

NEWSLETTER



Volume XXXV, Spring

May, 2012

A Word from the President

David Goldman

Since my last letter, the fall, winter and part of the spring have gone by. But the days are getting longer and warmer, so we need to get out in the environment and enjoy the great outdoors. In that vein, you may remember that last year the Trust received a Grant from the State's Department of Conservation and Recreation's Recreational, Trails Grant Program for the restoration of the surface on the Center Trail that has been badly eroded by heavy rains in the past few years. After negotiations with the Town, the Trust proceeded to accomplish all the tasks (as modified by the negotiations) on Center Trail and the trail is now open for your use. However, please be aware that the Town, at its 2011 regular Town Meeting, committed \$120,000 to upgrade the trail to a multi-use trail (accessible by non-motorized wheeled vehicles). That work is being planned as we speak and I expect the actual work to commence in the near future.

The Geocaching program for our trails and properties continues. However, the Trust has lost its **geocache-master** and is looking for a volunteer to take over the position. If you are interested, please call me and we can discuss the work involved (not a lot). For Geo-caching information see the website <http://www.geocaching.com/>. Also in this regard, the Trust is looking for a **webmaster** to maintain our website. If there is any interest, please contact me.

Before long, the Trust, in partnership with the Sudbury Trustees, will be the recipients of a Conservation Restriction on the Town's Fruit Street property. This effort has been seven (7) plus years in the making and we hope that it is finally coming to fruition. The last/final revision of the CR is at the State DEP for approval. Then the only other task left is a survey on the approximately 125 acres of open space land. It should be noted that the Town has decided to ban the discharge of any firearms on the entire Fruit Street property (245 acres) because of the danger to kids and adults using the Fruit Street Fields.

Once again, I must appeal to you and plead for your support. We all know that economic times are still 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. 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**, that provides for the preservation of that rural character we all want in Hopkinton. So please ***help support the Trust, by becoming a member or making a tax deductible donation***, 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 beautiful New England spring and summer seasons.

Very truly: *David Goldman*, President

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HOPKINTON TRAILS CLUB - LIBRARY PROGRAM

By Mavis O'Leary

On April 3, 2012 an interested group of approximately fifty people crowded into the Hopkinton library's presentation space. The program of interest was titled: "Rails and Trails – Linking Hopkinton's History".

Hopkinton Trails Club/HALT member Mavis O'Leary and Ms. Susan Marshall, Adult Reference Librarian, coordinated the event with the approval of Trails club leaders and members.

Trails Club leaders and members teamed up with Hopkinton Area Land Trust (HALT) and Downtown Revitalization Committee (DRC), to put together a program to bring more publicity to the volunteer, independent Trails Club and their trail related activities.

The second focus of the program was to highlight the current status of the center Trail and Trails Club involvement in repair and restoration work done in collaboration with HALT and DRC to improve the Center Trail's usability.

Center Trail is located on the former railroad bed that once encompassed the town in the 1800's to 1950. The trailhead for Center Trail is located at West Main Street across from Hopkinton Lumber and the Respite House. The entrance is marked with a sign and kiosk donated by HALT. From West Main Street, Center Trail continues south to the Loop Rd. at the school property and ends at Chamberlain Street about 1.1 miles. Today, the trail surface is flat, firmly packed earthen surface with some uneven and wet areas within woodland setting. The final goal of the Center Trail restoration is a ten foot wide, stone dust multi-use surface. At some future date the present Center Trail will no doubt be a vital link to a more extensive Upper Charles Rail Trail connection.

Trails Club/ HALT member, Jeff Furber, presented information about the three organizations in Hopkinton which oversee/manage trails in Hopkinton. These are: Open Space committee, HALT, and MA/DCR. Furber gave details of locations, acreage and availability of maps of the trails. DCR trail maps were included in handouts.

