive clean drinking water for granted; however, traveling has demonstrated that this is a luxury.

My trip to Ecuador has had an enduring impact on me. I witnessed first hand how, in that country, inefficient irrigation practices and unsafe methods of chemical disposal jeopardize the ecosystem, as well as human health. This experience motivates me to take action.

A creative thinker, I am enthusiastic about taking on the challenges of conservation. As part of the model United Nations Club at Hopkinton High School, we often discuss infrastructure shortcomings and agricultural challenges in developing nations. I am excited to take what we have discussed as theoretical solutions and apply it to "real life". I believe that I qualify for this scholarship due to my commitment to community service, as well as my interest in majoring in Environmental Engineering in college. The later will provide me the knowledge base needed to implement solution to current environmental problems. While in college, I plan to participate in the "Engineers Without Borders" program and hope to contribute to a project in a conservation- or water-related field. Upon graduation, I hope to work in a similar field and positively impact entire ecosystems.

INVASIVE PLANT GUIDE REPRINTED

A Guide to Invasive Plants in Massachusetts has been reprinted and is now available for purchase from Mass Wildlife and other partners. Currently, guides are available for sale at Mass Wildlife's Field Headquarters in Westborough and the New England Wildlife Flower Society in Framingham. The Guide is \$5 a copy. To purchase a guide from Mass Wildlife, stop in the office during business hours or send a request to Invasive Plant Guide, Mass Wildlife Headquarters, NHESP, 1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westborough, MA, 01581 and include a check payable to: Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund. Credit cards are not accepted.

The Guide is designed to assist in the identification of 66 invasive plant species currently regulated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These invasive plants are non-native species that spread aggressively and have been determined to pose a threat to Massachusetts' native plants and habitats. This guide is the result of a collaborative effort by the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group, (MIPAG) a group of state and federal agencies, private conservation organizations and plant nurseries formed to further educate citizens about the negative impact of invasive plants. First printed in January of 2007, the guide was quickly snapped up by gardeners, nurseries and garden centers, botanists, naturalists and

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other plant enthusiasts. Within a few months, very few copies remained and due to the demand, work commenced to reprint the guide.

Invasive plants impact the Massachusetts environment by competing with native plants for limited natural resources, dominating habitats and reducing food and shelter for a host of native wildlife. This competition can cause forests, wetlands and meadows to become degraded, diminishing their ecological values and functions, as well as the economic and aesthetic values of Massachusetts natural landscapes. In one year alone, Massachusetts spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to control aquatic invasive plants. This figure doesn't take into account extensive containment efforts undertaken by municipalities, private landowners or lost revenue due to decreased recreational boating, swimming and fishing activities.

In the Guide, each invasive plant description includes a photograph, the plant's regulatory status, key identification characteristics, habitats where the plant is likely to be found, type of threat the plant poses to native species and habitats, and its current distribution and place of origin. Similar plant species are also briefly described to aid in plant identification. The guide includes the MIPAG definitions of three categories of invasiveness, brief explanations of how invasive plants are introduced and spread, why invasive plants are a problem, where to learn more about invasive plant control, and the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources' regulations regarding their importation, sale and propagation. Useful websites about invasive plants are also referenced. For more information about invasive plant species, go to: www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/conservation/invasives/invasive_species

From Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, June 7, 2008, Vol 8, No.8

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

by Rand Wentworth President, Land Trust Alliance from "Smart Investment Tip: Buy Land" Exchange, Spring 2003

