

HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST INC.

NEWSLETTER



Volume LII, Spring

April 2019

Dear Hopkinton Community,
Autumn is almost over, we've had some turkey, the leaves are down, hopefully the raking is done, and winter will be here soon.

It's at this time of year that we make our appeal to you, our Hopkinton community, for end of year membership renewals and donations. The Hopkinton Area Land Trust serves Hopkinton by helping to conserve your woodlands and provide enjoyable walking trails.

It has been a busy year with the addition of the Peloquin Front Street parcel (16 +/- Acres) and the Cheney School Street parcel (8 +/- Acres), bringing total acreage under the Trust's management to about 1,100 acres. Your consideration will help immensely with our operating fund requirements and help us continue making a difference by retaining enjoyable Green Space in Hopkinton.

In particular, this year we are striving to undertake a long overdue Trail Map updating, including a major website update with easy access to downloadable maps intended to enhance your enjoyment and utilization of our properties. Your support is crucial to these efforts, as it represents quite an incremental funding need above our usual membership receipts.

Please remember that your contributions are tax deductible as the Trust is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation.

I also ask our local businesses to please consider becoming an annual Trust Sponsor with recognition of your assistance to be included on our web site and our documentation.

By maintaining open space in Hopkinton, the Trust is helping to preserve, protect and increase the value of your property and maintain the rural character of the town. **We have exceeded 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. If you enjoy the use of the open spaces, please remember to **help support the Trust, by becoming a member or by making a year-end tax deductible donation**, so that we can continue to provide this value to you the residents.

We look forward to seeing you at our next board meeting to be held in the Library training room on November 28 starting at 5:30PM.

Sincerely and Thank You on behalf of the Hopkinton Area Land Trust Board of Directors,

Sincerely, *Barry Rosenbloom*, Vice President

PO BOX 56, WOODVILLE MA 01784

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PART IV: NEW SERIES FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Readers of this newsletter may have noticed that HALT has often named its trails and properties after a particular person or family. Hopkinton residents may be interested in learning more about these particular persons or family, and why HALT would have named a trail or property for them. This series will discuss some of these people or families in upcoming issues.

IV. Wiley Woods

By Gail Clifford

This parcel on Frankland Road was the first property acquired by the Hopkinton Area Land Trust, which was organized in 1995. The total area is about 16 acres, and the trail is almost a mile in length. The beginning of the trail is through a dense, but swampy area. After a stream crossing, the land rises somewhat in elevation into an upland mixed forest, less dense than the wet areas. It abuts about 10 acres of additional, but private, open land owned by an Open Space Development to the west of the property. It is mostly secluded and very quiet, passing near dwellings and a business only on the southern end of the loop section of the trail. There are two benches along the trail. This area is a favorite of equestrians and dog walkers.

The property is named in honor of Judith Wiley who was an ardent supporter of HALT and conservation planning in general. Judith served on the Hopkinton Conservation Commission for 2 years and the Planning Board for 17 years in the 1970s and 1980s, and was Chairman of the Planning Board for many of those years. She was described by one person as a "leading force" in early town planning, and she played a major role in the development of Hopkinton's Open Space bylaw and the Master Plan. Known as a fair-minded and level-headed leader, she worked apolitically in all her dealings, even though she was a registered Democrat and later served as chairman of the Democratic Town Committee. She died unexpectedly on February 14, 1998, at a Boston hospital after a brief illness, age 60.

Judith (Laird) Wiley was born in Annapolis, Maryland, and graduated from Newton College of the Sacred Heart as valedictorian in 1959. She and her husband moved to Hopkinton in the 1960s, then moved to San Diego for a few years before returning to Hopkinton to stay. She was also instrumental in the planning of Framingham Union Hospital, a member of the League of Women Voters, and a strong supporter of the Hopkinton Public Library.

FINDING VERNAL POOLS

By Mavis O'Leary

Spring-like temperatures in February, melting snow and timing allowed Vernal Pools to be found and observed a bit earlier than usual. February's unseasonably warm temperatures have exposed vernal pools which can be seen in the woods on the Susan DeGozzadi trail, a property under HALT stewardship. Observable activity in vernal pools occurred in early March when seasonal temperatures started to warm up a little more. No movement or evidence of pool inhabitants were observed at the early thaw period in late February.

