



THE HINGHAM LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

2023 Annual Report & Newsletter

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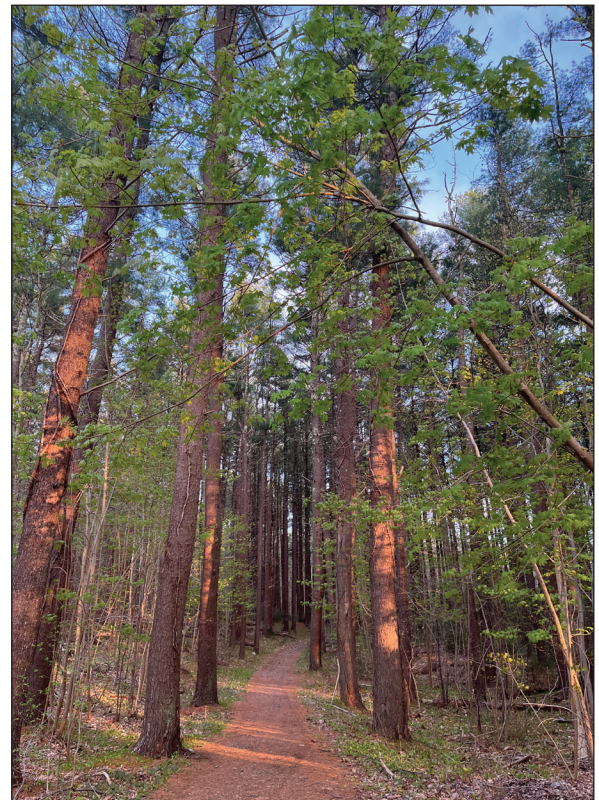
Hingham's Updated Master Plan, and the Town Forest at 100

The Hingham Land Conservation Trust held its 51st annual meeting on May 3 at the Hingham Public Library. At the meeting, board chair Art Collins introduced the returning 2023 Board Slate, which was reelected. Please see page 4 for a list of board members.

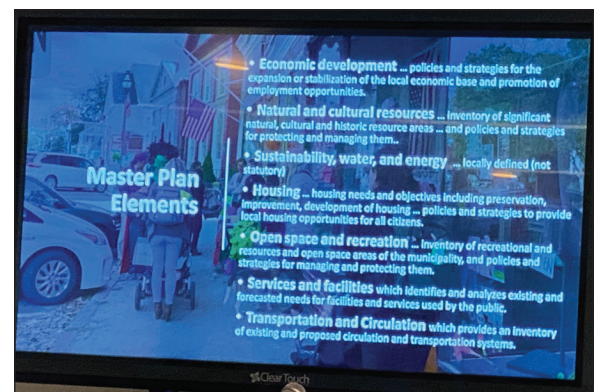
Guest speaker Gordon Carr, Chair of the 2020 Hingham Master Plan Committee, discussed highlights of the town's current master plan. The Master Plan Committee sought community input on an array of issues pertinent to Hingham's priorities for the future, including the question "What do you love about Hingham?" Green space "won by a mile"! Carr noted that the preceding master plan, drafted in 2001, contained the goal of preserving open spaces—which was fulfilled in part by the Town of Hingham's acquisition of the Lehner Conservation Area. The current Master Plan addresses connecting Hingham's open spaces as much as possible, and recognizes the challenge of maintaining the existing open space that we currently have.

Our next guest speakers addressed that very challenge in their discussion of the Town Forest at 100. Phil Benjamin and Tom Farrell, authors of the Hingham Town Forest Management Plan, discussed the state of the town forest, also known as the George Washington Forest, as it celebrates its centennial. The forest was planted in response to a Massachusetts law encouraging towns to own and manage woodlands to maintain the timber supply. The town planted red and white pines and Norway spruce. Today, the original red pines have succumbed to disease and infestation, but stands of healthy white pines remain. To ensure the forest's vitality in the future, Benjamin and Farrell discussed the importance of diverse tree species and tree ages in weathering climate change, which has brought more extreme storms, warmer temperatures, and changing freeze and thaw cycles. Thinning the existing stands will also strengthen the forest's resilience.

The meeting was recorded by Harbor Media, and is available online. 



This stand in the Town Forest demonstrates the monoculture and uniformity of tree age that make the woods vulnerable to extreme weather and infestation.



Open space plays a key role in Hingham's Master Plan.



State Representative Joan Meschino chats with Special Guest Gordon Carr and Trustee Don Kidston at the Annual Meeting.



