



Brewster Conservation Trust

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

Autumn 2016

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."

- Franklin D. Roosevelt



The Rail Trail runs along the right side of the photo, Sheep and Long Ponds in background left. This is the Sheep Pond Woodlands, a couple hundred acres of pine forest running along Gull's Way. In the middle of the photo is the 11-acre Boehm property that BCT is planning to purchase.

Sheep Pond Woodlands: a forest worthy of its name

Clear-cut by colonists, Brewster's pine forest has all grown back in just the past 150 years. In the mid-1800s, when Thoreau walked through, he said the Cape's denuded landscape looked like the "bottom of the ocean laid bare." We don't ever want to take our woods for granted again. The key is saving large enough chunks of it, with width and breadth, to provide quality upland habitat and preserve a forest worthy of its name.

The Brewster Conservation Trust seeks to buy an 11.11-acre tract of pine forest on Gulls Way for \$275,000 this winter. We have a commitment from the Town of Brewster for \$125,000 (approved at last Spring Town Meeting) and hope to secure a \$85,000 State grant in December. We will still need you, our friends and members, to contribute the remaining \$65,000. Every dollar donated is tax deductible and will be applied solely to this land purchase. You have never let us down.

cont'd on page 2

Photographers wanted for a BCT photo exhibit at the Brewster Ladies' Library in May 2017

Photos can be taken in any season, "of" or "from" any of our properties, be close-ups, mid-range, or landscapes and may include people and/or animals.

Interested? Have photo to submit? Contact bct@brewsterconservationtrust.org.

For more information and a map of suggested properties, visit www.brewsterconservationtrust.org.

While all the photos will not be formally exhibited at the library, the Brewster Conservation Trust would request permission to use, in perpetuity, any image submitted. The BCT would include a photo credit for any image used.



Sheep Pond Woodlands (cont'd)

The Sheep Pond Woodlands is still a forest worthy of its name. Stretching from Route 137 on the east to Route 124 on the west, and bounded on the north by the Cape Cod Rail Trail and on the south by Sheep Pond, this unbroken forest is roughly 200 acres in size. The Town's Conservation Commission already owns 79 acres, acquired through the Town's Land Bank funding 15 years ago, that runs from the parking lot at the bike trail/Rt. 137 crossing to the fisherman's landing on Sheep Pond. There are excellent walking trails on the old cart paths leading past Captain Smith's Bog and several vernal pools where spring peepers sing in April.

Our intended land purchase is all high, dry pitch pine and white and black oak forest, halfway down Gulls Way. Thickly vegetated with blueberry and huckleberry shrubs, there are also shy lady slippers blooming in May. The land abuts the bike trail and provides part of the pleasant greenbelt along this section. We hope to work with other adjoining landowners to preserve additional acreage in this broad forest.

Please help us out with contributions large and small so we can keep going in our quest to keep Brewster green!

THE PITCH PINE

Excerpted from, The Pitch Pine, Cedarville Journal column of 2/7/03 by John N. Cullity, founder and president of the Sandwich Conservation Trust

I think the pitch pine is given the least respect of our native trees. It is the signature tree of Cape Cod, growing in dry, barren areas, even in the white sands of a beach. Any tree that can fill this role in nature has my admiration.

The range of *Pinus rigida* extends approximately from Maine to the Carolinas, but is most associated with Cape Cod, the eastern end of Long Island, and the New Jersey Pine Barrens. A mature specimen can reach 100 feet high, though 40 to 50 feet is more common. I have counted 126 growth rings in a stump.

This scraggly tree is full of sticky pitch when cut in warm weather, rots quickly when in contact with the soil, and is shunned as firewood when anything better is available. They also have a shallow root system and tend to blow over in storms.

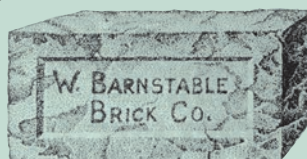
But crows love to roost and nest in these trees and I have seen hawks and owls perched on a dead limb, looking for prey.

