



Brewster Conservation Trust

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

Spring 2017



The Fishing Rock at Lower Mill Pond
from the BCT photo collection

Partners in Conservation

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.

- Howard Hayes
founding member, Brewster Conservation Trust

What does conservation mean to you? Is it a gorgeous view of protected marshlands or a sunset at the beach? A walk with the dog on a wooded path? A visit to one of Brewster's little farms? Is it protecting high quality drinking water and healthy ponds? Is it meadows for bluebirds or stretches of forest for deer and coyotes or vernal pools for salamanders? Is it an acre in a neighborhood for children to play?

Wherever your passions lie, you are part of a mosaic of people devoted to the preservation of the unspoiled landscapes and natural beauty that make Brewster arguably Cape Cod's greenest gem.

Some who grew up in Brewster remember when a boy could spend all day riding his bike on dirt paths and never come upon a house. Or a girl could ride her horse on the beach or ride through the woods from Stony Brook Road to Harwich Center. When the population of the town was under 2,000 there was not much talk of conservation or of zoning or of water quality.

Times are different now. There are many more of us—almost 10,000 residents and 35,000 in the summer—and we consume, and discard, a whole lot more than we did 50 years ago. Private-property development is far outpacing land conservation so more efforts are necessary to preserve what we have always considered Brewster's rural character. We are developing new ways to dispose of solid waste and build safer septic systems. If we want wooded paths and clean water and space for wildlife, we must actively protect what before seemed so natural, so inevitable.

cont'd on page 2

BCT Mission: To preserve open space, natural resources, and the rural character of Brewster and to promote a conservation ethic.

Partners in Conservation (cont'd)

It takes a community of people with many different priorities to keep the character of Brewster. Which part is your priority? Bird watching? Walking trails with grandchildren? A beautiful sunset view? All these can be protected only by hands and hearts and money. Some volunteers work with The Ponds Coalition. Some teach children about the ways of soil and insects. Some clear power lines to encourage Entergy to avoid spraying sensitive areas. Some build bird houses. Many are careful to avoid fertilizers and pesticides, to have septic systems regularly pumped, to assure their paved driveways do not cause additional road run off. Many donate funds to keep Brewster beautiful.

What does BCT do? If you saw the art show at the Brewster Ladies' Library in May you have an idea of how the Brewster Conservation Trust contributes to all these goals. Forty-four individual prints by nine photographers vividly portray 12 signature properties owned by the trust and open to the public. Dozens of photos in large collages present work with schoolchildren, land stewardship projects and community outreach. Since 1983, we've been able to protect almost 180 parcels of land, over 1,250 acres which are now under conservation management by BCT, the Town, and private property owners. It's who we are. It's what we do.

Many photos from the Library show are on our website: brewsterconservationtrust.org. Prints and note cards from the show are available for purchase so you can share what Brewster means to you.

THE YOUNG CONSERVATIONISTS

Did you play in the outside as a child? Was there a park or playground nearby? A patch of woods or an expanse of fields and forest to explore, to ride bikes, to make forts and wade in puddles? Do you question whether today's young people have the same opportunities or interests?

BCT is helping younger generations enjoy and respect the natural world. Projects include engaging with 3rd and 4th graders of the Eddy Elementary School, helping high school men earn Eagle Scout badges, sponsoring college students for summer internships, collaborating with AmeriCorps, and working with the Master Gardeners and young gardeners.

EDDY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

Partners in this venture: An anonymous benefactor, Brewster Conservation Trust, Eddy Elementary School, Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary - Mass Audubon, Brewster School Department, naturalist Donald Schall

- Eddy School 3rd graders will again meet with naturalist Don Schall in June to explore wildlife in Windmill Meadows. Tiny insects and flitting butterflies are part of this ecosystem as well as the birds, foxes and chipmunks that feed on the blueberries and acorns.
- In 2016, and again in 2017, BCT collaborates with Wellfleet Audubon scientists and Eddy School's 4th grade to study the soils, trees and paths at the Hay Conservation Center and the Eddy Sisters Trail and other BCT properties.



