



BREWSTER CONSERVATION TRUST — PROPERTY SPOTLIGHT

A house lot becomes a marshview park in 2008



Now you see it, now you don't: the 1970 half-Cape perched on the edge of the marsh was removed in 2008 by the BCT

Property Name: Bladen Park at Head of Quivett Creek (BCT#110)

Habitats:

0.5 acre cleared lot

7.0 acres brackish marsh

Donor: Daryl Massey Bladen

BCT interest: fee simple (full title ownership)

Location: 63 Main Street, West Brewster (Rt. 6A at the Dennis town line)

Public access: Limited parking on Sea St. at Main St., public access to

History and Description: The property came to the Trust as a gift from Daryl Massey Bladen, one of Brewster's most generous residents, Daryl has been a fixture of community events throughout her years in Brewster. She and her late husband Chris, inspired in their family an exceptional spirit of generosity.

In 2004-08 the Town of Dennis launched a major effort to preserve remaining land at Crowe's Pasture on Quivett Neck. To aid the conservation efforts, Chris and Daryl Bladen donated a conservation restriction on the seven acres of marsh they owned along the upstream portion of Quivett Creek, opposite the Dennis marshes and Crowe's Pasture.

The rental house that the Bladens owned on the property had been built many years before, by a previous owner, too close to the marsh. Daryl feared that the house's septic system was too near the marsh and allowed for potential contamination of the creek.



Daryl Massey Bladen



View east (downstream) from Sea St. Dike at Quivett Creek

After Chris unfortunately passed away in 2006, Daryl Bladen approached the Brewster Conservation Trust with a bold idea: in return for a commitment from the Trust to undevelop the property by removing the house and other man-made structures and restoring the site, Daryl would donate the property.

As the Bladens' generosity had supported the acquisition of Crowe's Pasture, the Dennis Conservation Trust generously offered to pay half of the costs of the removal of the rental home. With the support from Dennis, Daryl and the BCT reached an agreement in 2008 for the property to pass into the hands of the Trust for perpetual preservation.

Before the undevelopment commenced that summer, the Trust tried, with Daryl's support, to find a group willing to accept the house for use as an affordable housing unit. Ultimately, the costs and difficulty associated with moving such a large structure proved prohibitive. The shed, however, was donated to the Town and now serves as a boat house.

A dedication ceremony was held on the new conservation property in August 2008, attended by Ms. Bladen and her family where their generosity was again on display. When asked how she felt about the loss of the house's value as part of her inheritance, one of the daughters replied that she had never even thought about it. And so this vital piece of the Quivett Marsh will be protected for all time owing to the generosity of the Bladen family. The land donation was made in memory of Christopher Bladen.



View from Chris' Bench through alders to marsh



A walking path over Sea Street Dike connects Brewster & Dennis. The road was closed 30 years ago; the culvert was widened around 2007, allowing more tide upstream.

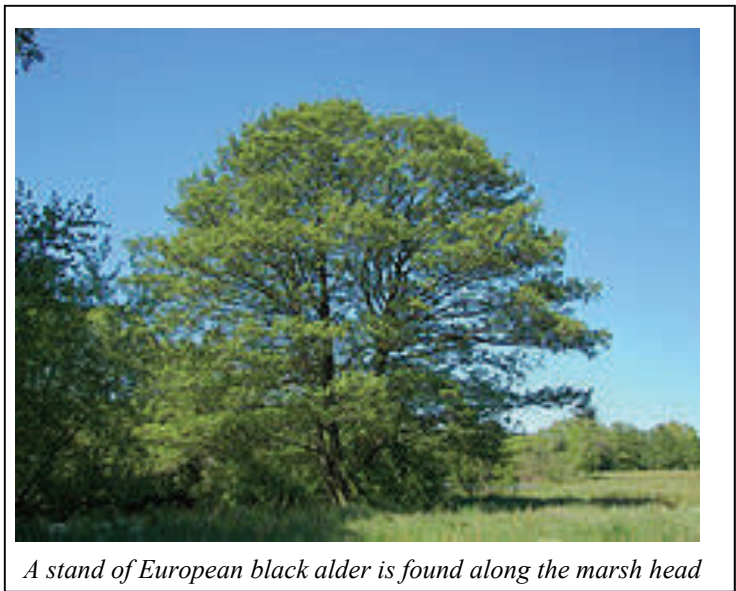
The property, located in the northwest corner of Brewster is a lovely spot for a visit. The property is surrounded by stone walls and the upland area where the house used to sit provides excellent views of the marsh. From the sheltered vantage point of the house site, a bench dedicated to Chris Bladen offers tranquil views of the marsh, isolated from the road by the surrounding trees.

A path also runs through the property connecting to Sea Street where a foot bridge overlooks water gently falling over rocks in the stream bisecting the marsh. From this vantage point a further enticing panorama faces the visitor with views of the marsh extending all the way to the

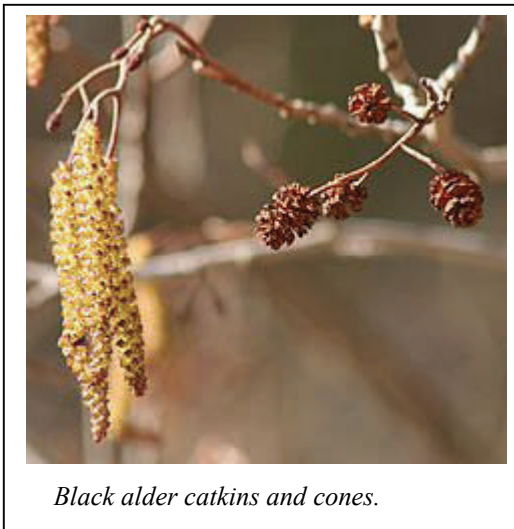
views of the marsh extending all the way to the waves rolling in off the bay to the north. Here too, a pair of benches offers a peaceful retreat amongst the gently wind blown marsh grass and reeds.

Habitat and Ecological significance:

The property preserves an upland wooded portion that provides habitat for a number of birds. In the past five years, the Towns of Brewster and Dennis and the Commonwealth worked together to restore more natural tidal flow upstream of the Sea Street Dike by widening the culvert. Over time, it is expected that the invasive Phragmites reeds of the upper end of the marsh at Bladen Park will die by saltwater inundation and give way to native salt marsh grasses. Salt marsh is one of the planet's most biologically productive ecosystems.



A stand of European black alder is found along the marsh head



Black alder catkins and cones.

Also note along the upland margins of the marsh at 6A, a stand of European black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) trees with their long catkins and tiny cones. Though not a native or rare species, there are only four known stands of the alder on Cape Cod and this is the most publicly-visible one.