The pitch pine has a rich history of usefulness. Colonists called it torch pine, for the hard, resinous knots which were collected from fallen trunks, burned as torches. Similarly, "candle-wood" were small split pieces burned to supplement light from the hearth. These lighting methods were very smoky, but poor families were satisfied.

Enormous amounts of tar and "spirits of turpentine" were made from pitch pines through a crude version of distillation, with rosin powder as a by-product. Turpentine Road in Sandwich alludes to this use.

Charcoal was also made from pitch pines. My grandfather recalled "Funntown" in East Dennis/West Brewster around 1900. At first he thought it might be a place to go for a good time, but then he learned that it was the site of lamp black manufacture. Pine was burned in brick domes; later, men scraped the lampblack off the interior surface. The domes were called "funns." Lamp black was used in black paint and ink. (Funn Pond is in the Dennis Pines Golf Course.)

When properly split and dried, the wood burns well; it was used for firing steam engines and for brick-yards, such as the one in West Barnstable (1878-1929).

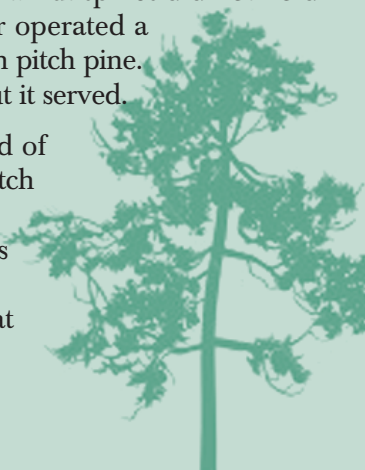


Arched kilns made of the "green" bricks were fired with 4-foot long pitch pine. Perhaps the greatest pitch pine user of

all was the Sandwich glass factory (1827-1888), which had cut 1,300 acres of woodland for its furnace.

"In Plymouth County, vessels have been made, for a considerable time, almost entirely of pitch pine," declared a 1846 state report. But spikes did not hold well. My great-grandfather operated a Crosby catboat framed with pitch pine. It wasn't as good as oak, but it served.

I would add that the sound of wind blowing through a pitch pine grove is particularly beautiful. When conditions are right, it may be the closest thing to singing that trees can achieve.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What do you see as Brewster's future? Many say that one of the things they love about our town is the rural character – the stretches of woods along Brewster roads, large areas of forest

where only trails cross the undeveloped landscape, ponds protected by wooded shore lines, and the generally high quality environment around us. In the coming years and decades, what will Brewster become? Will we maintain a balance between this environmental quality and the development needs of residents and visitors?

The Nature Conservancy, in 2012, estimated that Brewster was 29% developed, 29% conservation, and 42% undeveloped. This last 42% is up for grabs. We often mistake undeveloped land as conserved land; the woods and fields we see as part of the Town's rural character. But in fact, Brewster could become more built up. Data from the Town's Assessor's office indicate that in 2014 and 2015, 57 acres transitioned from the vacant (undeveloped)

category to developed categories. At the same time only 15 acres moved from vacant to conservation. Despite the best efforts of BCT, the Town, and willing land owners, the trend clearly tilted in land development's favor. Is this the balance we want for Brewster's future?

This is not to say that all land should go to conservation. To accommodate the needs of all residents, young and old, it is imperative that we ensure affordable housing, and we should provide the facilities that keep our local economy vibrant. At the same time, we need to continue to protect the open space which is part of what makes Brewster attractive to residents and visitors. This does not come cheaply.

In the last BCT newsletter I wrote about the return on investing in open space for the town. We must continue to make this investment to maintain Brewster's character and quality of life. As land values rise and open parcels become more fragmented, this becomes a greater challenge. Please help BCT and the Town meet this challenge by supporting open space purchases at Town meeting, contributing to BCT, and donating land, all to leave a legacy of Brewster's quality of life for future generations.