"Communities that conserve land make an investment in future economic development. Companies frequently relocate where their top talent wants to live, and that is most often in places of natural beauty. When land is protected, the adjacent land often increases in value, with homes selling for 10–20 percent more than comparable homes without access to parks. Frederick Law Olmsted first demonstrated this principle in the late 1800's when he documented that Central Park caused \$5.4 million in

additional annual tax revenues, quickly repaying the \$14 million cost of the park. American consumers seem to have grasped this simple economic principle: A survey by the National Association of Homebuilders concluded that new homebuyers value trails and natural areas above any other amenity. Saving land from development is often the best way to reduce government spending and avoid increases in property taxes. Many jurisdictions believe that they will make money from the property taxes on new subdivisions, ignoring the true cost of schools, roads, police, water, and storm water management. Studies show that it costs between \$1.04 and \$2 for every dollar of tax revenue to provide services to a typical subdivision, so current taxpayers end up subsidizing outsiders who bring increased traffic, crowded schools, and the loss of the community's individual culture. It is also cheaper to protect clean water at its source than to build expensive water treatment facilities. New York City, for example, saved \$5 billion in construction costs by purchasing conservation lands around its reservoirs in the Catskill Mountains."

Abigail, a Dogs Tale, by Betty Fitzpatrick

While running our boarding kennel on Saddle Hill Road, we met many interesting dogs, like the owners, some good and some bad.

I got a call one day from a family in Framingham who wished to board a Dalmation puppy for the week-end. The Dalmation is not as social as some other breeds. They are a one-family, one-man type dog. The Dalmation is a very good natured dog, but reserved. The people arrived with a plum colored pup. I had never seen that color, obviously quite rare. The spots that were usually black were plum colored. It seemed to have a softer effect. The puppy was very outgoing and seemed to love everybody. The owners brought along their eight year old daughter. I noticed the girl had a strange attitude toward the dogs in the kennel. She jumped at them and hit their kennel doors to make them bark. This behavior did not turn me on! The parents seemed to ignore it. I instructed the girl that worked for us to follow her around to make sure she didn't hurt anyone. Kids will be kids, but my job was to protect the dogs in my care. If that little girl had been mine, she would be sporting a rather painful bottom!

The puppy boarded beautifully. She was a sweet outgoing pup. I loved her. When they picked her up on Monday morning, I hoped the parents would watch their daughter more carefully.

The puppy boarded beautifully and we saw Abigail quite a bit during the next few months. I must say that I got more

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attached to her than I should have. We were good friends, she and I.

One day the father arrived at the kennel and wanted to pay me to have Abigail put to sleep because she had snapped at the daughter. I knew nothing was wrong with that dog. The daughter was a pain in the butt!! I tried to talk him out of it. No success! I looked at Abigail's happy face and tail, and without even checking with my husband, I offered to buy her for one dollar. Sign the registration over to me and his responsibilities were over. He agreed and I had a Dalmation of all things. I called friends and vets later, to let them know that I had a pure bred to give away. Many people came but no one was interested. A few days later, an elderly couple dropped in to say hi! We had sold them one of our Springer's years ago. After the dog died of old age, they said they would never have another dog.

It seems they had retired but could not make their way on Social Security, so they had started a small catering business. She made the sandwiches and helped him load a refrigerated truck and drove to construction sites around the area. Against their protests, I brought out Abigail. She was adorable, and I could tell they liked her. I offered them a deal. I would sign over the registration to them, and if they wanted to get away for a week-end or vacation, I would board her for free. We would do it together. They took the deal and the dog. They had a fenced in backyard, and invited neighborhood kids to come in and play with her daily. All the rest of her life, she never snapped at a child or adult. I saw her a lot during her happy life. We saved a dog together and loved her together. It was a good deal!!

UP TO 90% OF LANDOWNERS ARE NOT AWARE

"The biggest problem land conservation faces in this country is that private landowners are not getting enough information. Up to 90% of landowners are not aware of any other options beyond selling their land for conventional subdivision development."

The principal private landowners in this country are older, 55 and older, even 65 years of age and older. Over the next fifteen to twenty years, millions and millions of acres of land will change hands, and potentially change use, as these older landowners plan for, or don't plan for, what's going to happen to their land."

Boston tax attorney Stephen Small, the nation's leading authority on private land protection options.

See the Hopkinton Area Land Trust trails maps on www.hopnews.com. Click on the "Community" icon near the "Bob's Blog" icon at the top of the HopNews.com home page. Then look for the HALT Logo and click on it.

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:

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Mail to:

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