Vernal pools, also known as ephemeral pools, autumnal pools, and temporary woodland ponds, typically fill with water in the autumn or winter due to rainfall and rising groundwater, and remain ponded through the spring and into summer. Vernal pools dry completely by the middle or end of summer each year, or at least every few years. Occasional drying prevents fish from establishing permanent populations, which is critical to the reproductive success of many amphibian and invertebrate species that rely on breeding habitats free of fish predators.

People walking and hiking on woodland trails may spot a "new" vernal pool. Anyone may contact the local Conservation Commission or the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (MA-NHESP) and report what they suspect is a vernal pool.

A Certified Vernal Pool (CVP) is protected under the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA). The MA-NHESP is the agency that certifies Vernal Pools by reviewing all the

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vernal pool reports submitted to them. When a vernal pool is certified as a CVP, it is protected under WPA from damage or destruction by those who may be unaware of the importance of vernal pools for animals and specific endangered wildlife.

Interestingly, Hopkinton has adopted a "Home Rule Amendment of Massachusetts Constitution and the Home Rule Statutes, independent of the Wetlands Protection Act, MGL c.131, ch. 40, and Regulations 310 CMR 10.00, thereunder", which protects any vernal pool, not just a CVP, and the 125-foot buffer around any vernal pool.

The Susan DeGozzaldi Trail, near the Cross Street entrance, features wetland and vernal pool information sign boards. One sign has graphic pictures of three common wildlife inhabitants of vernal pools. There is a large vernal pool and wetlands there.

Additional informational sign boards are found along the length of the trail describing a variety of trees and other woodland features that are seen in this wooded area. A second entrance to this trail is on Frankland Road near the Ashland town line.

More extensive information about vernal pools is found at The Upper Charles Trail/Chamberlain Street entrance, adjacent to large wetlands there. This large detailed information sign describes vernal pools as a "type of wetland ecosystem that is common in Hopkinton and throughout New England." This sign board shows photographic images of the common inhabitants of vernal pools at various stages of their life cycle. Also found here are details about the types of inhabitants of vernal pools and what other wildlife species depend on vernal pools for their existence.

In March/April one needs not be close to the woodlands where vernal pools exist to hear the call of some vernal pool inhabitants named 'spring peepers', as they sing their mating chants and leave the vernal pools to seek a mate.

Sources: Hopkinton Conservation Agent; www. Mass Division of Fisheries & Wildlife; Town of Hopkinton General Bylaws, October 2016; www. MA-Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program;

Forty Acres of Farmland in America is Lost to Development Ever Hour

Picture bulldozers plowing up pastures and cornfields to put in subdivisions and strip malls. Add to this picture the fact that the average age of the American farmer is nearly 60 — it's often retiring farmers that sell to real estate developers. They can afford to pay much more for property than aspiring young farmers.

Alarmed by this trend, environmentalists back in the 1970s developed the idea to pay retiring farmers to preserve their land in a natural state rather than sell out to real estate developers. Since then, thousands of nonprofit "land trusts" have sprung up to support the cause, 29 states now have funding programs to support them, and the federal government has offered a hefty tax break to landowners who sign a "conservation easement," which is legalese for a document that prevents a parcel from being paved over, in perpetuity, no matter who buys it.

For the most part, the movement has been a success. So far, it's kept more than 56 million acres out of developers' hands over the past four decades. But some in agricultural circles are concerned that conservation land is also being kept out of the hands of future farmers since traditional conservation easements don't require the land to be productively farmed, only preserved.

Holly Rippon-Butler, land access program director for the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC), a group working to make farmland more affordable and break down other barriers that face aspiring agriculturalists, says land trust properties may be off-limits to developers. However, they are becoming increasingly desirable among deep-pocketed individuals who are looking to establish hobby farms and equestrian estates, which are fair game under most conservation easements. "City folks who want to buy farmland for its idyllic qualities but not necessarily food production for market are a worrisome new piece of the larger land access issue," she says.

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Brokering a single conservation easement can be a years-long endeavor, so it will be a while before the architects of the land trust movement, version 2.0, can point to more than a scattering of concrete results. The good news is that, because of the very nature of conservation easements, the results are permanent.

LAND TRUST NEXT MEETING

The Hopkinton Area Land Trust will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at 5:30 PM in the downstairs meeting room in the Hopkinton Public Library.

"It is not so much its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men's hearts, as for that subtle something, that quality of air that emanation from old trees, that so wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit." – Robert Lewis Stevenson

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 Address _____

All contributions to HALT are deductible for income tax purposes.

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