Hal Minis

EDDY SCHOOL SCIENCE CLASSES EXPLORE BCT'S HAY PROPERTY WOODS

Do you know how to estimate the height of a tree? Do you know what the layers of soil are? This is what 80 students from the Eddy School's Fourth grade science class discovered over two days at BCT's 60-acre Hay property. In small groups, they walked through the woods to different destinations, stopping along the way to talk about what they saw and what they heard.

Some groups played tree detective by measuring the diameter of a tree, estimating the height, and identifying leaf and bark types. Other groups created soil jars by excavating a small area of the forest floor and recording what they found at each layer, what the soil texture was, and what roots, bugs and other things they found in each layer. Each group recorded this information on data sheets and took pictures with their i-Pad.

What did they learn? "I didn't know there was so many things you can look at in the woods." said one fourth-grader. "We identified different trees by feeling their bark, looking at the shape of the leaves or counting the number of pine needle bundles." said another.

The trip to Hay property was part of a larger collaboration between BCT and the Eddy School science program. In addition to the outing at the Hay property, BCT has helped the third graders explore the meadow at Windmill Meadows, next to Drummer Boy Park. BCT is also developing a trail on a recently acquired property next to the Eddy school which will allow the science program to explore a vernal pool. BCT is also funding the expansion of Wellfleet Audubon's program with the Eddy School to add a field trip to a BCT property to each of their classroom programs. The goal of this collaboration is to get school children outdoors by using BCT land as living laboratories for the Eddy School Science program.



CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Howard Hayes works for the present and plans for the future.

In 1983 the country was recovering from the Arab oil embargo and interest rates were skyrocketing. Realtor Hayes saw the need for conservation land and realized the time was right. He and John Lobingier, a member of the Brewster Conservation Commission, sought other like-minded citizens and the Brewster Conservation Trust was founded. In accepting the Conservationist of the Year award Howard said, "When we started the Trust, we never imagined it would grow into the strong, active organization that has played such an important role in shaping Brewster."

The Hayes family's Brewster roots start with his grandparents. Howard spent childhood summers in the 5-bedroom house on Winslow Landing. Settling in Brewster after college, he worked as a carpenter and at Latham's School, becoming a realtor in 1976.

Purchases of conservation land show faith in the future. Howard reflects that assurance: "If people have confidence in the integrity of BCT and if they understand the mission, the funds needed will be there. It's the Field of Dreams philosophy – If you build it, they will come."

Howard retired as a trustee in 1998 but his interest in conservation and the well-being of Brewster is strong. He serves as agent for BCT, gives us good strategic advice and donates his fees back. His counsel continues to improve the trust in the present and his position on the Brewster Coastal Advisory Group continues his work to assure our future.



SUMMER INTERN JOHNNY ROBINSON

"...there is much good work to be done by every one of us and ... we must begin to do it." - Wendell Berry



After Johnny Robinson completed his freshman year at Hampshire College he had a completely different experience as a summer intern for BCT.

At his first full time job, Johnny contributed in the office and on many conservation projects. And there was a lot to do. Indoors he learned office work: setting up space, maintaining schedules, creating records for properties; but most of his

time was spent outside installing trail signs, clearing trails and removing invasive plants and vines. He helped clear downed trees, installed a gate, scouted property lines and made boundary maps.

As Johnny helped maintain the office and the conservation land, he learned skills as well. "Education works best when it's based on a system of learning-by-doing. The same can be said for my personal growth while I worked here," Johnny wrote. While learning about power tools and computer programs, he also learned techniques for time management.

"It was a pleasure working with a friendly and helpful group of people, while maintaining beautiful properties for the public's enjoyment," he said.

Thank you, Johnny. It was a pleasure working with you, too.

