



THE HINGHAM LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

# 2024 Annual Report & Newsletter

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## Hingham Land Conservation Trust's 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting

The Hingham Land Conservation Trust's 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting took place on May 8, 2024. After the re-election of the board slate and a brief discussion of the budget (see page 4), the program took an in-depth look into salt marshes. A defining feature of the South Shore landscape, and of coastlines all over the world, salt marshes are the wetlands over which the saltwater tides flow.



Photo Credit: Dr. David Kimbro

Board member Eileen McIntyre opened the presentation with "A Dash of Salt Marsh History," which provided context to the salt marshes' roles over time in this area. Indigenous Americans used the salt marshes as a rich hunting and shell-fishing ground. Later, European settlers harvested the marsh grass itself to use as animal feed, thatch, and insulation. Salt marsh hay was so vital to the colony's economy that the salt marshes were partitioned among individuals, and ditches were dug to mark boundary lines and to aid harvesting efforts. As the South Shore gradually transformed from an agricultural to a bedroom community, salt marsh plots were returned to the town. Ditches, however, continued to be dug in an effort to control mosquitoes, and are still visible today.

Guest speaker **Dr. David Kimbro**, Associate Professor at Northeastern University, spoke on the Ecology of Salt Marshes: Conservation and Restoration. He discussed the

concept of "ecosystem services", a conservation policy approach that attempts to quantify the societal benefits that different ecosystems provide. The benefits of salt marshes under any calculus are abundant! Though salt marshes occupy just 1% of the globe's surface area, they provide 20% of all ecosystem services. In addition to the provisioning of salt hay, salt, hunting and fishing, salt marshes provide us with recreational spaces, regulate water quality, and stabilize the shoreline, among other valuable benefits. They formed over 4,000 years ago, dynamically changing vertically and laterally over the years, due to natural forces and human intervention. From climate change that brings rising sea levels, to the introduction of invasive species, such as non-native Phragmites, to pollution, development, and injury from ditching, this valuable habitat faces many threats.

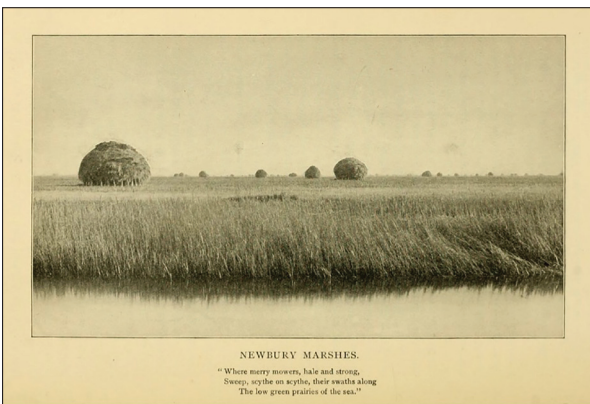


Two views of the extensive ditching that threaten salt marshes' vitality.

Our second guest speaker, **Alejandra Narváez**, Coastal Project Manager from Trustees of Reservations, brought news about the Trustees' salt marsh restoration projects. As the largest private owner of Massachusetts shoreline, the Trustees are attempting to restore several salt marshes, including Damde Meadows in Hingham; the Great Marsh, located north of Boston; and projects on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

Damde Meadows was blocked from tidal flow for many years. The Trustees removed the barrier, and salt water has returned, but the marsh grass has not entirely come back—the area is actually now more of a tidal flat than a salt marsh. The Trustees

*continued on page 2*



"Parallel with the broad elm-shaded main street of Hingham lies a stretch of salt marsh. . . . Late in the month [of August] come the mowers with their cart; and the tall windrows fall in heavy heaps, while the usually still plain is alive with moving forms, swinging the scythes in rhythm."

– Mary C. Robbins, describing the Home Meadows in a chapter in "Hingham, A Story of Its Early Settlement and Life, Its Ancient Landmarks, Its Historic Sites and Buildings" published by the Old Colony Chapter of the D.A.R. in 1911.



HLCT's programming this year covered a diverse set of topics and landscapes, reflecting our area's rich resources and history. Subjects included coastal salt marshes, sustainable farming at Holly Hill Farm in Cohasset, and some human history in the beautiful Hingham Cemetery. We kept the trails cleared at our three major properties: Jacobs Meadow, Eel River Woods, and Whortleberry Hollow. We also strengthened conservation efforts of other local organizations through the Sally Goodrich Environmental Research Grant, which is now in its second year and going strong. This year's recipients were Holly Hill Farm in Cohasset, Wompatuck State Park, and Bare Cove Park in Hingham (see page 3 for updates).

as current efforts to protect and restore these valuable ecosystems. Earlier that month, we explored a completely different topic on our Spring Walk at Holly Hill Farm in Cohasset, where we learned about pollinator meadows, composting, and sustainable farming/gardening practices. Our Fall Walk focused more on human history while walking through the historic and scenic Hingham Cemetery (which is also an arboretum) on a beautiful Autumn day.

