

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

NEWSLETTER



Volume XXXIII, Autumn

September 2010

A Word from the President

Dear Friends,

These are exciting times for the Trust. After fifteen years of existence as a charitable corporation governed by a Board of Directors and revenue derived from donations only, the Board of Directors has decided to change the way we do business by becoming a member organization. That means several things, one of which is to ask you, our public friends, to become members of the trust by paying a small annual dues fee of \$30. The Trust has also decided to change our logo as evidenced by the one that appears at the top of this newsletter for the first time. Unfortunately it appears in black and white because of the printing process of the newsletter, but it is even more spectacular in color. If you would like to see it, come over to the Trust's booth at the PolyArts Festival on September 18th. With this change in structure many new benefits will be available. The first of which is our presence on the internet with a new website that can be found at www.hoplandtrust.org. The site is exciting and if you have a few moments to spare, please take some time and explore it. The site has a wealth of information about the Trust. The site provides our history, our accomplishments, our properties, our trails and much more. You can also use the site to sign up for membership. As the Trust transitions from non-members to members, we hope that you will join us and also continue your generous donations that have provided our support in the past.

On other matters, the Hopkinton Area Land Trust awarded two scholarships to Hopkinton High School seniors this year. One to Cameron Fairbanks and the other to Amy Sung. These are two of Hopkinton's outstanding young people. You can read more about them on page 3 in an article entitled "2010 HALT Scholarship Awards", by Gail Monroe, Director for Scholarship Activities.

Another matter of interest is that Erik Pohl, a scout working on his Eagle Project, has completed the work in the Whitehall Conservation Area. Erik has prepared several new trails, installed signage, installed trail markers and finally installed a 150 foot long field fence along Piazza Lane to delineate the Towns property line with its neighbors. This project completes work in the Whitehall Conservation Area making it one of the premier open spaces in Hopkinton and ready for your enjoyment. Please join us this Fall to walk in this preserve and enjoy the great outdoors as the Fall turns our forests into a blaze of color.

As always, I must come to you with hat in hand, and plead for your support. We are all suffering from the tough economic times, but if you think about it, the Trusts' open spaces provide some very real benefits to each of you. First, it provides open space land that is always open to you and your family for your fun and enjoyment (free of any charges). Second, the Trust provides for the preservation of that rural character that we all say we want in Hopkinton. 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 this fall season.

Very truly: *David Goldman*, President

PO BOX 56, WOODVILLE MA 01784

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Smart Growth

Despite progress in protecting land and a growing appreciation for the natural resources of the Commonwealth, Massachusetts continues to lose ground each day to development. While the rate of loss may be moderating, the impact of development is being felt in regions of the state containing some of our most sensitive rare species habitat and natural communities. And what is being built is becoming less and less sustainable, in terms of larger average house and lot sizes supporting fewer people.

Economic Challenges - Sprawling development rarely brings about the economic benefits anticipated. While it is true that an acre of land with a new house generates more total revenue than an acre of hay or corn, the cost of providing infrastructure and services to that property is greater for residential development than for open space, farm, or forest land. Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies conducted in more than 83 communities show that owners of farm, forest and open lands pay more in local tax revenues than it costs local government to provide services to their properties. Residential land uses, in contrast, are a net drain on municipal coffers: It costs local governments more to provide services to homeowners than residential landowners pay in property taxes.

Smart Growth and Open Space and Farmland Preservation - Smart growth is an approach to development that concentrates on investing in existing communities. By directing growth to communities where people already live and work, smart growth limits the amount of farmland and open space that is developed, makes existing communities more attractive -- with a mix of housing, restaurants, parks, cafes, and jobs, and minimizes the need for new water, sewer and road infrastructure that increase taxpayer burdens.

Smart growth means supporting town centers and Main Streets, and attracting investment in and around these centers and within existing communities, preserving the character of rural towns. In contrast, sprawling development in rural, suburban and urban areas is auto-oriented, single use development -- frequently along or at the intersection of nearby highways -- that draws

economic activity out of downtowns, damaging their vitality and dramatically increasing infrastructure needs. Smart Growth, in contrast, simultaneously preserves open space and farmland while ensuring that there is an adequate supply of housing for families with a mix of incomes. Smart Growth provides residents with a mix of shops, offices, restaurants, and other services that they can get to by automobile, bus, bike or foot.

Economic Benefits - Communities across the country have found that protecting open space, parks and farmland is a strategy that can be used to strengthen existing communities, support Main Street businesses, and avoid the costs of urban and suburban sprawl. As part of a package of smart growth programs and policies, communities that offer a high quality of life, including well-maintained neighborhood parks and open space, impose significantly fewer costs on local governments.

Adopted from www.smartgrowthamerica.org

Tales from the Trails

By Brian Garrett

It's a lazy summer afternoon with the sun shimmering off Lake Whitehall in Hopkinton. After a busy morning gathering and restocking my winter cache, I'm looking forward to a nice nap in the early afternoon sun. Off in the distance I sense an intruder. Lumbering along the path he comes into view. Large and clumsy, he's loaded with gear and headed my way. He passes beneath and heads for my favorite morning watering hole. I'm hoping he'll pause to take a quick look around and leave me in peace, but no -- he's stopped at the water's edge and settles in. He's making a racket as he unpacks a tripod and starts taking pictures of the lake. No, no, no. This is all wrong. No-one comes down here without my permission. This is my space, my spot. Someone has to leave and it's not going to be me.

