

Property Reports for 2017, as submitted in January 2018, by stewards of the 3 primary properties owned by the Hingham Land Conservation Trust:**Eel River Woods – Don Kidston, Steward**

A gift of Mary Niles, Eel River Woods, located at the confluence of the Eel and Plymouth Rivers near Cushing Pond, offers a serene woodland walk on more than a half mile of trails. The entrance to Eel River Woods is on Cushing Street at Pioneer Road.

During 2017, improvements included the addition of a kiosk near the trail head on Cushing Street. The new kiosk was installed by the Town in the spring under the guidance of Town Senior Planner Loni Fournier. The information kiosks installed in parklands owned by the HLCT as well as others owned the Hingham Conservation Commission (12 properties in all) are part of Trails Improvements funded through the Community Preservation Act. In November a trail map, also provided by the Town, was added to the kiosk.

In addition to regular trail maintenance a major clean-up was conducted in September with the assistance of Hingham Troop 1 Boy Scouts: Luke Chipman, Cameron Santarelli, Jake O'Neill, Kevin Porter, Conor Power, Colton Chipman, Alex Gorczyca, Brendan Power and Aidan Murphy. (A story about the Scouts' work appears in the HLCT 2017 annual report and newsletter, available elsewhere on this website.)

In November, Hingham Troop 1 Boy Scout Leland Frantz completed his Eagle Scout project with help from his fellow scouts. They constructed a new 16-foot-long boardwalk replacing a deteriorated old boardwalk. Materials for the project were generously donated to the Scouts by DB&S Lumber in Norwell. Prior to work on-site, Leland actively participated in the process of securing required approvals from the Hingham Conservation Commission and the Building Department.

Jacobs Meadow – Rick Rohleder, Steward

A gift of Helen P. Burns, Jacobs Meadow, a 30-acre open space nestled in the heart of Hingham, offers a mix of wide meadows encircled by trees, gentle hills, pine woods, old stone walls, pockets of wetlands and two easy trail loops. Public access to the property, located behind Wilder Memorial Hall off Main Street, is only available outside of the Wilder School hours. This access easement has been generously provided by the Trustees of Wilder Memorial and through a land donation by the Goodlatte Family of an acre of land between Wilder School and Jacobs Meadow. (With the recent Town acquisition of the Lehner property, access to Jacobs Meadow is also available by first entering the Lehner parkland trails near #32 South Pleasant Street.)

During 2017, improvements at Jacobs Meadow included the addition of three kiosks placed at different key locations to guide walkers. The new kiosks were installed by the Town of Hingham last spring under the guidance of Town Senior Planner Loni Fournier. These kiosks were installed as part of Trails Improvements funded through the Community Preservation Act. In November, colored, laminated trail maps of the property, also provided by the Town, were added to each kiosk.

In addition to regular trail maintenance, a major clean-up of the meadows and trails was conducted in March by HLCT Board Members Richard “Skip” Hull, Nick Sowles, and Joe Bierworth with the assistance of Hingham Fire Department Captain (and professional landscaper) Bill Powers. Through their efforts using chain saws, heavy duty brush cutters and a large John Deere tractor, the group better defined the edges of the lower parts of three meadow areas, where the forest was encroaching, and opened several sight lines for better views. Later in the year, during late November and early December, Bill Powers again was retained for his landscaping services to mow the hay within all the open areas in the meadows and to clear trails of obstructions. This winter season or at any time of year visitors can enjoy quiet strolls, bird-watching, viewing small natural springs of clear water and general nature observation along the well-defined, easy-to-traverse trails.

Whortleberry Hollow -- Nick Sowles, Steward

This 13-acre tract of varied terrain has a public footpath access via granite steps from Cushing Street. The land was given to the Trust by Suvia P. Whittemore in memory of her husband, the late Arthur E. Whittemore, Hingham’s Town Moderator for many years. A story recalling Suvia Whittemore, one of the founding trustees of the land trust, appeared in our 2016 HLCT annual report and newsletter, available elsewhere on this website.

Only minor maintenance was required in 2017 to keep the trails around the hollow in tip-top shape. Thriving oak saplings were trimmed, mostly with hand saws, as some infringed on the narrow, fenced corral that serves as entrance to the parkland from Cushing Street. As this oak stand matures we may soon enter under a canopy of oak rather than next to saplings.

Deeper within the 13 acres a kiosk was installed last summer by the town. Walkers will find this near the intersection of the circular trail and the extension trails, not far from the brook. A recently created trails map of the property is now displayed here. The current stillness and greater visibility make winter a wonderful time to explore Whortleberry Hollow.

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