



## THE HINGHAM LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

# 2013 Annual Report & Newsletter

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## Conservation Restrictions & Benefits

JOE BIERWIRTH



*Amonte Meadows*


This year's annual Town Meeting voted to award to the Hingham Land Conservation Trust seven conservation restrictions covering town-owned property purchased over the years through the Community Preservation Act. Located on the HLCT Parklands map by number, the properties are: the **McCormack property** on Leavitt Street by the Wompatuck gate (49); the **Dunlop/Hatch property** off Union Street behind the golf driving range (Schultz's Field #44); the **Condito property** across the street from Foster School (10); the **Scotland Street property** abutting McKenna Marsh (73); the **730 Main Street property** in Glad Tidings

Plain (58); the **Amonte property** on Rockland Street (Amonte Meadows #20); and the **Cushing property** on East Street (Cushing Meadow #30).

During CPA's early years it was not known that town-purchased conservation parcels also required a grant of a conservation restriction to third parties. Once this requirement was clarified, the Town sought proposals from qualified organizations to hold the restrictions; the HLCT was chosen as the most appropriate organization to protect these Hingham gems. In connection with holding the restrictions, the HLCT will receive CPA funds to endow monitoring and potential en-

forcement. In addition, all later CPA purchases will come with conservation restrictions. The HLCT intends to continue to offer its services to hold the restrictions and protect these parcels as open space for the benefit of all.

### Conservation Restriction Benefits

Conservation easements offer terrific income and estate tax benefits for conservation-minded families who own property with valuable development rights. First, the donation of a conservation easement is a charitable gift equal to the value of the extinguished development rights. The gift can be deducted on the donor's federal (but not Massachusetts) income tax return. Second, the conservation easement will reduce the value of the property for federal and state estate tax purposes. With current combined state and federal estate tax rates in excess of 42 percent, there is tremendous appeal in a technique that allows landowners to retain their property yet reduce its value for estate tax purposes. The third tax benefit for conservation land is the estate tax exclusion. The exclusion is equal to the lesser of \$500,000 or 40 percent of the land's value and is allowed in addition to the reduction in value caused by the conservation easement. 

The 2010 edition of the "Parklands for the Public" map is available at the library, the Conservation Commission and Town Clerk's offices, and by mail to members who request it on their HLCT donation envelope. Copies are on display in the Hingham Public Schools libraries and classrooms.



## Chairman's Letter

KATHARINE REARDON

In 2013, the HLCT Trustees improved our communication and administrative tools while expanding our support for community environmental initiatives.

**New Website:** Designed pro bono by Tom Kennedy of GrayMatter Agency, we are now online. Please visit [www.hinghamlandtrust.org](http://www.hinghamlandtrust.org) to see gorgeous pictures of Hingham open space and HLCT properties along with our "Parklands for the Public" map. With Dan Power's generous advice, we also streamlined our administrative functions.

**Focus on Weir River:** HLCT collaborated with the Weir River Watershed Association and the Weir River

Estuary Park Committee to support protection of the Sidney Pond land on Rockland Street through CPC purchases. This partnership has since joined with Aquarion Water Company to sponsor forums on the environment of the Weir River Watershed and Estuary focusing on the relationship between water usage and ecosystem health.

**School Partnership:** We continued our \$500 high school senior environmental studies scholarship and Parklands for the Public maps were provided to all 5th graders. In recognition, HLCT received a Community Partner Award from the Hingham School Committee.

**HLCT Properties:** Stewards Bob Courchesne, Don Kidston and Charles Willse, with the help of volunteers, have kept HLCT properties clean and trails open. Please see our website for their reports.

Sadly, this year HLCT lost a dear friend, Philip Lehner. Along with HLCT trustee, Monique Lehner, he welcomed us to their home, hosted our 40th Anniversary celebration and generously supported our work. As we continue into our 42nd year, we need all our friends and hope to make new ones who value the beautiful natural places in Hingham. 



