



Brewster Conservation Trust

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

June 2012

BREWSTER: A WEALTH OF WATER

By Paul Gasek and Hal Minis

Today, when people come to Brewster, they think about the salt water and beaches. Tell newcomers – even some old comers – about all the fresh water in ponds, creeks, herring runs, marshes, swamps, and vernal pools in the Town, and you're apt to get a blank look.

But the Cape Lands were shaped during the last Ice Age, by frozen and flowing water from the great glaciers. This is a place of water, made by water. And, of all the towns on Cape Cod, Brewster is the most well-endowed with waterways and wetlands.

There are three great salt marshes – Quivett and Paine's Creek bordering Dennis in the west, and Namskaket bordering Orleans in the east. These ancient glacial outwash channels flush out onto the 18 square miles of the Brewster Flats, with its eelgrass meadows, shellfish beds, and primary nursery areas for marine life.

There are at least two herring runs in Brewster. One comes in from Nantucket Sound, up the Herring River through Harwich, and into Hinckleys and Seymour Ponds. The more famous run comes in from the Bay at Paine's Creek, runs up Stony Brook, rises 28 feet by the Old Mill, and into Lower and Upper Mill Ponds.

There are 81 ponds ranging in size from less than one-tenth of an acre to more than 730 acres. There are 38 named ponds in Brewster, seven in Nickerson State Park alone.

Those seven amount to 320 acres of the Park's 1,900-acre total. The rest of the named ponds add up to another 1,815 acres – an area amounting to a second Nickerson Park – a pond park!



Stony Brook at the Herring Run

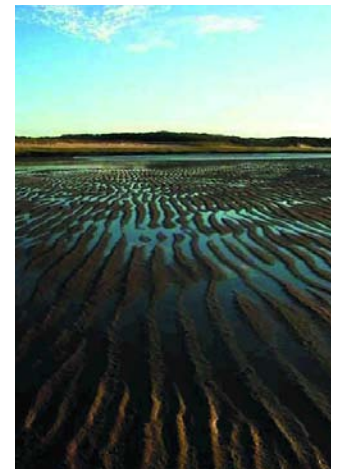
There are also cedar swamps, maple swamps, blueberry swamps, quaking bogs, abandoned cranberry bogs, streams and creeks of all kinds, and too many vernal pools to mention here. At the moment, both the Town of Brewster and BCT are focused on identifying, certifying, and protecting vernal pools – small, critical ecosystems for many rare species that can't survive anywhere else.

Brewster's water resources are essential to the survival of the human community here, too. Humans are just another species living in the Brewster ecosystem, but we put more pressure on the water supply than any other. Ponds, swamps, and pools are beautiful – they also hold the same water we drink as well as flush. That presents a growing challenge. Brewster water has to remain fit for human consumption – and land conservation is the best and least expensive way to keep it that way. A recent study found that of 53 ponds studied, only seven have high water quality or quality acceptable for current uses.

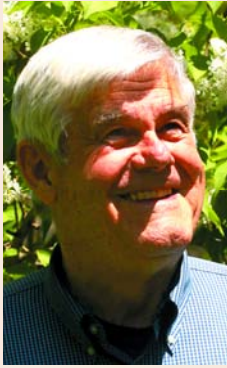
Over the years the Town, frequently with BCT's active support, has taken many steps to protect our waters.

In 1984, Town Meeting adopted the Brewster Wetlands Protection By-law, to supplement existing State laws protecting wetlands and further control development close to waterways and wetlands.

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For more about BCT and up to date information and entertaining videos, visit our website:
www.brewsterconservationtrust.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In 1661, Thomas Prentice left the Plymouth Colony to come and settle on Cape Cod. He certainly noticed the fine building sites by water everywhere in what was then Harwich. It was a great place to expand the Colony! In 1663, he purchased 50 acres on Stony Brook from the Sauquatucket elder, Sachemas, to build a mill. That purchase began a 350 year history of settlement, development, and the human relationship with the water, salt and fresh, that everyone has come here to use and depend on.

A lot of people live in Brewster today and there's enormous downward pressure on water quality. We know why. The water you see in the ponds, vernal pools, and wetlands of Brewster are the visible signs of a vast reservoir of water directly under our feet. Each pond, vernal pool, and freshwater marsh is an exposed part of the drinking water lens which flows underground beyond pond and pool shores, beneath Brewster.