I am thankful that all of the HLCT board members agreed to stay on for another year. We are looking for new members to bring their ideas and energy to the board. Areas of high need are a leader for the Goodrich Grant program and people with skills and interest in communication and media. Additionally, there is always a need for those interested in helping to maintain our properties or to take on special projects, so please reach out to me at [info@hinghamlandtrust.org](mailto:info@hinghamlandtrust.org) if you are interested in getting involved. See you on the trails! 🌿



Board Chair Art Collins in Yosemite National Park, California

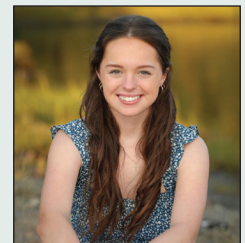
I spent my summer vacation exploring some open spaces beyond Hingham, backpacking in the Sierra Nevada, starting in Yosemite then going into the Sierra and Inyo National Forests (see photo). I returned with renewed appreciation for the beautiful trails that we have right in our own backyard and a commitment to spend more time on them.

During our Annual Meeting in May, our guest speakers highlighted the importance of coastal salt marshes, some history about their use and the impact humans have had on them, as well



Philip O. Swanson Scholarship

HLCT was pleased to award the Philip O. Swanson Scholarship to Kathleen Swanson (no relation). The past president of the Unity Project Club, Katie graduated from Hingham High in 2024, and is currently a freshman at College of the Holy Cross, where she is majoring in Environmental Sciences. Congratulations, Katie! 🌿



Hingham Land Conservation Trust's 52nd Annual Meeting

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are piloting unique methods to establish sea grass and to reduce erosion. They face challenges ranging from the high energy of the dramatic tides in the area to more mundane permitting issues.

An engaging Q&A session yielded the following tips on how everyone can help increase the resiliency of our salt marshes: don't apply lawn fertilizer, pick up after your pets, and educate yourself about the outsize importance of this buffer between land and sea. This informative presentation was recorded by Harbor Media and can be found on our website at [hinghamlandtrust.org/watch-the-2024-annual-meeting](http://hinghamlandtrust.org/watch-the-2024-annual-meeting) 🌿

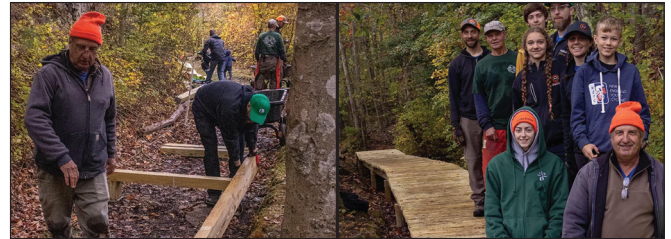


In the Fore Point Channel, Artist Carolina Aragón created "FutureSHORELINE," a temporary art installation made of lobster traps that depicts the height of anticipated flooding in Boston due to sea level rise. Each level represents the projected elevation of sea level rise for the years 2030, 2050, and 2070.



The second annual Goodrich Environmental Research Grant awards were announced to three recipients in January. The grant funds research projects that assist in the conservation of local open space and that encourage residents to enjoy area parklands and conservation areas. You can learn more about it and how your town or non-profit organization might apply on the Grants page of our website: [hinghamlandtrust.org/grants-and-scholarships](http://hinghamlandtrust.org/grants-and-scholarships). Here is an update on the three projects funded.

**THE FRIENDS OF HOLLY HILL FARM (FHFF)** received funding to purchase a microscope and a soil microbiometer, equipment used to evaluate the presence of beneficial microbes in soil, compost, and compost tea. Janice McPhillips, FHFF Farm Educator, participated in a four-day, ten-hour training provided by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts to learn how to do assessments of soil health using the microscope. This work is part of the focus on soil health at Holly Hill Farm, which includes making and using compost on the farm from food scraps collected locally and saved from incineration as trash. Over the winter, more practice with the microscope and the microbiometer is planned. FHFF anticipates being able to share what they have learned with the public at some point in the future.



*A combination of skilled professionals and volunteers hard at work.  
Photo Credit: Kai Schow*



*Making compost is not a photogenic endeavor, but healthy soil yields bountiful results! Photos courtesy of Holly Hill Farms.*

**THE FRIENDS OF WOMPATUCK STATE PARK**, an all-volunteer, not-for-profit group, has been working with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the town of Cohasset’s Conservation Commission on a plan to repair a badly deteriorated trail section. This trail provides access to the Aaron River Reservoir area of the Park from the Doane Street, Cohasset entrance. The Goodrich grant awarded was applied to the cost of materials for a section of bridge more than 100 feet long over a wet area. Work on the project was delayed due to our very wet spring, and some changes were required in the plan. The work was being done in October as this newsletter went to press by a combination of skilled professionals and volunteers.

**BARE COVE PARK**, a popular 484-acre wilderness preserve in Hingham, includes extensive paved walking and bike trails with six informational kiosks located throughout the park. The Bare Cove Park Committee received excellent feedback about the kiosks, which provide information about the flora and fauna within view. The Committee will work with the Town of Hingham’s Department of Public works to order and install four more kiosks in appropriate locations within the park, thanks to the Goodrich Grant’s funds.