EDDY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VERNAL POOL TRAIL



Principal Joanna Hughes and BCT President Hal Minis cut the green brier "ribbon" to officially open the new trail

Partners in this venture: Brewster Conservation Trust and many volunteers, Eddy School staff and teachers, Brewster School Committee, Department of Natural Resources, Brewster Conservation Commission, Brewster Department of Public Works, AmeriCorps

Years of planning brought together a team to create a nature trail connecting the Eddy School to a place of natural beauty with towering trees and two vernal pools. At the dedication science teacher Patricia Marchant led the children in singing, "This land is your land, this land is my land." As science teacher Charlie McKendree said, "These trails offer a path for children to make a connection to nature . . . Here we can experience a sense of wonder. We are a part of something so deep, so much bigger than ourselves. And children can begin to care about these places."

CHILDREN'S GARDEN AT THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Partners in this venture: Brewster Conservation Trust, Brewster Council on Aging, the Master Gardeners

Each year BCT welcomes the Master Gardeners to the BCT owned Community Garden where for 4+ months they teach 14 children the basic principles of gardening. Each young gardener has lessons on worm farming, bee keeping and composting. They make flower arrangements, test soil structure and learn about the birds on Cape Cod. They even make scarecrows to guard the garden. By the end of the season, after learning how to grow, taste and appreciate the value of fresh organic vegetables, this group of 8 to 12 year olds becomes a kind of family.



EAGLE SCOUTS

BCT has helped two high school students earn Eagle Scout badges as they helped build and maintain trails for walkers and dog walkers to enjoy.

SUMMER INTERN WARREN SALO

Partners in this venture: An anonymous benefactor, College graduate Warren Salo, Brewster Conservation Trust

For the summer of 2017 we welcome our paid intern, Warren Salo, a Bachelor of Science graduate from the State University of New York College at Oneonta. He will be spending his summer working with BCT staff and volunteers. With his knowledge of GIS principles and environmental applications, he will assist BCT staff and volunteers in improving the mapping skills so important in today's land management practices.

You may also see him out and about with a lawn mower or with the group of volunteers who meet regularly to maintain BCT properties.



AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER COREY BRAY

Partners in this Venture: AmeriCorps, Brewster Department of Natural Resources, Brewster Conservation Trust



Graduate of Old Dominion University in Virginia and one-time summer student in Belize, 24-year-old Corey Bray is spending his AmeriCorps year working jointly with the Brewster DNR and the Brewster Conservation Trust.



An Eagle Scout and a lover of outdoor activities, Corey has had opportunity to work on BCT land management projects both organizing work parties and developing his trail building skills.

AMERICORPS

In addition, AmeriCorps group work days have assisted BCT volunteers and trustees to clear and burn invasive plants at Windmill Meadows and at Quivet Marsh Vista.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Much of this newsletter is about the many partnerships we form to complete the activities which are core to our mission. Indeed, rarely can the Trust do it on its own: we rely on partnerships with organizations that share common interests and a commitment to protect our resources and build people's awareness of the value of the work we do. Luckily in Brewster and on Cape Cod there are many such organizations.

But beyond the organizations, I'm impressed by the people who are part of these organizations, who drive them and work with BCT. For example, we recently purchased a property next to the Eddy School with a vernal pool on it – a relatively rare piece of surface water whose seasonal nature produces a special habitat, perfect for letting the children at the Eddy school learn about the wonders of the natural world. Charlie McKendree, the science coordinator at Eddy, has been there every workday to cut paths, build a bridge, and other things to get the trail ready for his classes.

For several years BCT has had the dream of building a trail on "Huckleberry Hill", a beautiful piece of woodland in East Brewster that would link the BCT property with Town property and eventually Town of Orleans property around Baker's Pond. I tip my hat to the individuals in Brewster's Natural Resources Department, the Town of Orleans Conservation administration, and the Orleans Conservation Trust whose willingness to collaborate and commitment to public access made the three mile Baker's Pond trail come to life.

And there are many more examples like these. I guess what impresses me about these experiences is that the community of people who share these interests and values is large and they are willing to join forces to protect our resources and help more people understand what we do and why it's important.

Hal Minis
President, *Brewster Conservation Trust*

BLUEBERRY POND

Partners in this venture: Brewster Conservation Trust, Ocean Edge, The Save Blueberry and Sol's Pond Coalition, The Brewster Ponds Coalition

Cal Mutti has served as Land Steward of several properties in his neighborhood near Blueberry Pond. A drainage problem, causing cascades of road run off to spill into the pond, clearly needed help from more than just BCT. It took a cooperative effort to solve the problem.