That lens provides all the water we drink, and a lot of water to Harwich, Dennis, and Orleans as well. It's the same water we use to flush sinks and toilets. Title 5 septic systems take care of some of it, but a lot of septic chemistry flows back into that same water table we drink from. Nitrogen from septic systems is already contributing to algal blooms in many Brewster ponds and seriously degrading water quality.

What can we do?

Land conservation is the cheapest way to maintain water quality – far less expensive than sewerage. Using the Brewster Wetlands Protection By-law, adopted by Town Meeting in 1984, is the best way to create a buffer between human activities and the ponds, pools, and marshes of Brewster. And taking advantage of the new State tax break for conservation should make saving open space fairer and easier. It's certainly important to the health of the community of species that live in those wet places, and critical to the human community that lives around them and shares the water.

Peter Johnson

BREWSTER: A WEALTH OF WATER (cont'd from page 1)

In the late 1980's, Brewster acquired over 1,000 acres in the Punkhorn to protect areas where water flows into Town wells, an action that is unique on the Cape.

In 2011, Town Meeting approved the Natural Resources Protection Bylaw, to require lower building densities and encourage cluster development in the areas where water flows into town wells in East and West Brewster.

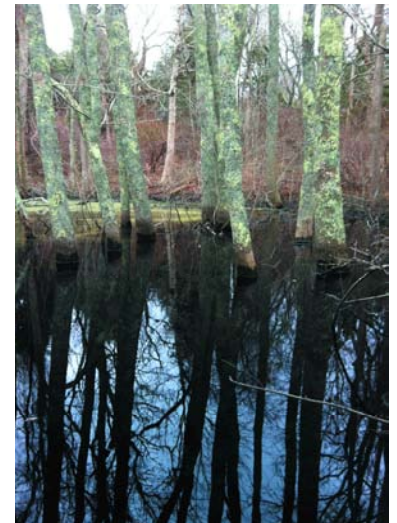


Slough Pond

The BCT has played a complementary role in protecting Brewster's waters. We've acquired 35 parcels in the "zone of contribution" to Brewster's well fields, and protected 24 pond frontage lots. Protecting pond frontage is a BCT priority, but these parcels don't come cheaply.

Late in 2011, the Brewster Conservation Trust got a powerful new conservation tool. Landowners who, by gift, conservation restriction, bargain sale pricing, or estate planning put land in conservation with a non-profit land trust (like BCT) may be eligible for State tax credits up to \$50,000.

Despite these efforts, the threats to our waters continue. Researchers have documented declining water quality in many ponds and estuaries. If there was ever a time for landowners to consider conservation of some or all of their land with the Brewster Conservation Trust, now is the time!



Dollar Pond

EXCITING NEWS FOR LANDOWNERS

New tax benefits are now available for anyone who owns land in Massachusetts. You do not need to reside in Massachusetts or even pay taxes here; if you own the land and the land qualifies, you qualify.

Starting late in 2011, for the first time ever, landowners who engage in conservation transactions with non-profit land trusts (such as BCT), towns or agencies can be eligible for a powerful new tax advantage – a refundable State income tax credit worth up to \$50,000. While there have been income tax deductions available for land gifts on a donor's federal returns, there have never been any incentives on the State tax side. Now there are both.

The Commonwealth must certify that the land has conservation values, and there are many parcels in Brewster that would qualify. Once the land and its appraised value have been approved by the State, the landowner qualifies for a credit against their income tax of up to \$50,000 or a refund check if the value of the gift exceeds the amount of tax due. The State approved the first 22 applications in December, returning \$976,000 in credits to landowners, including six on the Cape. A full \$2 million is available statewide in 2012.

John and Joann Figueras of East Brewster were among the first to benefit from the new State tax credit. They recently donated a two-acre parcel of pine-oak woods to the Brewster Conservation Trust that helps knit together three adjoining parcels of town-owned conservation land



Joann and John Figueras, donors of land to BCT

on the south flank of Huckleberry Hill, where BCT has made an effort to assemble important wildlife habitat parcels over the past two years.