### Eel River Woods

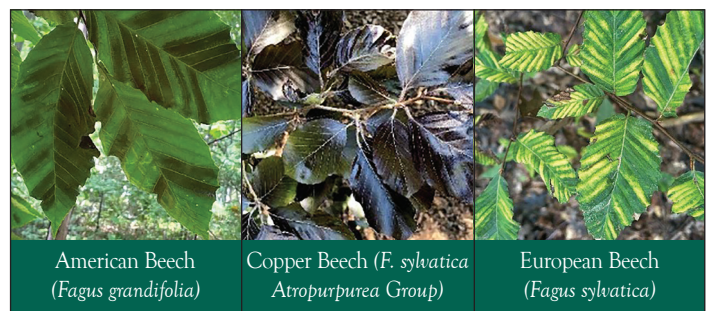


Have you seen this sign? The Eel River Woods Sign depicted here with Rick Rohleder, Art Collins, and Mark Loughlin went missing and has been replaced.



### Beech Leaf Disease Impacting Area Woodlands

If you’ve walked through HLCT’s Whortleberry Hollow or Wompatuck State Park lately, you probably noticed that the beech trees are ailing. Beech Leaf Disease, first reported in Ohio in 2012, has arrived on the South Shore and is rapidly moving northward. Caused by a nematode, the disease affects the leaves’ ability to photosynthesize—eventually starving the tree. The nematode, likely spread by birds and insects, infects leaf buds in the fall. The following spring, the leaves exhibit banding, and sometimes curling and premature leaf drop. While some area arborists may be able to treat individual trees, Wayne Ciullo, Senior Regional Stewardship Manager, Southwest Region of The Trustees of Reservations, notes, “There’s not a lot you can do on an ecosystem scale.”



*Examples of banding on various varieties of Beech trees. Photos courtesy of The Trustees of Reservations.*

## 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](http://www.hinghamlandtrust.org) to contribute by credit card.

Contact us at [info@hinghamlandtrust.org](mailto:info@hinghamlandtrust.org) or by mail at the following address:  
Hingham Land Conservation Trust  
PO Box 10  
Hingham, MA 02043

### Board of Trustees

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Eileen McIntyre  
Elizabeth Moulds  
Daniel Wells

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### 2023 Financial Summary

Total Revenue: .....	\$23,994
Total Expenses: .....	\$17,159
Goodrich Fund: .....	\$58,056
Austin Fund: .....	\$17,835
Other Cash Assets: .....	\$227,420

More information can be found on our website: [hinghamlandtrust.org](http://hinghamlandtrust.org), designed and maintained by KLSuttonDesign LLC.



## Spring Walkers Explored Holly Hill's Farming & Fields

On a bright, early May day, HLCT members enjoyed a walk showcasing the environmental stewardship work at Holly Hill Farm in Cohasset. Our tour guide was Janice McPhillips, a farm educator and grant writer, as well as a former volunteer on the Green Teams at every level of the Hingham Public Schools.

The mile and a half walk started in the barnyard area, then explored (from a distance) the beehives and their important inhabitants. We continued onto Long Field, the site of a native meadow restoration project. From there, we explored Peck's Meadow, the farm's primary growing field. We learned how the equipment purchased with funds from the Goodrich Environmental Research Grant will aid Holly Hill's new soil health program. As any spring walk on a farm involves a bit of mud, we got to bring home soil samples on our boots.

Holly Hill's grounds connect to Wheelwright Park, and they are open to visitors. While you're there, check out Holly Hill Farm's organic farmstand! Friends of Holly Hill Farm supports the farm and its many educational programs with volunteer work and tax-deductible donations.



*A hearty crew heralded in spring with a walk at beautiful Holly Hill Farm.*



## Fall Walk Through Hingham History

HLCT members enjoyed peak fall weather and foliage on our Fall Walk through the Hingham Cemetery. Former cemetery board president Larry Lindner guided us over 13 terraced acres, pointing out significant sculptures and historically important gravesites, starting with the earliest section dating back to the cemetery's founding in 1672, and working our way towards present day. Along the way, we saw how headstones changed over the years following the fashion of the times and the increasing wealth of the town's citizens. In 1838, the cemetery was beautified and turned into a park and arboretum. Today, it features native and exotic plantings. We were also able to see historic Ames Chapel, beautifully restored in 2015 and available to the public to rent as event space.



*Enjoying a gorgeous fall day at Hingham Cemetery with a side of history and horticulture.*



## Choose Your Own Adventure: 50 Walks in Hingham

Looking for a little inspiration for your next walk or bike ride? Is your dog bored of the same-old, same-old route? Do you need a stroller or walker-friendly outing? Look no further than the comprehensive 50 Walks feature on our website! [hinghamlandtrust.org/50-walks](http://hinghamlandtrust.org/50-walks). The brainchild of HLCT board member Don Kidston, 50 Walks is a compilation of routes that can be searched by activity, length, ADA accessibility, dog-friendliness, and other features. One of Don's favorites is the Trihammer Pond/Pope's Lane Loop. Under a mile long, the walk features a mill pond set in woodlands, birds, a fish run, and remnants of a historic mill, beautiful water views, and summer-time sun sets.