



HOPKINTON AREA LAND TRUST, INC.

hopkintonlandtrust.org

Spring

April 2021

Dear Neighbors,

It has been more than a year since the pandemic began to affect our lives. With few indoor places safe to go, people took to the great outdoors in large numbers. Interest in Hopkinton's trails has grown immensely, and with it, an increased awareness of the public open spaces in our neighborhoods. **The Hopkinton Area Land Trust has trails for every level of ambition and skill:** casual walking, hiking, snowshoeing, horseback riding, skiing, and biking. Some trails are great for tricycles, baby carriages and wheelchairs. We even have a property where you can just sit on a bench and admire the sunset. Browse our website to find something that suits you.

In the last 18 months, to accommodate this increased usage, HALT volunteers have been especially active with trail building, maintenance and improvements. **We now have 25 miles of trails throughout town for all to enjoy**, and this number is constantly increasing. We are also actively working with the town, landowners and developers to acquire additional open space before it gets taken up by development. We are very closely involved with all the town boards and committees that have a role in open space preservation.

Protecting the conservation value of the 900 acres of land under our responsibility requires constant vigilance. We are especially grateful to all the volunteers who have stepped forward to join our stewardship program in the last year, allowing us to keep the trails open, monitor the condition of our properties, and deal with issues in a timely manner.

With the snow gone but foliage not yet out, now is a great time to go out on the trails when the visibility is best. Try a familiar trail and maybe you'll find an unexpected view that you haven't seen before. You may get lucky and see some wildlife, and if you look closely, you'll find some early blooming wildflowers. Worried about ticks? You won't find that many in the woods, and they don't fly, jump or drop from trees. Use DEET, stay on trails, avoid brushing against vegetation and check yourself when you get home. But bring the right shoes, because spring can mean mud!

Morrie Gasser, President

Trails Club

A great way to discover new places is with a guided walk. The Hopkinton Trails Club leads monthly walks on trails in town, many on HALT properties. The walks are on weekends at a leisurely pace and rarely more than 2 miles. If you are interested in exploring trails in Hopkinton, visit the Trails Club website:

hopkintontrailsclub.com/events.htm

Outdoor Almanac for April

From © www.massaudubon.com

- With warming weather, Black-capped Chickadees sing their sweet fee-bee fee-bee as they prepare for nesting season. Don't confuse the sweet chickadee song with the Eastern Phoebe's more emphatic, raspy, whistled fee-BEE, which also starts about now.
- Mourning Doves can be heard "perch cooing" as they start the nesting season. This repeated low-pitched coo song is often heard just before dawn and frequently mistaken for an owl calling.
- Listen for Spring Peepers in wetlands; the persistent high-pitched whistles of large congregations fill the air after dusk.
- Painted Turtles can be seen basking on logs or rocks, warming up after their winter stay in cold mud at the bottom of the pond.
- Red Fox kits have emerged from their dens. Kits have dark gray fur at birth which turns to sandy gray when they first venture out. The change to adult red starts at about three months.
- Watch for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Early returning hummingbirds often feed from sap wells made by Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. If you plan on putting out a hummingbird feeder, this is the time to start.
- Gray Catbirds, Eastern Towhees, and Barn Swallows return. Listen for the feline-like mewing of the catbirds among sprawling vines and thickets and the drink-your-tea call of the towhees in scrubby areas. Look for the mud nests of Barn Swallows under the eaves in sheds and barns.
- Search in woodlands for early wildflowers, such as trout lily, trillium, bloodroot, and hepatica.

How To Celebrate Earth Day

This year, we celebrate Earth Day on Thursday, April 22. The connection we have to nature, plants, and the land is integral to our health and all that we are. Earth Day reminds us to take care of our planet—whether it’s cleaning up litter, planting more trees, recycling and repurposing, or going on a walk in a green space amidst the wildflowers.

Earth Day 2021 will mark the 51st anniversary of this holiday. Typically, Earth Day is assigned a different theme or area of focus each year. This year’s theme is “Restore Our Earth.”

10 EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS

Celebrate Earth Day by appreciating and respecting the natural world. Here are some ideas to inspire you!

1. **Support our native bees:** The super-pollinators of the garden are native bees! Plant flower that are rich in pollen and nectar; plant a variety providing blooms all through the growing season.
2. **Start Composting:** Yet another to-do list staple. Composting is a must. In addition to reducing your carbon footprint, you’ll also reduce your spending. And you’ll be able to produce your own healthy nutritious soil without having to spend big bucks on the fancy dirt!
3. **Plant wildflowers:** Or any kind of flower. If a full-blown garden is too much work, start with planters that are easily cared for.
4. **Reduce plastic dependency:** Plastic permeates every aspect of our lives. Eliminate single-use plastics, such as water bottles and grocery bags.
5. **Check out your local farmer’s market:** See what you can cross off your routine grocery list.
6. **Bring nature into the garden:** Grow plants that attract butterflies and plants that attract hummingbirds!
7. **Volunteer or donate to a local environmental organization:** Contributing with your time, knowledge or money helps your community thrive.
8. **Conserve water:** Water wisely in the garden and avoid over-watering. Turn the faucet off while brushing your teeth.
9. **Plant more trees:** Talk to your local government about planting more trees and native garden beds in public spaces or consider planting your own on your property!
10. **Get kids involved:** Pass down a love of nature and plants with kids. Plant a garden with your children. Get them involved at an early age. Have fun!

Walk Rockwood Meadows to Peppercorn Hill

Join us and the Trails Club on the morning of April 17 for an easy walk to see the new parcels of land the Town of Upton recently added to the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area, and to explore an additional parcel that remains to be purchased. Check our website at hopkintonland-trust.org/events for more information.

Report Trail Conditions

After every big storm, HALT trails experience lots of blowdowns. As you walk the trails, feel free to pick up and move aside sticks and branches in the way. But if you run into a major obstacle that you cannot remove, or any other problem on the trail, let us know. On our website, select the “Steward Report Form” item under “Support” in the menu bar to report the problem and we’ll get right 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.

Become a Member of HALT			
Join online at our website or mail this form			
Family	\$30 ___	Sentinel	\$50 ___
Centurion	\$100 ___	Steward	\$250 ___
Protector	\$500 ___	President’s Circle	\$1,000 ___
Total Enclosed \$ _____			
Name _____			
Other family member name _____			
Address _____			
City _____			
State _____		Zip Code _____	
Telephone _____			
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All contributions to HALT are deductible for income tax purposes.			
Mail to: Hopkinton Area Land Trust, Inc. PO Box 56 Woodville, MA 01784			
Contact: info@hopkintonlandtrust.org Visit us at: hopkintonlandtrust.org			