While this year has been a bit more subdued compared with the many activities celebrating our 50th anniversary last year, there were still some significant milestones and memorable events. After launching the Sally Goodrich Environmental Research Grant last year, the selection committee had the task and honor of choosing the first recipients. It has been rewarding to follow the progress of the recipients as they use the grant money to further these important projects and we look forward to seeing the new submissions for next year’s grant. See page 3 for details.

During the annual meeting in April, we enjoyed learning about the state of the Hingham Town Forest as well as recommendations in the Town Master Plan which impact land conservation. Following on the theme of forest management, during our Spring walk at More-Brewer Park, we learned

about the many species of trees planted by Francis Willard Brewer in the late 19th century. This year’s Fall walk was at Jacobs Meadow which, despite its name, is actually mostly forest. We also learned about the new quest established at Jacobs Meadow by South Shore Quests and are excited about the new generation of visitors that it will bring.

The HLCT board of directors remained stable for most of this year, with just one member stepping down. One of our goals for the upcoming year is to develop comprehensive maintenance and improvement plans for the three properties owned by the HLCT (Jacobs Meadow, Whortleberry Hollow, and Eel River Woods). We are always looking for new members to bring their ideas and energy to the board, so please reach out if you are interested in getting involved. 🍷



Trustee News

TRUSTEE RICK ROHLEDER STEPS DOWN

Trustee Rick Rohleder, the property steward of Jacobs Meadow since joining HLCT in 2017, is stepping down from the board. Rick led a successful coordination effort with the Hingham Conservation Department and Hingham’s scouting groups. The program led to construction of boardwalks and benches by members of Boy Scout Troop 1 at Whortleberry Hollow and Eel River Woods. More recently, members of Girl Scout Troop 75399 updated a mid-1900s tree inventory at More-Brewer Park. Rick also hosted a “virtual spring walk” at Jacobs Meadow during the pandemic. We are grateful for Rick’s dedicated service to HLCT as a board member. See you on the trails, Rick! 🍷



Philip O. Swanson Scholarship

The HLCT was delighted to award the Philip O. Swanson Scholarship to Katelyn Foley, Hingham High School Class of 2023. Katelyn is attending Wheaton College and plans on majoring in Geology and minoring in Astronomy and Art. While at HHS, she was involved in the Green Team. She says, “Nature has always been a part of my life and it is a place where I can always find peace no matter what state I am in. . . Green Team has been a great opportunity for me to expand my love for nature. . . I plan to continue the Green Team’s work no matter what I end up doing in life.” 🍷



NEW BENCH INSTALLED HONORING EARLY BOARD MEMBER, MIKE AUSTIN

A new bench was installed in Jacobs Meadow, thanks to a generous gift in honor of former board member, Mike Austin, by his widow Nolly Corley and his family. 🍷



Property Clean Ups

EEL RIVER WOODS CLEAN UP, TRIANGLE GARDEN CLEAN UP

From clearing downed trees to battling the wasps while weeding a pollinator meadow, HCLT works hard throughout the year to maintain our properties. 🍷



Mark Loughlin weeds the Triangle Garden at Bare Cove Park.



Goodrich Environmental Research Grant Update

The Goodrich Environmental Research Grant Committee is reviewing this year’s applications, and will announce the winners in late January, 2024.

The two recipients of our inaugural grants were hard at work over the summer. Here is an update on their projects.

CREATING A POLLINATOR MEADOW AT COHASSET’S WHEELWRIGHT PARK

Wild Cohasset Inc. and the Cohasset Open Space Commission used funds from the grant to establish a native pollinator meadow in Wheelwright Park on North Main Street in Cohasset. Lisey Good of Wild Cohasset Inc. spearheaded the project, whose purpose is to promote native plants, monarch butterflies, songbirds and other pollinator birds and insects, and to discourage the future infestation of non-native plants. The garden includes signs with QR codes that link to more information on pollinator gardens. The garden has also been supported by other Wild Cohasset members, high school students and local scout group volunteers.



The new Pollinator Meadow grew strong over the summer!

The project began in the spring of this year and was largely completed this summer. Volunteers destroyed invasive species by covering them with tarps, planted a 500+/- square foot garden with native pollinator plants, and weeded and watered as necessary to establish the meadow, which should be self-sustaining as the native plants mature.



July blooms, from L to R: Monarda Fistulosa, Anemone Canadensis, and Monarda Didyma.

