



Brewster Conservation Trust

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

December 2010

FUND DRIVE BEGUN TO BUY HUCKLEBERRY HILL:

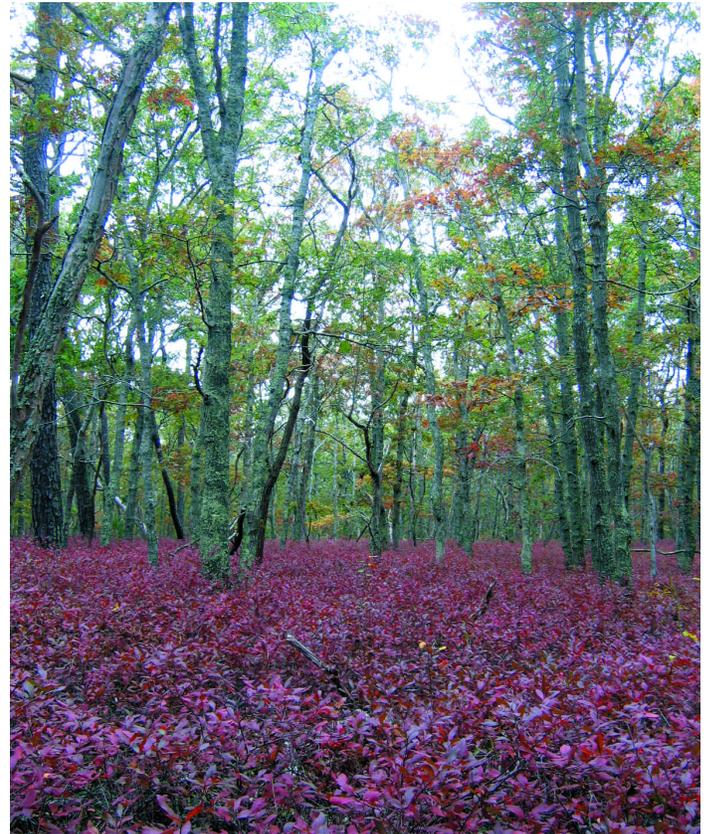
Help us preserve a 10-acre part of Brewster's highest hill!

You cannot get a nosebleed climbing Brewster's highest hill. At only 134 feet above sea level, you can barely get out of breath. Still, when we had a chance to buy part of its eastern flank, we jumped at the chance. But we will need support from the community of Brewster to succeed. Please contribute.

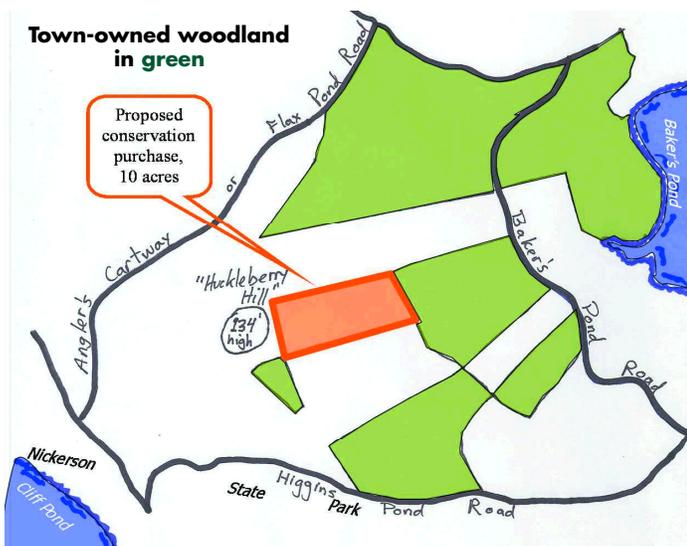
Huckleberry Hill is our name for this landform located between Baker's Pond and Nickerson State Park in East Brewster. Take a look at the photo and you will see the knee-high carpet of huckleberry shrubs at the autumnal peak of their color, a wine-dark sea out in the forest.

The 10-acre forest tract is composed of white and black oaks, and pitch pine, with occasional wispy white pines, mockernut, American beech and sassafras trees. It abuts a 90-acre assemblage of town-owned conservation lands. Well-grooved narrow foot trails wend their way through this area. It is a favorite haunt for white-tailed deer. It is truly a forgotten pocket of Brewster, perhaps even more so than the Punkhorn nowadays.

