

# NEWSLETTER



*Volume XXXIV, Fall*

*December, 2011*

*A Word from the President*

*David Goldman*

Another year has almost passed and the Thanksgiving dinner has been enjoyed. The year end holidays are upon us all too quickly and the Trust hopes that you are enjoying them with your family. It has been a busy year for the Trust and I would like to give you an update of what the Trust has accomplished and what we hope to accomplish in the coming year. As you may be aware, the Trust has rebranded itself as evidenced by the new logo above, a new website ([www.hopkintonlandtrust.org](http://www.hopkintonlandtrust.org)), and has converted to a membership organization. In terms of membership, the Trust now has approximately 70 members and more joining every day. We held our first Annual Meeting on September 25, 2011 at the Hopkinton Fire House Training room. In addition, the Trust is completing the acquisition of two Conservation Restrictions, one on 125 acres and one on 16 acres. We also completed work on the Whitehall Conservation area and have placed signs at several trail heads.

You may remember that the Trust has been developing a Geocaching program for our trails and properties in order to encourage greater usage of them. The Trust purchased several "Cache Boxes", Log Books, and other material and Geo-caches have been put in place in September and October. Two Geo-caches have been set up as follows. Deer Run/The Andersen's trail, Cache ID GC34X5Y at coordinates N 42° 14.879 W 071° 29.895 (Fawn Ridge Road in the Northeast section of Hopkinton) and the Karl Mighton Memorial Trail, Cache ID GC34X6Q at coordinates N42° 13.065 W 071° 28.329 (North Mill Street and East Street in the Southeast section of Hopkinton). Two additional caches are being installed and we will provide that information in the near future.

As always, I must come to you with hat in hand, and plead for your support as a donor or as a member (see back page for membership information). We all know that economic times are tough, and may be getting tougher, but if you think about it, the Trusts' open space in town provides some very real benefits to each of you. It provides open space land that is always open to you and your family for your fun and enjoyment (free of any charges). Also, by maintaining the open space, the Trust is helping to preserve and increase the value of your property in Hopkinton. **We are closing in on 750 acres of open space land in Trust ownership or under Conservation restriction**, 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 the holiday season.

Very truly: *David Goldman*, President

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## GEOCACHING IN HOPKINTON

If you are interested in learning more about geocaching in Hopkinton go to [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com). Enter Hopkinton's postal code in the search box and a list of local caches is shown. There are caches in the Hopkinton State Park, Berry Acres (off of West Main St.), Whitehall State Park, Wilson St. and more.

Whether you're new to geocaching or you're just getting started, you most likely have a bag of some type, which you carry with you when you're on your geocaching adventures. If you don't then I highly recommend getting one and filling it with the items listed below.

**1. Pens & Pencils** – Most micros and even some smalls, regulars and larges do not contain writing utensils. If you go caching without a pen there's a good chance you won't be able to sign half of the logs.

**2. Batteries** – It's great fun to be out hunting for caches in the middle of nowhere, or in the middle of somewhere for that matter. But it's not so much fun when your GPS dies and needs new batteries!

**3. Swag (Trade Items)** – Especially when caching with children, it's always good to have some small items to trade for other items inside caches.

**4. Tweezers** – Many micro containers contain logs that are very difficult to remove. Tweezers have "saved the day" for me on several occasions! In some rare occasions tweezers are even needed to retrieve the actual Geocache itself.

**5. Flashlight** – Whether you cache at night or doing all of your hunting during daylight hours a flashlight often comes in handy. At night it's obvious, but even during the day some hiding spots are much easier to find when a flashlight!

**6. Paper and/or log books** – Many logs get wet. It's always good to help out the cache owner by replacing wet or full logs, so 1. you can sign the log 2. those who find the cache after you can sign the log and 3. the cache owner doesn't have to deal with it. It's cheap and easy, so why not?

**7. Camera** – You never know when you're going to find a neat place, creative container, rare animal etc. on your

geocaching adventures. Always have a camera with you, so you don't have another "Darn, I wish I had a camera" moment.

**8. Cache Containers** – I have a few extra nanos and bison tubes in my bag. You never know when you're going to come across a great spot that needs a cache.

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## 2012 WEATHER

- Snowfall will be **above normal** in most locations from New England southward to Georgia and westward across the northern tier of states to the Cascades of Washington and Oregon. Skiers, rejoice!
- Snowfall will be **below normal** in most other areas that typically receive snow. Hey, at least that means less shoveling, right?
- Temperatures across most of the nation will be **above normal**, on average, with several very cold periods.
- However, temperatures will be **below normal**, on average, in most of New England, the Mid-Atlantic, South Florida, the Upper Midwest, the Desert Southwest, and the Pacific Southwest.
- Precipitation will be **above normal** in the eastern Ohio Valley and in northern portions of the Upper Midwest, Pacific Northwest, and Pacific Southwest and **below normal** everywhere else.
- Most of the area from Texas and western Louisiana northward to Nebraska and Iowa will have relatively mild temperatures, on average, but below-normal precipitation will increase drought concerns.