Cal wrote, "On Christmas Eve the rains fell gently and steadily in the neighborhood, producing a rushing stream of storm water that cascaded down North Pond Drive, testing the newly installed storm water catchment system, construction of which took up the previous five full days. It was exciting, with big toys everywhere, with blueprints and laser levelers, too.

"Our beloved Blueberry Pond is a natural treasure, longing to be made pristine again. The frogs, fish, and ducks are all clapping their wings, gills and legs.



"Congratulations on an amazing collaborative effort that will bless this trusted gift of land and water for centuries. Perhaps best of all is how this effort is testimony to what can be accomplished when many different groups come together in common cause to effect real solutions to large problems."

Thanks to Engineer John O'Reilly for working with property owners to reduce run off. Building on this experience, the Brewster Ponds Coalition will use this lesson to educate other pond front communities.

GARDEN CLUB PROJECTS

Partners in this venture: Brewster Garden Club, Brewster Conservation Trust volunteers and interns

The Alyce Favreau garden is coming along. With BCT volunteers providing the heavy lifting and seven Garden Club members planning and planting, the garden at the Hay Conservation Center is 75% complete.

BCT and the Brewster Garden Club also collaborate on a \$2000 scholarship for a Brewster high school graduate to continue college studies in an environmental or natural resources field.



Brewster Conservation Trust

BAKER'S POND TRAIL

Partners in this Venture: Brewster Conservation Trust, Brewster Department of Natural Resources, Orleans Conservation Trust, Orleans Department of Public Works, Orleans Department of Natural Resources, many volunteers

It took fund raising, vision, planning, coordination between towns and departments, hours of trail clearing, and the persistence of BCT trustee John Lamb to bring this trail to fruition.



In the beginning, the confusion of existing trails crossed more than a dozen lots in two towns, and in places the trails wandered over private land. For seven years an orderly trail system was only a dream. For the past two years the two towns, their conservation trusts, and town departments conferred and planned. Finally volunteers cleared old trails and cut the necessary new ones to create a three-mile trail that spans both towns, offering a secluded valley walk that leads to a vernal pool, a zig-zag climb up Huckleberry Hill with a beach grove near the top, and a range of views from different heights on either side of Baker's Pond that change depending on the weather, the season and the time of day.

Access to the new trail is from Baker's Pond Road in Orleans. While walking and admiring the views, look for deer, coyotes and turkeys, and consider all that it took to make this trail possible.

BIOBLITZ

Partners in this venture: 15 specialists from Brewster, Cape Cod and Massachusetts

On one warm day in June 2016, 15 observers with a variety of scientific specialties met at the Hay Conservation Center to discover who and what lives in the 55 acres of wooded preserve. In that one day they scouted paths, woodlands, ponds and wetlands, and some of the naturalists have returned through the fall to continue the study. So far there are over 400 individuals with a heavy emphasis on moths and vascular plants. Included are mammals, herps, birds, butterflies, moths, damsel and dragonflies, arthropods, eucaryotes and vascular plants.



The count continues. If you have a specialty we would like to hear from you. Refreshments are occasionally provided.

PROTECTING LAND AND GROUND WATER FROM CHEMICAL SPRAYING

Partners in this venture: Brewster Conservation Trust, APCC, Orleans, Dennis, Eastham, many volunteers

How many times have you heard the term "sole source aquifer?" It means that all our water on Cape Cod comes from one underground supply. It means that anything that goes into the ground may eventually come out of your tap.

Cape Cod citizens are justifiably concerned that any pollution can become a major problem. To that end several towns appealed Eversource's annual plan to spray herbicide under transmission lines. With the appeal pending, the chemical spraying was delayed in 2016 but is now scheduled for 2017.

For two years scores of BCT volunteers have been manually clearing under the Eversource power lines to eliminate the need for spraying.

In March 2017, BCT wrote directly to Eversource Energy noting that "BCT owns several parcels which would be subject to chemical spraying. These parcels include habitat for rare and endangered species, other special Massachusetts habitat characteristics, and some are located within a drinking water supply area."

The letter formally requested that Eversource Energy acknowledge BCT's efforts and requested that the company refrain from spraying on any of these eight properties.

We'll let you know how it turns out.

Meanwhile, you can do your part to protect our fragile ecosystem. Eliminate or reduce your use of fertilizers and pesticides. They may be as dangerous as anything Eversource sprays.



BCT volunteers removed woody vegetation from eight properties under power lines.

