

NEWSLETTER



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May 2015

A Word from the President

David Goldman

Winter is finally over and all the snow has finally melted – Welcome to the New England Spring. Speaking of spring, it is time to shed the winter blues, get out of the house and take a walk in the great outdoors. I encourage you to find one of the Trust’s many trails and location to enjoy your walk. If you want to know where the properties and trails are located, please visit our website at www.hopkintonarealandtrust.org .

Over the past few months **the Trust**, in cooperation with the **Sudbury Valley Trustees, the Friends of Upton State Forest, the Friends of Whitehall, the New England Mountain Bike Association, and the Bay State Trail Riders Association** attempted to convince the town to purchase 203 Pond Street (a 40 acre parcel) to provide a connection between the Whitehall State Park and the Upton State Forest. The efforts failed but, all is not totally lost, because 32 acres of the property will be donated to SVT. However, instead of the connection being 800 feet along Pond Street, it will now be limited to 100 feet. I want to personally thank all the people and their groups for all the very hard work that they expended on this effort.

The Trust, in cooperation with the Boy Scouts, has created a new trail connector trail from the Whisper Way parking area to the Cameron Woods trail system. The parking area is accessed by turning south into Whisper Way off of Woods Street just west of the Route 495 underpass and proceeding about 1000 feet along the road to the parking area on the right. There is space for 6 vehicles and the trailhead is defined by an opening in a split rail fence. Thanks to Dan McIntyre for the provision and installation of the fence. The trail has been clearly marked, so please come and enjoy this new trail. **In addition, the Trust is planning a new geo-cache on the trail in the very near future.**

The Trusts’ open space in town provides some very real benefits. By maintaining the open space, the Trust is helping to preserve and increase the value of your property in Hopkinton and maintain the rural character of the town. **We have reached 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. We are at the beginning of the spring-summer season and if you enjoy the use of the open space please remember to ***help support the Trust, by becoming a member or by making a tax deductible donation***, so that we can continue to provide this value to you the residents. So have some fun, get outdoors and enjoy nature’s wonders. Find a geo-cache, take a walk in the Trusts properties, **welcome home**. For those that are members, look for a membership renewal letter in the mail very soon.

Very truly: *David Goldman*, President

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FOW Receives 2015 Shared Stewardship Award

The Friends of Whitehall (FOW) recently received the Shared Stewardship Award from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for “extraordinary contribution to furthering stewardship of the state parks system.”

Richard B. Trubiano, Forest and Park Supervisor, offered the nomination based on FOW’s efforts to foster stewardship and promote state parks, noting FOW’s continued support through funding and volunteerism on many valuable projects. FOW’s efforts for trail stewardship and providing maintenance enhance the visitor experience by providing safe and readily accessible passage to those seeking connection with nature. FOW has also sponsored multiple scout projects, hosted clean ups and workshops, and provided valuable information to visitors.

In addition to all that the Friends do, the MassParks Awards Committee was also moved and inspired by the sheer volume of FOW’s contribution to the state parks over the past ten years. From the award letter, “The extraordinary work that you do promotes the agency’s mission, and we are certainly grateful that your efforts have promoted shared stewardship of our treasured resources.”

The Award was presented on April 1st at the MassParks Supervisors’ Academy Awards Ceremony at the Devens Common Conference Center in Devens, Massachusetts. Accepting the award for the Friends of Whitehall were President Steve Warren, Clerk Margaret Mighton and Board of Directors member Ken Johnson.

THE MONARCH MASSACRE: NEARLY A BILLION BUTTERFLIES HAVE VANISHED

Threatened animals like elephants, porpoises and lions grab all the headlines, but what's happening to monarch butterflies is nothing short of a massacre. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service summed it up in just one grim statistic: Since 1990, about 970 million have vanished. It happened as farmers and homeowners sprayed herbicides on milkweed plants, which serve as the butterflies' nursery, food source and home. Only about 30 million monarchs remain.

Monarch butterflies are a keystone species that once fluttered throughout the United States by the billions.

Every fall, monarchs undertake a massive migration, flying from Canada and the northern United States as far as 3,000 miles south for the winter. It is considered by many to be the most spectacular migration of the insect world. Most monarchs west of the Rockies migrate to California, while most eastern monarchs migrate to central Mexico. After wintering in the south, monarchs come out of hibernation in the spring, mate, fly north to find milkweed plants, lay their eggs, and die. Only the monarchs born in the late summer or early fall make the migration. The migratory generation can live eight months, much longer than the two to six week lifespan of other generations.

In an attempt to counter two decades of destruction, the Fish and Wildlife Service launched a partnership with two private conservation groups, the National Wildlife Federation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, to basically grow milkweed like crazy in the hopes of saving the monarchs.

The common pink milkweed plant is essential for the monarch’s existence. Monarchs lay their eggs on the underside of the milkweed leaves, and when the eggs hatch, monarch larvae eat *only* milkweed leaves. Although milkweed is poisonous to some species, it is not harmful to monarch caterpillars. Instead, the milkweed toxins make the caterpillar poisonous to its predators.

This decline has been linked to the severe depletion of milkweed plants, which used to be naturally plentiful along roadsides, and in farm pastures and gardens. Now milkweed, daisy, and many other perennial flowers are mowed on roadsides and ditches throughout the summer months and are cleared from farmland to make room for crops.