## Annual Meeting

KATHARINE REARDON

HLCT's year's run of good weather ran out on June 13, 2013. However, several members did make a short foray into the Niles Courtyard, the garden centerpiece of the Hingham Library dedicated in honor of Hingham philanthropist, Mary Niles. Marc Mazzei, the courtyard's landscape architect, spoke about the garden's design and construction. Marc's landscape practice focuses on creating innovative and sustainable design solutions for public and private outdoor spaces that exhibit a harmonious sensitivity to their surroundings. Marc graciously thanked us for the opportunity to revisit the garden after many years of growth and we thank him for travelling from Cambridge to share his thoughts and impressions with us.


The courtyard design, influenced by Mary Niles' interest in Japanese landscape, also must meet the operational needs of the library. Marc showed several design versions that became less fussy and more Zen, as in the use of a simple curved wall to create a "story" space. In the challenging environment



*Niles Courtyard at the Hingham Public Library*

of a small enclosure, plant choice de-emphasized flowers in favor of all-year appeal and varied viewpoints. Tree and shrub choice was particularly critical as their removal and replacement would be difficult once the building was closed in. Paperbark Maples, chosen for their scale, elegant structure and copper exfoliating bark, have flourished. Marc's advice against too many floral embellishments appeared

well founded; the garden's attractiveness even in drizzle was a testament to the strength of the design.

In conjunction with this event, the HLCT 40th anniversary photographic history of the Trust was exhibited at the library gallery and the library cart featured a woodland miniature dish garden and wildflower photos taken by Charles Willse. 





## Sidney Pond Walk

CHARLES WILLSE

Our spring walk toured the five acre Rockland Street Noonan property proposed for Community Preservation Act purchase at the Annual Town Meeting. The HLCT and the Weir River Watershed Association (WRWA) advocated for this acquisition by co-hosting two walks of the cart path and pond followed by a visit to the nearby Foundry Pond Conservation Area. First, Samantha Woods (WRWA) led a watershed centered tour. The second walk, led by the Weir River Estuary Park Committee, focused on the history of the site and nearby areas on the Weir River.

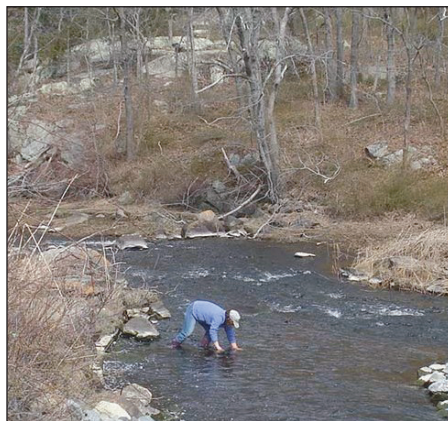
Sightings of a Great Blue Heron and a large White Egret feeding at the edge of Sidney's Pond highlighted the ecological value of this part of the Weir River Estuary, a State designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern protecting the estuary's diverse habitats, including salt marsh, shallow marsh meadow, wooded swamp and adjacent uplands. Abundant mollusks, crustaceans, salt marsh grasses, and aquatic vegetation provide food for over 100 resident and migratory bird species and a now recovering shad fishery spawning ground.

Almost 200 years ago, Sidney's Pond was a commercial ice pond created by building a dam and sluice gate on a small stream running down to the Weir River. After the pond froze to a depth of eight inches, 400 pound blocks of ice were cut and stored in the icehouse whose foundation wall still exists. The ice was delivered in summer and fall to local markets and homes for refrigeration. An active business from the 1800's until the 1950's, the last ice customers were the vacationers in the summer beach homes in Hull.

North of the pond is the raised embankment of an abandoned railroad



*Above: Our walk begins on Rockland Street. Below: Gathering shad eggs in the Weir River.*



line, the right of way for one of the country's first electric railroads (1896) which stretched from Braintree to Cohasset. The railroad eventually became part of the Old Colony Line, which was recently rebuilt as the South Shore MBTA commuter rail system.