From [www.farmersalmanac.com](http://www.farmersalmanac.com)

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## AGRICULTURE DECLINE IN MASSACHUSETTS

Agricultural land uses have been in decline in Massachusetts ever since the advent of the railroad made the fertile grasslands of the Midwestern U.S. more

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appealing than the rocky landscapes of New England. A more recent look at land changes in land use between 1971 and 2005 is useful as a potential explanation for the decrease in so many of our grassland bird species. Of the roughly 400,000 acres of cropland and pasture present in 1971, nearly 150,000 of these acres have been converted to other land uses. While most are aware of the 75,000 acres that were converted to developed land uses over this period, it is important to realize that an equivalent amount of land (71,400 acres) has naturally reverted to a forested condition. The combination to conversion to development and reversion to forest results in a 25% decrease in cropland and pasture.

From "State of the Birds", Mass Audubon, 2011

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## **OCTOBER NOR'EASTER**

October's Northeast snowstorm and extended power outages have focused renewed attention on extreme weather. But was this event related to climate change? Most press coverage says no, and as a result the press are well on their way to getting the story wrong.

Scientists are increasingly recognizing that climate change plays a central role in the extreme weather events that are slamming people and communities around the world. This week press coverage began of an IPCC report on extreme weather due out in two weeks, which will identify a better than 90 percent chance that climate change will bring more severe weather in our future.

And also, Kevin Trenberth, a scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, CO published an article urging scientists to change their fundamental research format on extreme weather from an assumption that climate change isn't responsible to an assumption that it is responsible, to reflect the reality that climate change is occurring and influencing every storm.

"Humans are changing our climate. There is no doubt whatsoever...So why does the science community continue to do attribution studies and assume that humans are having no influence as a null hypothesis?" wrote Trenberth. Now some of you probably are ready to stop reading with a phrase like null hypothesis, but stick with me.

So what Trenberth is proposing is that the scientifically correct default expectation is that climate change influences everything, last weekend's storm included. "These changes are universal so that all storms are now operating in an environment that has changed, and even a 'normal' storm must have heavier precipitation than it would have had 40 years ago."

By continuing to assume that climate hasn't changed and then trying to test for whether it has, Trenberth argues, scientists are making a series of errors that "grossly underestimate the role of humans in climate events of note in recent times."

In the case of the Northeast snowstorm, this quote from Seth Borenstein's coverage of the IPCC report has been spread far and wide (I even found it quoted in a Taiwanese newspaper): "The snow-bearing Nor'easter cannot be blamed on climate change and probably isn't the type of storm that will increase with global warming, four meteorologists and climate scientists said."

But there are two ways that climate change amplified the effects of the Northeast storm. First, we've had an extremely warm fall. In the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts, where I live, we didn't have a killing frost until October 27<sup>th</sup>. That's the day I harvested the last of the okra, peppers, and winter squash from the garden—fully a month after a normal fall's first frost date. That late fall meant that trees still had their leaves, and hence that the snow broke far more branches and therefore damaged power lines much more than it would have in a normal fall. For the people still waiting for power nearly a week later—that's a climate change related extreme.

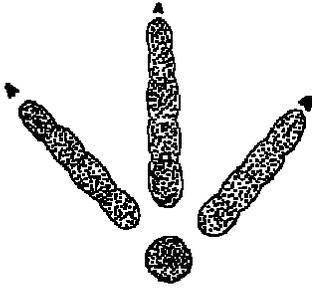
And the volume of water in the storm also was likely influenced by climate change. The storm brought the heaviest October snow in New England in more than 200 years—since the "snow hurricane" of 1804. A once-in 200 year event is probably extreme by most people's definition. The link to climate change, as Trenberth points out is that global warming has increased the amount of water in the atmosphere by about 4%, "thereby increasing the intensity of precipitation (rain and snow)."

From [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

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## WILD TURKEYS



Wild turkeys are native to the southeastern United States. They have been introduced in many parts of the west, including California. They prefer oak woodlands, but are found in grasslands and pine forests as well.

They are swift runners and are wary of people. However, I have found them to be bold when they know there is food around. Turkeys have approached quite close to me when I am putting out food for other birds at feeders.

Turkeys are polygamous. The male struts with his tail fanned to attract a harem. He fluffs up his feathers and drags his wing tips along the ground. This makes him look bigger. You can often find the tracks made by the dragging wingtips. Wild turkeys do have the ability to fly. They are rather large and clumsy in flight, but are capable of it. I have seen turkeys wade a river rather than fly across, however. Perhaps it uses so much energy that they prefer to conserve rather than fly when they could just as well walk. (Or wade, in this case.)

Turkeys lay eight to ten buff-colored eggs with brown spots. Eggs are laid in a shallow depression in the ground, lined with grass and leaves. I have found these nests in tall grass in spring. The typical call is a gobble, although turkeys use other calls as well.

The male turkey has a more colorful head and darker plumage. He also has a spur on each leg and a "beard" of feathers on the chest. Young gobblers may not have the spur and beard yet. These youngsters are called "jakes."

The female turkey has a more subtly colored head. She is able to hide better due to this natural camouflage. It is useful when she is sitting on her nest and needs to be concealed from predators.

From [www.bear-tracker.com](http://www.bear-tracker.com)

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.

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All contributions to HALT are deductible for income tax purposes.

Mail to:  
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Woodville, MA 01784

Or email: [info@hopkintonarealandtrust.org](mailto:info@hopkintonarealandtrust.org)  
Or contact David Goldman at [goldmand@mindspring.com](mailto:goldmand@mindspring.com)

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