We need \$150,000 to purchase this parcel and another 3-acre parcel in East Brewster. We hope to engage our traditional partners at the Town and State for some funding assistance, but BCT members and the public will need to help us too. To be able to secure 13 acres for \$11,500 per acre is a bargain at any time. But the time is now and the need is urgent.



When you think of holiday presents this year, help us give Brewster a gift that does not depreciate over time: land for all to enjoy for all time. We submit Huckleberry Hill for your consideration. Thank you.



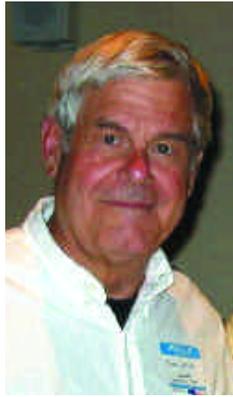
WAYS TO DONATE TO PRESERVE HUCKLEBERRY HILL:

- 1) Send a check made out to "BCT- Huckleberry Hill" at P.O. Box 268, Brewster, MA 02631 (envelope enclosed).
- 2) Use secure PayPal at www.brewsterconservationtrust.org
- 3) Call our Treasurer Peter Soule at 508-255-4728 to arrange for donation of securities.

ALL donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.
BCT is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am honored to have been asked by the board of the Trust to serve as president again. I look forward to working with our members, volunteers, and town officials on many projects of environmental significance to our beautiful little town by the sea. There is still so much to preserve that makes Brewster such a special place. Our noble ring of ponds, the broad shining tidal flats, our quiet dark woods and historic homes along leafy avenues—preserving all of this charm is clearly part of the work of the BCT.



Other items, not so clearly visible, need our help. In particular Brewster is grappling with its water quality and water management needs. Water is the lifeblood coursing through the veins of our town: our bay, our ponds, our thin little streams and, most importantly, our aquifer. The water we drink comes from the land

on which we live. What we do to the land affects how we steward the water beneath. The BCT supports the hard work being done by the Town's Comprehensive Water Planning Committee to shape the preservation of our waters. Nothing is more important, nor as complex. We will be part of the education effort around this important plan.

We will also strive to make progress on our efforts to maintain our properties, a sometimes thankless task, done mostly behind the scenes. Trash is dumped in one of our woods. We clean it up. We are always on the lookout for volunteers to help us. All you need is a pair of work gloves and a helpful attitude. We can supply the gloves!

Finally, I would like to thank my friend Elliott Carr for serving as BCT president for the past year. He has done an excellent job and his counsel to BCT bears the wisdom of life experience. We are lucky to have one of the Cape's foremost environmental leaders serving with us on the Brewster Conservation Trust. Thank you, Elliott.