Herbicide use in particular has had a huge impact on the monarch, killing milkweed plants on farmland and depleting the butterflies’ primary food source. “The widespread decline of monarchs is driven by the massive spraying of herbicides on genetically engineered crops, which has virtually eliminated monarch habitat in cropland that dominates the Midwest landscape,” Bill Freese, a science policy analyst with the Center for Food Safety, said in a press release.

In fact, the loss of millions of acres of milkweed on agricultural lands in the Midwest has likely contributed

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more than anything else to the decline of the monarch population, according to a study by researchers at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. Drought can also exacerbate the situation for monarchs, limiting the growth of milkweed plants in gardens, and along roadsides. The illegal logging of the tall fir trees in Mexico's forests, which shelter the eastern monarch population during the winter, also poses a threat to the species.

In 2014, the Center for Biological Diversity and the Center for Food Safety filed a petition to place the monarch on the federal endangered species list.

National Trails Day – June 6

June 6, 2015 is American Hiking Society's National Trails Day®, the country's largest celebration of trails. American Hiking Society's National Trails Day® (NTD) is a celebration of America's magnificent Trail System, occurring annually on the first Saturday in June.

NTD features a series of outdoor activities, designed to promote and celebrate the importance of trails in the United States. Individuals, clubs and organizations from around the country host National Trails Day® events to share their love of trails with friends, family, and their communities.

America's 200,000 miles of trails allow us access to the natural world for recreation, education, exploration, solitude, inspiration, and much more. Trails give us a means to support good physical and mental health; they provide us with a chance to breathe fresh air, get our hearts pumping, and escape from our stresses.

Hopkinton has miles of wonderful trails. More information can be found at: www.hopkintonlandtrust.org or www.hopkintontrailsclub.com

House Passes Bill Extending Easement Tax Breaks

Feb. 13, 2015 | Environment & Energy Daily | Washington, D.C.

The House approved legislation permanently extending a special tax break for farmers, ranchers and other landowners who agree to spare their properties from development.

The House voted 279-127 for [H.R. 644](#), a package of three bills to spur charitable giving that includes [H.R. 641](#), by Reps. Mike Kelly (R-Pa.) and Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), to permanently extend an enhanced tax deduction for conservation easements. The deduction, which expired last December, rewards landowners, particularly farmers and ranchers, who keep their lands available for wildlife, recreation and scenery.

The measure, which is expected to cost more than \$1 billion over the next decade, is strongly backed by conservationists, sportsmen and agricultural groups that argue it will accelerate the rate of land protection.

"Federal lawmakers made clear today they share our firm belief that land conservation is good for America and Americans," said Rand Wentworth, president of the Land Trust Alliance. "As we work with our Senate allies to advance this bipartisan bill, we will continue to emphasize the value of keeping working lands in working hands."

The White House threatened to veto the package due to the absence of offsets.

The bill received 67 percent support, enough to overcome a veto.

Outdoor Almanac

From www.massaudubon.org

June 2015

June 2

Full moon. The Rose Moon (Colonial American).

June 16

Fireflies appear in grassy areas; each species has its own flash pattern.

June 18

Baby birds begin to leave their nests at about this time yet are still well attended by their parents.

June 21

Summer solstice - First day of summer and the year's longest stretch of daylight.

June 23

Gray tree frogs begin singing; listen also for the nighttime bullfrog chorus at nearby ponds.

June 25

Open meadows are graced with the bright faces of yellow black-eyed Susan and white ox-eye daisy.

June 30

Daylilies bloom in old gardens and fields.

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A SHARP SPIKE IN HONEYBEE DEATHS

A prolonged and mysterious die-off of the nation's honeybees, a trend worrisome both to beekeepers and to farmers who depend on the insects to pollinate their crops, apparently worsened last year.

In an annual survey released on May 13, 2015 by the Bee Informed Partnership, a consortium of universities and research laboratories, about 5,000 beekeepers reported losing 42.1 percent of their colonies in the 12-month period that ended in April. That is well above the 34.2 percent loss reported for the same period in 2013 and 2014, and it is the second-highest loss recorded since year-round surveys began in 2010.

Most striking, however, was that honeybee deaths spiked last summer, exceeding winter deaths for the first time. Commercial beekeepers, some of whom rent their hives to farmers during pollination seasons, were hit especially hard, the survey's authors stated.

Nobody knows with certainty why honeybee deaths are rising. Beekeepers once expected to lose perhaps 10 percent of their bees in an average year. But deaths began to spike in the middle of the past decade, when a phenomenon in which bees deserted their hives and died en masse, later named colony collapse disorder, began sweeping hives worldwide.

The Environmental Protection Agency said last month that it was unlikely to approve any new uses of the pesticides until more tests on the risks to bees and other pollinators have been completed.

Send Us Your Photos

Do you have photos of Hopkinton weather, nature, animals, plants, trails, etc. Anything related to outdoors, conservation, land, or nature.

Email your photo to the Land Trust at: info@hopkintonarealandtrust.org

We will try to publish as many as we can on our web site: www.hopkintonarealandtrust.org

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 _____

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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
508-435-6578

Or email: info@hopkintonarealandtrust.org

Choose your membership level now at:
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