It's a lazy summer afternoon with the sun shimmering off Lake Whitehall. I've had a great hike so far. With my backpack, tripod and camera I've been enjoying the sights, smells and sounds of the woods here in the Whitehall Conservation Area. I parked at the boat ramp on Route 135 and headed left into the woods, following the newly marked trail along the water's edge.

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I hear voices as I round the bend to my favorite spot – a big flat rock which looks out onto Lake Whitehall. Drawing nearer, I realize that a family has chosen my favorite spot for a picnic. I wave hello and continue along the path. Just around the bend I find a small side path that I've never noticed before. The path turns towards the water at the point of the peninsula. I settle in and set up my tripod and my camera. I take a few pictures looking out into the lake when I start noticing the wildlife buzzing around me. I snap some pictures of sunfish and dragonflies taking advantage of the shaded shallows in front of me. I'm settling in and feeling ready for a nap when all of a sudden...

The brush is alive with noise. I can't figure out where it's coming from. It sounds like a bunch of animals, but I don't recognize the calls. I thought it might be a bunch of birds, but then I see a blur of movement through the brush. It's moving fast on the ground and it's clearly not a bird. The clicks and chirps continue from multiple directions. Now the racket is nearly above me. Clearly, one or more animals are not happy that I'm here. Then I see him – *it's a chunky red squirrel*. I turn the camera towards him and he scurries up a tree. He's still making a racket when he pokes his head around the trunk of the tree. He inches out onto a branch to get a better look at me. I sit quietly and eventually he stops yelling at me. We sit for the next ten minutes or so keeping an eye on each other. He's starting to doze off when I quietly gather my gear and make my way back on the path. A quick look over my shoulder and it is clear why my precocious friend, the red squirrel, has chosen this spot for his home – it's a lazy summer afternoon with the sun shimmering off Lake Whitehall.



2010 HALT Scholarship Awards

By Gail Monroe

For over 10 years the Hopkinton Area Land Trust (HALT) has been awarding scholarships to graduating high school seniors interested in pursuing a career in conservation and/or the environmental sciences. Applicants must be residents of Hopkinton, currently attending any of the area's public or private high schools.

Earlier this year, HALT awarded two scholarships, one to Cameron Fairbanks and the other to Amy Sung. Cameron's initial interest in environmental issues developed when he was assigned to attend meetings of the Hopkinton Conservation Commission through his local government project. The environmental issues and concerns discussed at these meetings were so interesting that he decided to take the Advanced Placement Environmental Science class during his senior year. The research and laboratory studies in this class further developed his interest in the environment, and he determined to further his education in environmental issues in college. He has been accepted at the University of Connecticut.

Amy Sung, who is planning to attend Brown University, has been interested in conservation most of her life. Her attendance at the Hopkinton Board of Health meetings, part of her government project, gave her a greater depth of understanding of the local environmental issues faced in a small community. In her scholarship essay, she wrote, "Greater change starts on a small level, and one group taking action in a local arena can impact the community significantly."

The Board of Directors of the Hopkinton Area Land Trust wishes both students much success in their college careers, and in the application of their knowledge and interest in their chosen life's work.

Attracting Birds

- There are over 282 species of birds seen in Massachusetts. Some are year round residents, such as the Black-Capped Chickadee and the Cardinal, while others spend only part of the year

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here, like the Eastern Kingbird and the Yellow Warbler.

- Many birds, such as the Downy Woodpecker, nest in tress, so leave dead trees standing, unless they pose a hazard.
- Use bird feeders, suet (during the winter only) and birdbaths.
- When using bird houses and boxes, keep them well above the ground, near sufficient hiding places, and keep them clean and dry to prevent disease.
- There is only one kind of Hummingbird found in Massachusetts, the Ruby Throated Hummingbird. To attract them, hang Hummingbird feeders full of a 20% sucrose solution (one part cane sugar to 4 parts water) that is changed weekly, or plant some of these flowers: Wild Columbine, Cardinal-Flower, Bee Balm. Baltimore Orioles are also attracted to Hummingbird feeders, although you can buy feeders specifically designed for Orioles.
- Hummingbirds also eat small insect so you'll want to avoid too many chemicals in your lawn.

The Earth-friendly Earthworm

Sometimes we don't pay much attention to things right under our nose – or our toes. Earthworms are everywhere, but their tremendous contributions to the environment are often overlooked. In their role as “nature’s plows”, earthworms consume soil and decaying matter as they tunnel through the ground. After digesting what they need to live, they deposit droppings or “castings” in the soil. These castings contain important nutrients that enrich the soil.

The tunnels that earthworms leave behind allow air into the soil, bringing much needed oxygen to plant roots. As rainwater runs down the tunnels, nutrients from the soil dissolve into the water where plant roots are able to soak them up. In one year, a single earthworm can digest 36 tons of soil. So the next time you're digging in your yard, take a minute to notice the extraordinary earthworms that help your garden grow.

From www.nationalzoo.si.edu

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_____

Address_____

City_____

State_____ **Zip Code**_____

Telephone_____

Email_____

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

Or email:

www.hoplandtrust.org



Printed on recycled paper

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