Peter Johnson

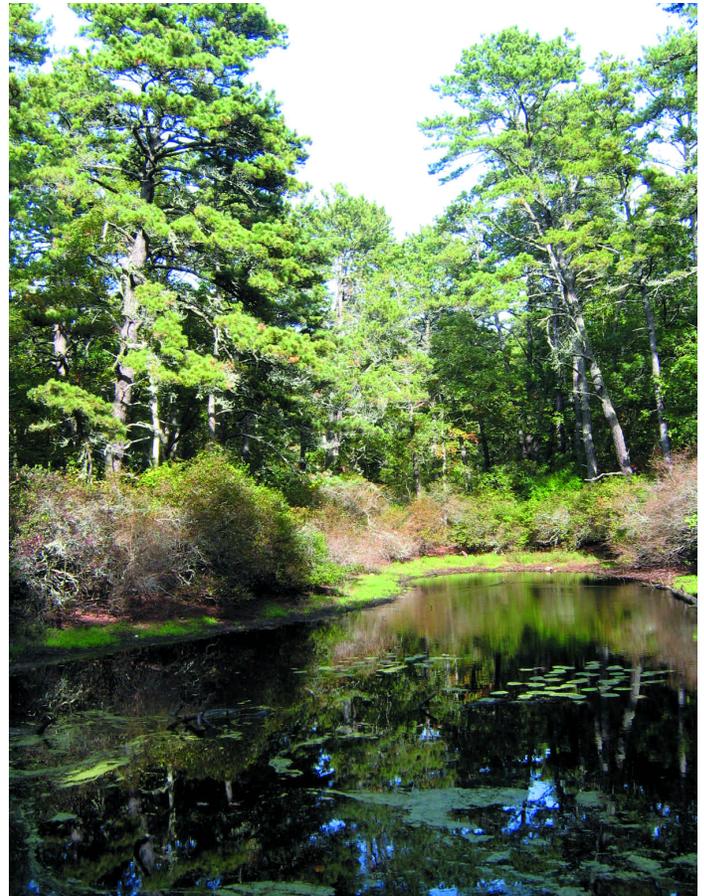
2010 LAND PROTECTION SUMMARY

BCT is completing another very active year for new open space lands preserved in Brewster. By year's end, we will have accepted donations of two wetlands parcels at Namskaket Marsh and Wash Pond totaling 4.16 acres, and the donation of the Drake's conservation restriction on 6.23 acres (see article on page 3). We have purchased 9.69 acres of woodland at Lower Mill Pond, Clay Hole Road and in the Punkhorn. The Town has granted BCT conservation restrictions on two tracts in the Punkhorn and Freemans Way Wellfield totaling 41.68 acres. And we have pending the purchase of the 13 acres in East Brewster (see article on Huckleberry Hill - page 1).

In all, BCT will have fostered the preservation of 75 new acres in town in 2010. This is the highest one-year total in the 27-year history of the Trust! We can not sustain this level of activity without the strong and generous support of our members and the people of Brewster.

We hope you will join the Trust as a dues-paying member, if you are not already. It is very easy—just use the enclosed envelope and let us hear from you or join via our secure website:

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org



Vernal pool on 8-acre Clay Hole Woodland purchased by BCT in 2010

DONATIONS OF TIME AND LAND

BRIER BOG PRESERVED: Jack and Nancy Drake donate CR

Thanks to the generosity of the Drake family, we have preserved another 6.23 acres of the Lower Road landscape, where BCT now protects almost 100 acres. The Drakes donated a perpetual conservation restriction on the old Brier Bog, named after farmer Anthony Brier, which the Drakes have owned for more than 40 years. The land includes about three acres of bog (now growing up to maple swamp and freshwater marsh) and three acres of mature pine-oak-cherry upland forest.



We were delighted to find several instances of Jack-in-the-pulpit growing in the swamp. It is seen in only a few places on the Lower Cape.

The land also is part of the extensive Lower Road drainage, which flows westwards the length of the road through swamps before emptying into Freemans Pond and then Paines Creek. Local archaeologist Dr. Fred Dunford believes the Lower Road area hosted the native American planting fields before colonial times. We thank the Drakes.



A wedding should be a joyous event, shared with friends and family on a warm sunny day in a beautiful landscape.



But preceded by cleaning a swamp in cold, wet weather? Is it being passionately committed to the environment ... or just plain crazy?

Richard Johnson (son of Peter and Ellie Johnson of Brewster) and Patricia Russell planned an early fall wedding in a lovely location. Wanting to share their commitment to the environment and the community, they invited their guests to a service project as part of their wedding weekend. The wedding party met at a Conservation Trust property off Lower Road and, using loppers and wire cutters, removed an old agricultural fence and other debris. The group united in camaraderie and mud as they slogged through poison ivy and briers, hacking at fencing and barbed wire and liberating an enormous fiberglass tub from a chilly creek. The project was followed by hot showers and the pleasure of knowing that they had provided for free passage of wildlife through the property. The wedding the next day satisfied the requirements of weather, location and good friendship.

BCT thanks Richard and Patricia and sends them our best wishes. Furthermore, we acknowledge that although BCT members often find creative ways to contribute, this is one of the most memorable. You don't have to get married (or be crazy) to volunteer with the BCT Land Stewards, but perhaps it helps. Call Pat Bertschy at 508-896-9556 to sign up.

What goes up, must come down Stony Brook

We have all endured some temporary inconvenience this fall, because of the detour around Rt. 6A at the Stony Brook crossing near Luke's Market. But it is all in the cause of a major, permanent improvement in the life of the herring migrating up Stony Brook to spawn in the Mill Ponds. Under Town Director of Natural Resources Chris Miller's supervision, the highway culvert is being widened, bringing more natural tidal flow upstream. Water quality south of the highway should also improve. American eels, a species that is also declining in numbers, will also benefit from better flow.