Climbing over the embankment we followed the rivulet to the Weir River where a small area below Foundry Pond dam has recently been restored to recreate spawning habitat for shad, which require fast water and a gravel streambed to lay their eggs. Our guide showed us fresh shad eggs attached to an underwater rock from the stream. Unfortunately the Foundry Pond dam has largely destroyed the herring run. A poorly designed fish ladder deters most of the returning herring and recent dam renovations prevent young fish from returning to the ocean to become adults. The Town is considering removing the dam to restore the herring run and fish spawning areas and improve the water quality of the Weir River. This controversial and expensive project was food for thought as we returned home. 🍷



## 2013 Swanson Scholarship

BARBARA WOLLAN

Each year the HLCT gives the Philip O. Swanson Scholarship of \$500 to a senior at Hingham High School. John Passaretti, this year's recipient, was recognized at our Annual Meeting. John has chosen to attend Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, with its new Center for Science and Innovation and an excellent environmental science program which concentrates on field studies and protecting the environment. John will seek a degree in environmental science and a future career in protecting and preserving our lands. Congratulations John and our best wishes for your future. 🍷



*John Passaretti*

## Why Join the Hingham Land Conservation Trust?

All contributions to HLCT are tax-deductible, including land and conservation easements. Your gifts contribute to the quality of life in Hingham now and for generations to come.

The HLCT conserves land to protect our water supply, wildlife habitats and freshwater ponds and streams, while preserving passive recreational uses. Your gifts fund mowing to preserve open meadows, surveys to define property boundaries and other essential organizational needs. Presently we own 65 acres and hold conservation restrictions on 40 acres in the town of Hingham.

The Trustees of the Hingham Land Conservation Trust invite your membership, participation and comments. Mail in the enclosed envelope or write to:

Hingham Land Conservation Trust  
PO Box 10, Hingham, MA 02043

For information, call (781)749-0162  
or go to [www.hinghamlandtrust.org](http://www.hinghamlandtrust.org)

### Board of Trustees

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## 2012 Financial Summary

Income .....	\$13,775
Expenses .....	16,347
Net Loss .....	(\$2,572)
Cash Assets.....	\$151,058



## Bare Cove Park Walk

BARBARA WOLLAN

On a spectacularly beautiful New England fall day, we gathered at the Fort Hill Street gate. Our guide was Hingham resident Ron Clough, former member of the Bare Cove Park Committee (BCPC) with over 40 years of experience in state and national parks management. We were joined by Patti Coyle, Chair of BCPC, and Park Ranger Scott McMillan. Ron began by offering granola bars to all 60 participants!

Bare Cove Park, 469 acres of protected wetlands, open fields and dense woods along the banks of Weymouth Back River, is the former Hingham Naval Ammunition Depot, decommissioned in 1961. In 1972 the Navy gave the site to the Town of Hingham which voted in 1985 to declare the Park a wildlife refuge.

Beginning at the Triangle Garden, we walked out to the end of Indian Point, exploring rocks, trees, and shrubs. At a large sassafras tree, Ron produced sassafras candy to make one of several real life connections during our enlightening botanical and historical journey. We learned about acorn cycles of white and red oak and their impact on the plant and animal life cycles; and about the geology from the



*Knoll near Indian Point*

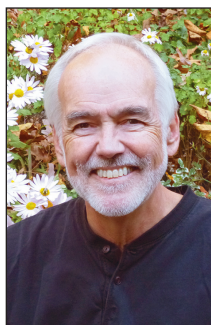
glacier age almost 10,000 years ago to current times, including some of the oldest rocks in the Boston Basin. Ron Clough's vast knowledge of the history and natural features of Bare Cove Park was very impressive, and his enthusiasm was infectious. Kudos and profound thanks to our tour guide Ron Clough!

Upon the completion of our walk, we were treated to refreshments and a tour of the newly renovated Bare Cove Fire Museum. Sincere thanks to our hosts Fire Chief Mark Duff and Museum President Dave Clark for their kind hospitality and willing insights into the historical fire equipment so meticulously displayed.



## Trustee News

New trustee, **Don Kidston**, has enjoyed exploring the trails in Hingham's many parks while hiking, jogging, or walking his dog, Shiloh, since moving here in 1978. As a transportation planner, Don focused on environmental aspects of transportation projects and



development of facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities including the Minuteman and Cambridge-Somerville Bikeways and Spectacle Island Reconstruction. On Hingham's Industrial Development Committee, Don contributed to the planning of the walkway through Hingham Square. Don is now the steward of Eel River Woods and hopes to make a positive contribution to the HLCT's efforts to conserve and enhance the Town's extensive open space.