Master-of-ceremonies, Matt Zettek, shifted the group's focus from trails in Hopkinton today, to Center Trail, and its origins in the railroad history of Hopkinton. Ms. Gail

Munroe Clifford, HALT/Hopkinton Historical Society/Trails Club member, informed the audience of the interesting facts around the beginnings of railroad history in Hopkinton. Using picture slides Ms. Clifford traced railroad history starting with failed ventures during the time of railroad industry expansion in the local area to the eventual and successful completion of a railroad connection from Milford to Hopkinton, Ashland and Framingham. Ms. Clifford's presentation showed a picture of an early railroad stock certificate, maps of old railroad routes, a bird's eye map of the railroad and its location in Hopkinton, ending with pictures of the depot location which was across Main Street and the Center Trail (CT) trailhead location today. Today the restored depot is seen at the edge of Ice House Pond on West Main Street, one-quarter mile from its original location in the 1800's.

Shortly after purchase, a Conservation Restriction (CR) was put in place and HALT was assigned management of the CR. HALT President, David Goldman deftly explained the parameters of a CR and details of limitations therein. Goldman then related other events re: DCR grant obtained by HALT to restore, repair and stabilize areas of CT in critical need of repair in 2010. In a good faith effort, repair/stabilization work started and was finished in December 2011, including areas outside the CR confines.

In response to this up tick of interest, Downtown Revitalization Committee chair, and recreational runner, Peter LaGoy has stepped forward to reinvigorate the Center Trail and bring it to a higher level multi-use trail. LaGoy likened the future of CT to the Wachusett Rail Trail, a similar stone dust surface trail in a woodland setting. LaGoy obtained CPC \$\$\$'s, an engineering proposal and has tapped experience and advice from other local rail trail experts. LaGoy's long range plan will guide Center Trail into the 21st century for the enjoyment of Hopkinton residents and visitors alike.

Hopkinton Legacy Farms Partners with Pulte Group Home Builders

By Mavis O'Leary

The Baystone Development (BD) owns the former Weston Nursery, 730-acre property in east Hopkinton. Formerly Weston Nurseries, the land is renamed Legacy Farms (LF).

The 730 acre LF property is divided by Rt. 135 into the north parcel and the south parcel, with varying amounts of acreage, designated residential, commercial and mixed use

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Pods, according to Master Plan Special Permit approved by the Planning Board and rezoning of the entire acreage to Open Space Mixed Use District (OSMUD), by Town Meeting vote, 2008.

Pulte Homes/NE is the company selected by Baystone Development/LF to build out 275 acres of the former Weston Nursery property, south of Rt. 135/East Main Street starting at Peach Street, traveling east to Clinton Street.

The plan for housing build out by Pulte Group is for 275 housing units on approximately 55 acres of land, on the south parcel. The remaining land is categorized as restored Restricted Open Space Land which will be protected by covenants.

The total acreage of Restored Open Space (ROS) land for the entire LF is 500 acres. Two parcels of (ROS) land included in the LF north parcel, north of Rt. 135, to the west on Wilson Street, and are designated for use by the Town specifically for recreational and municipal uses, in the future.

Wood Partners plans to build a 240 unit apartment complex is a separate and distinct building project from PG. This project is located approximately 500 yards south of Rt.135 and on the west side of the LF/south, spine road. Development here will start in May 2012.

Traversing the LF-south parcel west to east, approximately 500 yards south of Rt.135 is the former railroad bed of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. The railroad tracks were removed in 1950 but the raised bed is prominent throughout the LF/south parcel from the west, along Linden Street, easterly to Clinton Street. The rail bed property ownership is unclear. Some is in private ownership and some is unknown ownership.

LF/BD has left the rail bed route untouched and intact on their property. A bonus for trail walkers, equestrians, and bicyclists, as the preserved rail bed provides connectivity to existing trails outside the property and serves as a possible future link to the Upper Charles rail trail to Ashland. Presently, the former rail bed is not passable west to east, from LF/south road to Linden Street to LF/East Village parcel but is shown on LF/PG development plans.

Traveling south on Clinton Street from Rt.135/East Main Street about 1000 yds., to the east, are preparations for the building and installation of a "state of the art" Waste

Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). Its major workings will be housed in an 'iconic New England red barn structure' according to Roy McDowell, (BD) owner. The WWTP will be a private utility to process waste water from the LF Development.