CHAPLIN AWARD GIVEN TO PETER JOHNSON OF BREWSTER

Each year the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts honors someone who has made a substantial contribution to the cause of conservation with the Ansel Chaplin Award. The 2016 winner is Brewster's Peter Johnson, chosen for his contributions to both Orleans and Brewster, for his dedication, leadership, organization skills, and advocacy for protection of land and water. His easy-going, consensus-building manner and thoughtful approach to problem-solving has led to a conservation ethic that is backed up by tangible results in Brewster.



TALENT BANK OF SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS . . .

BCT relies on volunteers with varied interests and skills. Those with chain saws and loppers clear trails, explorers search boundary markers in the woods, office workers scan documents and maintain files. These weekly or monthly or occasional volunteers are invaluable, and we invite you to join us. But some have special skills and exceptional dedication. Here are three of them.

Don Arthur and Mary Chaffee

If your trail walk leads to an exceptional view, or if you need to sit and rest a spell, thank Don Arthur for the bench placed just where you want it.

Don didn't grow up in a woodworking family, but his wife, Mary Chaffee, did. Don served thirty-three years as a Navy emergency physician and health care executive, reaching the rank of Vice Admiral and serving as 35th Surgeon General of the Navy. All that didn't prepare him for taking classes in furniture making, but the skills he and Mary learned have resulted in beautiful pieces for their home and some 24 benches donated to the Brewster Conservation Trust. Don and Mary's conservation ethic extends from benches to putting a CR on open land beside their home to studying law (they are now in their third year) so Mary can pursue future work in environmental protection.



Don and Mary Chaffee in their work shop.

. . . GIVING THEIR TIME AND TALENT TO BCT



Parisi family on the trail

Chip Parisi

Chip lost Carol, his wonderful wife of 44 years, in 2013 and turned his sadness into action. Chip and Carol were avid volunteers with the Friends of the National Seashore and Chip decided to focus his energy and love of the outdoors on a trail closer to home. Since 2013, he has worked to monitor and improve one of the premier walking trails in Brewster, the one-mile Eddy Bay Trail, off Lower Road.

As a result of Chip's efforts, and the support of many volunteers, the trail features a wildflower meadow in front of the old, restored cranberry barn foundation, an extensive holly grove practically clear of invasives, a visible stone wall in the trail's interior, and opens to three magnificent wolf oak trees just before the end of the trail. Overlooking the highest bluff in Brewster on Cape Cod Bay is a bench dedicated to Carol's joyful spirit. Chip's efforts are regularly rewarded when he greets the many residents and visitors who frequent the trail and comment on its accessibility and natural beauty.

BREWSTER CONSERVATION DAY – BETTER THAN EVER!

July 9, 2016

The fifth annual Brewster Conservation Day was better than ever! Close to 1,000 people of all ages came to Drummer Boy Park to experience the 40 exhibits, hear featured presentations on important issues in Town, and participate in activities about the value of conservation. They practiced how to be water friendly consumers at the Brewster Ponds Coalition game “Be a Pond Hero”, asked experts about how septic systems work, learned about composting and soil testing from the Cooperative Extension Service and the Chamber of Commerce, learned about the value of planting native plants,



made bird feeders, explored the full size fish weir, toured the windmill, and viewed the Blacksmith demonstration at the Brewster Historic Society’s historic village.



Thanks to all organizations for their engaging, educational exhibits. Thanks to the dozens of volunteers from the BCT land stewardship team, the Brewster Historical Society, the Brewster Flats, AmeriCorps Cape Cod, and the Eagle Scouts. And thanks to all the businesses that contributed to Brewster Conservation Day: Café Al Fresco, Dunkin’ Donuts, Ferretti’s Market, Joey’s Pizza, Laurino’s Restaurant, Ocean Edge Resort, Perry’s Last Stand, Stop & Shop, Shaw’s and Star Markets, Trader Joe’s, and Pepsico. It was a great day and we’re already looking forward to next year! Be sure to check out video of this year’s event on our website: brewsterconservationtrust.org.