WATER CONCERNS: THINKING BEYOND NUTRIENT POLLUTION

By Laurel Schaidler, Ph.D.

Partners in this venture: Dr. Laurel Schaidler of the Silent Spring Institute; Brewster Ponds Coalition, sponsor of Dr. Schaidler's talk in Brewster on which this article is based

Communities across Cape Cod are working to curb nutrient pollution from household wastewater, which causes damaging algal blooms in coastal waters and ponds. But your septic system is also a source of other pollutants.

Our research at Silent Spring Institute has shown that these pollutants, called emerging contaminants, can make their way from septic systems into groundwater and ultimately into drinking water and ponds. We found them in 75 percent of the public wells and 85 percent of the private wells we tested on Cape Cod. These chemicals include pharmaceuticals, consumer product chemicals, flame retardants, an artificial sweetener, and fluorinated chemicals are commonly used in food packaging, non-stick pans, and water- and stain-resistant products.

The presence of these chemicals alone does not mean that they are harmful to people; water is not the only way we are exposed. Nevertheless, some of these chemicals have been linked to cancer and developmental effects at high levels of exposure. In addition, scientists are still learning about potential health effects of long-term, low-dose exposures and possible interactions among various mixtures of these chemicals.

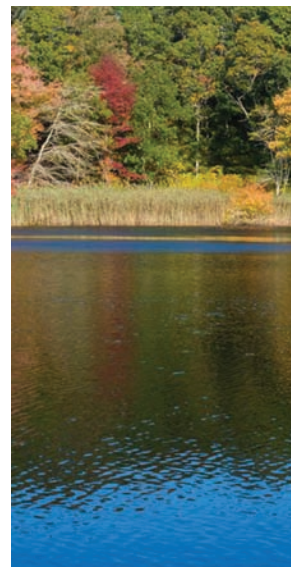
We also found hormones and pharmaceuticals in ponds on Cape Cod affected by septic systems from densely developed residential areas. Fish are especially sensitive to hormones and hormone-mimicking chemicals that can interfere with their development and reproduction.

Pharmaceuticals, hormones, and other emerging contaminants are showing up in rivers, lakes, and drinking water across the U.S. However, the Cape's dense development, widespread use of septic systems, sandy soils, and reliance on shallow groundwater make its water resources especially vulnerable.

What can we do?

We can preserve open land around water supplies and ponds. This will protect water quality by acting as a buffer from pollution. Individually, we can all help by using household products free from harmful or persistent chemicals, avoiding flushing unused medications down the drain, and maintaining septic systems.

For more tips about reducing your reliance on harmful chemicals and to learn more about Silent Spring Institute's water research, visit www.silentspring.org



CLEARING THE WAY

Partners in this venture: BCT staff and volunteers

Call them what you will: Geezers, Old Men in Hats, the Brewster Land Management Crew, they work hard to cut and maintain trails, build bridges and kiosks, place signs. They use chain saws, loppers, clippers and brawn. While the average age may be 68, they look 58 and do the work of 48. The list of 40 includes about 10 stalwarts and many irregulars including a few women and not enough younger folk. All are welcome to the



Thursday morning sessions of two hours, just enough to prime you for lunch and a nap.

If you have a favorite trail or property, you might want to become the monitor for it. All that means is visiting the property a couple of times a year and reporting back on any issues.

To join the fun,
call Jeff at 508-694-6720.



East Brewster Property given in Memory

In early May, Lee Ziegler-Prouty donated 0.6 acres in East Brewster to BCT. The woodland oasis between homes in a sparsely settled area has habitat that is typical of the region, pitch pine and its normal companions, black and white oaks with an understory of high and low bush blueberry, bearberry, and viburnum. Lee made this generous gift in memory of her parents, Alois and Beatrice R. Ziegler.

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 Thibodeau at jeff@brewsterconservationtrust.org.

In Memory of

Barbara Albret

Karen E. & Dr. Calvin F. Mutti

Stu Anson

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Brewster Conservation Trust

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SAVE THE DATE**5th Annual
BREWSTER
CONSERVATION
DAY****Saturday, July 8
9:30 am – 2 pm
Drummer Boy Park***Partners in this venture:**Brewster Conservation Trust, Brewster
Historical Society, Brewster Department
of Natural Resources, over 40 exhibitors
from all over Cape Cod, dozens of
volunteers, more than 1,000 visitors*