A trail will be installed in the restored, Restricted Open Space land of the WWTP location. The trail will be "field located" after the completion of the WWTP and adjacent draining fields are in place according to Mr. McDowell.

At a recent Pulte Group/neighborhood presentation meeting held at Weston Nursery meeting rooms, Legacy Farms spokesperson, Steven Zeiff and Pulte Group representatives, Mark Mastriaonni and Reid Blute, assured abutters and neighbors that their pledge to provide walking and equestrian trails on the perimeter and throughout the development area will be open to the public as well as the residents of the newly created villages in east Hopkinton. Trails and paths will, 'where possible', maintain connectivity to familiar, existing routes for walkers, equestrians and bicyclists. According to Mr. Zeiff, a bike/pedestrian path will run along side the full length of LF/Road, on both north and south parcels.

Agreement Reached to Conserve Historic Elmwood Farm in Hopkinton

Although Elmwood Farm on Ash Street in Hopkinton, Mass. has been dormant for much of the last decade, its fields could return to agriculture once again. The Trust for Public Land has reached an agreement with the Abbott Realty Trust to purchase and conserve the 80-acre property by the end of 2012.

Elmwood Farm was active for more than 200 years, and was the original home of Food for the Needy, a local organization which evolved into the Community Harvest Project, a group that grows fresh fruit and vegetables for the Worcester County Food Bank. The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national conservation organization, has until December 2012 to raise the \$1.8 million purchase price and conserve the land and protect an historic house and barn. TPL will work with the Town of Hopkinton to bring a warrant article to vote in 2012, and if approved the Town would ultimately own the majority of the land.

"Although much of Elmwood Farm is tucked away and out of sight from Ash Street, it will make a special place to visit and hike, and the prospect of bringing farming back to the land is exciting," said Chris LaPointe, senior project manager for The Trust for Public Land. "We are

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grateful to the Abbot Realty Trust and the Town of Hopkinton for pursuing this conservation opportunity with us.”

The conservation effort could result in historic preservation of the house and barn, passive recreation, and renewed farming operations, including a possible community supported agriculture operation. The Bafflin Foundation has already committed \$75,000 towards the effort. The Town of Hopkinton Community Preservation Committee has voted to support investing up to \$1.3 million in the acquisition, and the article will be before voters at Town Meeting in May. The remainder of the funding will likely come from the sale of the house and from a handful of additional private foundations.

For much of the 20th century Elmwood Farm was the home of Bill and Rose Abbott. They founded Food for the Needy in the 1960s, and the effort became the Community Harvest Project, a volunteer-based farming organization that grows vegetables for local hunger relief. The Abbotts passed away in 1997 and 2001 and left the property to Abbott Realty Trust, with the direction that the bulk of the value of the property would be used to fund a nonprofit foundation, whose purpose would be to provide support to Community Harvest Project.

TPL will also work to protect the historic house and barn with an historic preservation restriction, and sell the structures privately to a new owner who has the interest, financial capacity, and ability to stabilize and restore the structures. The private sale of the house will reduce the overall cost of the project. Interested parties should contact Realtor John Petraglia at 508-476-7745.

Elmwood Farm has a rich history. The original house was built by Hopkinton’s second minister, Rev. Elijah Fitch more than 200 years ago, and Historical Society information indicates that the house was used as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Members of the Fitch family reportedly helped to hide escaped slaves hide in the pantry behind the potato sacks.

Lucy Fitch Perkins became a well known authoress of the children's book series "Twins" and her daughter Eleanor Ellis Perkins published "Eve Among the Puritans" (1956) which tells of the Fitch family. More recently, a 20th century resident of Elmwood Farm was Edward Goddard, architect of the Waldorf Astoria in New York City.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit conservation organization conserving land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and natural areas, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Since its founding in 1972, TPL has helped protect more than 3 million

acres of land nationwide, including nearly 14,000 acres in Massachusetts. TPL depends on the support and generosity of individuals, foundations, and businesses to achieve our land for people mission. Visit online: tpl.org/massachusetts.

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 \$ _____

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All contributions to HALT are deductible for income tax purposes.

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