How are the herring doing? Nationally, the decline in populations continues to concern fisheries biologists. Fishing pressure offshore is one threat. Streamflow and water quality concerns inland are another. The Brewster run has been widely variable.

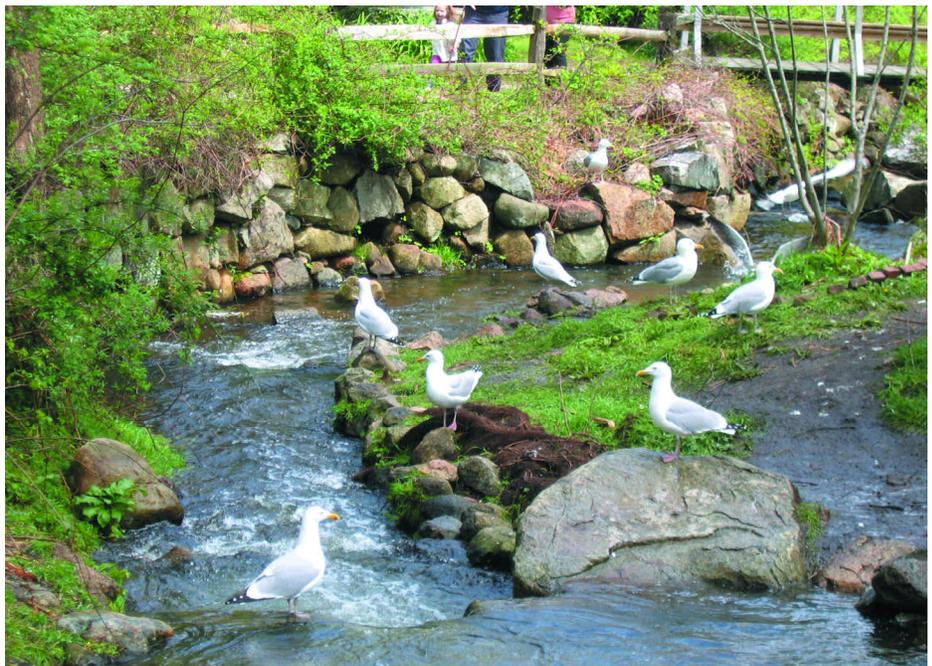
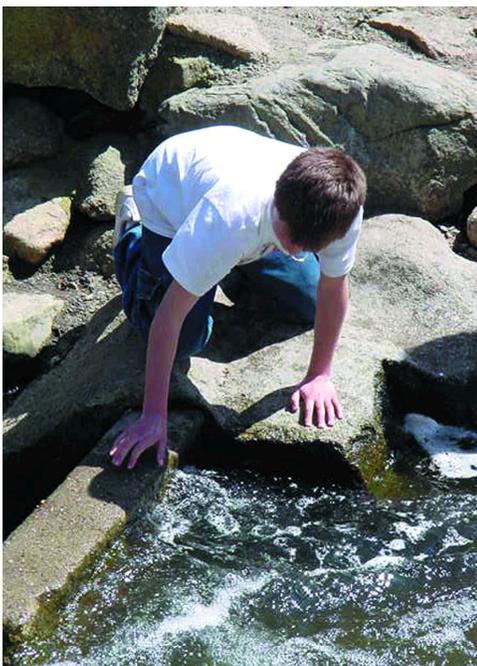
For several years, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod has trained volunteers to conduct fish counts for the Herring Run Monitoring Program. One such volunteer, Brewster's Ellie Johnson reports, "I live near the herring run and never needed an excuse to wander

along its trails. But it is fun to take part in some science while I am there. We count the fish moving through the final gap in the fish ladder as the exhausted fish finally reach Lower Mill Pond. And we engage with children and others who stop to watch us and wonder what we are doing with a watch and notebook." Using a statistical

method developed by the state Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), APCC's Senior Scientist, Dr. Jo Ann Muramoto, has analyzed the fish counts at two locations.

The size of the 2010 herring run in Stony Brook is estimated at 71,000 compared with 19,197 fish in 2009. In 2008 and 2007 the estimated numbers of herring were 33,000 and 30,000, respectively. The reasons for the apparent fluctuation in the Stony

Brook run from year to year are not known. "The run started earlier (first week of April) and lasted longer (into the first week of June), and many more fish were observed during more days," says Dr. Muramoto. "So that raises the bar for next year's herring monitoring to show an improvement following restoration." If you would like to volunteer, call Jo Ann at 508-362-4226.