APCC ANNUAL MEETING

Award presented to The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts



BCT was one of the founders of the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts in 1986. At its 2016 annual meeting the APCC recognized the Compact’s 30th anniversary and celebrated the Compact, its member trusts, and its Executive Director Mark Robinson for many successes in protecting the Cape with innovative land protection tools.

“APCC has long recognized the relationship between land protection and water quality. Moreover, countless studies have consistently shown that sound land protection practices are the best way of keeping property taxes low.”

DeWitt also noted that “Cape Cod’s drinking water remains under siege from a variety of risks and hazards”, but that “Sound zoning and land use planning such as... Brewster’s innovative natural resource protection zoning...are all important protection measures.”

INSPIRATION FROM A YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST

*Excerpts from an essay by Christian Patrick Lester, a recent college graduate.
Patrick passed away on May 9, 2016.*

"When I am in a rut or feel bad, I escape to the woods. There is an amazing peace that I feel when I enter into the wilderness. Everything has a purpose, even the trees. It all comes together in a mosaic to make a large picture. The picture gets bigger and bigger as you expand outward and think of our world as a whole.

"It scares me to know that we are losing vital plants and animals every day. It's a matter of time before we wipe out part of the picture and the whole thing crumbles. The peace and serenity will be gone, that's why we need to work together to keep our Environment intact. Because it's usually the small things that nobody notices or recognizes or even sees, for that matter, that may be the most important. So my advice to you is take a walk in the woods with someone you love and remember to take in all the small things in life which are what is most important."

MEMORIALS & BEQUESTS Contributions to BCT honor the memory of a loved one; give a donation to the Brewster Conservation Trust "in lieu of flowers". The address for donations: P. O. Box 268, Brewster, MA 02631. For guidance on planning a bequest or gift, contact jeff@brewsterconservationtrust.org.

In Memory of

William M. Baxter
John & Marcia Kielb

Claude W. Brenner
Raymond James

June E. Brickman
Ms. Nina E. Liss

Lenore M. Dedon
Lisa Pham
Patrick Hennessy

Lucile V. Dillon
Duane & Karen Rapp

Chester Dobrolski
(who loved to fish in Brewster Ponds)
Chris Shand

Alice Favreau
Anne Southworth

Suzanne Foster
John Posey & Paul MacDonald

Raymond Girard
Patricia Girard

Diane L. Gately
James H. Gately

John and Kristi Hay
Elizabeth Finch

Jim and Terry Hughes
Laura Collins-Hughes

Paul Hush
Anne Southworth

George & Jeanne Illig
Andrea Illig

Deane Keuch
Brewster Men's Club

Linda Lanier-Keosaian
Gregory J. Keosaian

Sarah Leslie
Jackie Buckley

Christian Patrick Lester
Joe Prevost & Meredith Pollard

Ruth M. McGinnis
Prudence Baxter
Robert & Helen Boyd
Elizabeth Coakley
J. E. Coakley
John William McGinnis
Carie Paige
Stephen J. Ryan

Marguerite McGirr
Mrs. Anne Crowley

Susan McNair
John McNair

Elizabeth Scarborough
John Posey & Paul MacDonald

Eleanor Snow
Elizabeth Finch

Mykey Sokoloff
Mike & Katharine Reynolds

Ann Waldron Sullivan
George M. Grubb
Hilary Sullivan Hickok & Family
Stephen Lindenmuth
John Posey & Paul MacDonald
Steven Pfeffer

Sally Swanson
John Posey & Paul MacDonald

Allen J. Ward
John & Marcia Kielb

In Honor of

My Family
Ed Henning

Ellie Johnson
Ellen R. Plaut

Carroll & Jane Johnson
Bruce R. Johnson

Brewster Conservation Trust

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www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

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**Brewster Conservation Day on July 9, 2016 at Drummer Boy Park**