USING eDNA TO DETECT WILD TROUT IN THE OLD SWAMP RIVER

The Town of Weymouth’s Conservation staff, with the help of a summer intern, collected water quality data from the Old Swamp River throughout the summer and conducted a first round of eDNA sampling. The water quality data—dissolved oxygen levels and temperature readings—was likely helped by all the rain this summer, and indicated that conditions this summer have been favorable for trout. However, the initial round of eDNA results (the study funded by the Goodrich Environmental Research grant) did not have any hits for the presence of brook trout. Weymouth also conducted an electroshock survey of the river in July with Mass Wildlife staff with no trout found. This is disappointing, as trout had been documented in the river historically and as recently as 2019. One hypothesis is that extreme drought conditions last summer might be to blame. Weymouth Conservation will wait for additional data before drawing conclusions and determining next steps. 📍



Testing for the presence of trout in Weymouth’s Old Swamp River.



South Shore Quests Have Been Enriching Local Walks for 25 Years

Do you know about South Shore Quests? For the past 25 years, volunteers have been publishing a booklet, updated annually, that contains 12-20 quests that can be completed on nature trails around the South Shore. Popular with young and old adventurers alike, the booklet contains the starting place for each quest, the approximate time to complete it, the conditions you can expect to find on the trail, questions to solve by finding clues, and fun facts to learn along the way. Successful questers will find a weatherproof box at the end of the trail with a stamp that they can use to mark their booklet and work towards earning a badge. The trails and clues are updated each year. Check out <http://southshorequests.org/about/> for more information, along with two free quests to try. 📍

Why Support the Hingham Land Conservation Trust?

The HLCT works to acquire, hold, and preserve open space in Hingham for the benefit and enjoyment of our town. Presently we own 65 acres and hold conservation restrictions on 118 acres in the town of Hingham.

We conserve land to protect our water supply, wildlife habitat, and freshwater ponds and streams. We collaborate with other civic organizations on educational programming and events.

Your gifts fund trail maintenance and seasonal mowing to provide access while protecting forest, wetlands and open meadow habitats, surveys to define property boundaries, the printing of our beloved "Parklands for the Public" map, and other organizational needs.

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. Use the enclosed envelope or visit our website www.hinghamlandtrust.org to contribute by credit card.

Contact us at info@hinghamlandtrust.org or by mail at the following address:

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Hingham, MA 02043

Board of Trustees

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Elizabeth Moulds
Daniel Wells

Printed on recycled paper

Design & printing by Powder Horn Press

2022 Financial Summary

Total revenue:.....\$39,845
Total Expenses:\$20,181
Goodrich Fund:\$63,684
Austin Fund: \$17,808
Other Cash Assets: \$214,702



Well Attended Spring Walk at More-Brewer Park

Gray skies did not deter a lively group of around 25 walkers who came out to our guided early spring walk on April 15 at More-Brewer Park. Wayne Cuillo, The Trustees of Reservations Stewardship Manager for the South Shore, led us. He was joined by Girl Scout Cadette Troop #75399 leader Wendy Finnerty and former leader Jeannie Ingram, whose troop created new identification signs and updated a tree inventory completed years ago by the Hingham Garden Club and the Conservation Commission. Although the trees were not yet in leaf, walkers enjoyed a new PA system that enabled all participants to better hear the discussion, and the late-breaking sunshine. 🌞



Scout leaders Wendy Finnerty (L) and Jeannie Ingram (second from right) sharing Troop 75399's work in More-Brewer Park.



Exploring the hilltop meadow.



Participants enjoyed learning from Wayne Cuillo's tree expertise.



Beautiful Fall Walk at Jacobs Meadow

Walkers enjoyed a beautiful fall morning on the trails of HLCT's own Jacobs Meadow at our October 14 walk. Trustee and property steward Joel Goloski led the walk. He was joined by Carol Valentine of South Shore Quests, who shared a new quest featuring the property with us. The quest contained questions that participants could answer by identifying clues found along the paths, including on HLCT's benches. Persevering questers eventually uncovered the location of a hidden box with a stamp in it they could use to prove completion. Along the way, all walkers enjoyed the changing foliage, hidden pond, and meadows and woodlands featured on the property. Most walkers continued on together to explore the adjacent Hingham Conservation Commission land. HLCT thanks Second Parish for providing parking, and South Shore Quests for giving us a sneak preview of their newest challenge. 🌞



Walkers enjoyed the mix of woodlands and grasslands at Jacobs Meadow.



L-R Carol Valentine, Eileen McIntyre, Roy Harris, Don Kidston of Hingham and Mary Pat Sweetman visiting from Seattle, WA show off a completed quest.