TRUSTEE NEWS

Paul Gasek joins the Board

"I have loved Brewster and observed the changes for 43 years."

Paul Gasek, Trustee of the Brewster Conservation Trust, has his own story of falling in love with Cape Cod. A summer cottage with iron-tasting well water. No cellar, no insulation. It was a small house on a pile of sand shared with the ants. Thick with bull briars and poison ivy, pines and scrub oaks down off Point of Rocks, it was all of a three minute walk down a sandy lane to the beach and the many square miles of the Brewster flats, perfect for clamming, snorkeling, fishing, strolling – breathing it all in, until it seeped into the bones. As a boy, Paul had "sand in his shoes."

After college in 1972, he became a commercial fisherman, line-trawling out of Aunt Lydia's Cove in Chatham, and learned more about the environment and ecology on and around Cape Cod.

The fishing career ended when he became a producer at National Geographic Television, then went to WGBH and later the Discovery Channel. His work travels added to his awareness of world-wide issues of population, food, water, air, public health, biodiversity, sustainability.



Many of these problems are reflected in Brewster including pollution and careless disregard for resources.

Paul writes, "As kids, we were admonished to 'think globally, act locally.' By participating in the BCT, I feel that I am participating locally and doing something to protect the place I love best, from my own back yard to Brewster, and the rest of the Cape."

Read more about Paul Gasek's love of Cape Cod Bay and Brewster on our website:

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

Contributions to BCT

In Memory of

Jennifer K. Baringer
Helen H. Matel
Sally Benson
Ed & Anne Smith
Bill Dowling
Beth Finch
E. Arthur Drake
Cynthia D. Hugli
Marie Therese Fischer
Ken & Beverly Fischer
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Dorothy D. Leone
Peter J. Marshall
Janet A. Golden
Peter W. Schilke
Margaret Schilke
Norman Robinson
Natalie Robinson

In Honor of

Grandchildren Zach & Marisa
Carole W. Bell
John Gibson
Gibson Family
Vicki Plaut
Karen & Don Taranto
Patricia Russell & Richard Johnson's
wedding celebration
Sue & Elliott Carr
Barbara & Phill Balasa
Stewart & Carolyn Goetz
Charles M. Johnson
Ellie & Peter Johnson
Penny & Jamie Ladd



Memorials and bequests

What could be a more appropriate way to honor the memory of a loved one than to give a donation to the Brewster Conservation Trust "in lieu of flowers"? It's a gift that will help protect lands of special beauty or environmental value in Brewster. The BCT welcomes memorials and records them in our newsletter. The address to be used for that purpose is P.O. Box 268, Brewster, MA 02631.

We also welcome bequests which may be made in several ways. For guidance on planning a bequest or gift, contact Mark Robinson of The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts at 508-362-2565 or mark@thecompact.net.

Brewster **Conservation** Trust

508-362-2565

info@brewsterconservationtrust.org

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

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Brewster Conservation Trust

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REPORT FROM TOWN COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLANNING COMMITTEE

How much water is Brewster using and how much will it need to provide for the future? What is the quality of our water now and how can we assure the future purity of our groundwater, surface water and coastal waters? These are some of the questions being studied by the Comprehensive Water Planning Committee. Working closely with Camp, Dresser and McKee (CDM), the Committee's report on current conditions and recommendations for priority actions will be forthcoming as a first step in developing a water management plan for the town.



Brewster Town Meeting voted in November to protect water quality around Grassy Pond by transferring 20 acres of town land to the Conservation Commission.



Meanwhile, there are steps each of us can take to protect our water:

To reduce water use:

- 1.) Install rain barrels and use this water in gardens or on the lawn
- 2.) Use native vegetation and shrubs and grasses that require less watering
- 3.) Conserve household water by fixing leaks and installing low-flow shower heads and toilets

To minimize run-off onto roads and into ponds and coastal waters:

- 1.) Divert roof-run-off into dry wells or drainage fields to reduce flow down driveways
- 2.) Plant and maintain at least a 50 foot buffer of vegetation at the down-slope edge of properties fronting ponds and coastal waters

Pat Hughes, Chair, Comprehensive Water Planning Committee