The Figueras family has lived near Bakers Pond since 1992. "We moved here for the peace and quiet of living in the backwoods of Brewster," says Joann Figueras. "We are pleased to be able to give back a little bit of that for others to enjoy."

Remember that this new tax credit is in addition to the regular federal income tax incentives for charitable contributions of land or interests therein.

For more details or a free, confidential consultation, contact Mark Robinson at mark@thecompact.net or 508-362-3422.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR AWARDED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN CONSERVATION



The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) chose Elizabeth Taylor of Brewster to receive a Lifetime Achievement in Conservation Award at MACC's Annual Environmental Conference in March. MACC Awards recognize Conservation Commissioners, government officials, citizen activists and others for important and long-standing efforts to protect the Commonwealth's natural resources.

Friends and families joined Elizabeth Taylor at an Awards Ceremony and an afternoon reception at the Conference.

Elizabeth's dedication to Brewster is a way of life. She has served on the Brewster Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Open Space Committee, Water Quality

Committee, Community Preservation Committee and the Comprehensive Water Planning Committee in Brewster, and also chaired many of these boards. She volunteers at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History and is our Representative on the Cape Cod Commission. As author of the Brewster Open Space Plan as well as numerous grants, town meeting articles and open space acquisitions, she has periodically been confused as an actual employee of her hometown. However, all her hard work and determination has been as a volunteer. Considered a local hero by many, Elizabeth's decades of service are an inspiration to all who appreciate civic engagement and activism.

Of course, she is also a trustee of the Brewster Conservation Trust.

We are proud, and fortunate, to have Elizabeth Taylor in Brewster. She is exceptional. She makes a difference.

We thank her.

IN YOUR BACK YARD

That patch of woods, the small field, the deserted bog – in virtually every neighborhood in Brewster, there are undeveloped parcels of land, land that could remain untouched – land that the Brewster Conservation Trust might like to help you conserve. This past year, the BCT had its eye on two such parcels in the historic Factory Village – Old King’s Highway district in West Brewster.



Cartway by Dollar Pond

One is two acres and fronts on both Stony Brook Road and Smith Pond – the last wild lot on the pond. The other is 2.6 acres on the north side of Stony Brook, with a certified vernal pool and frontage on Rt. 6A and little Dollar Pond back in the woods. The land was once used as a cranberry bog, then a potato field, and is crossed by an ‘ancient cartway’, still partly visible in the deep brush.

Both parcels fell within BCT’s Priority Ponds Project, adjoin existing Town and BCT conservation lands, and would help enlarge and preserve the rural and historic character of the old settlement.



Dollar Pond



Smith Pond

The question is always, where do we get the wherewithal to buy and conserve these parcels? This is why BCT was delighted when residents of the Stony Brook neighborhood banded together, stepped up, and helped to purchase the two parcels for conservation. Pitching in were Daryl Bladen, Betsy McCullough, Hank and Suzanne Foster, Joe and Victoria Klein, Tom Keating and Carol Caravosio, Charles and Barbara Birdsey, Tino Kamarck, and Paul Gasek. Summing up the feeling of the group, long-time BCT supporter Hank Foster said, “It’s our neighborhood – we wanted to do something!”

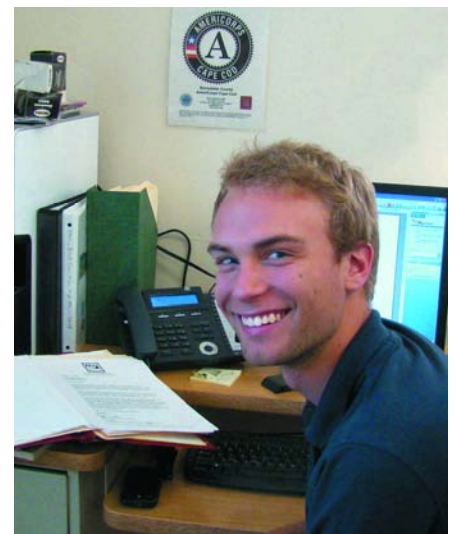
This kind of neighborhood support for BCT purchases and conservation restrictions makes preserving open space in Brewster a kind of “family affair”, and something for the next generation and beyond.

AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER SUPPORTS BREWSTER CONSERVATION

What’s a nice Michigan college graduate doing in the Brewster Town Hall? Meet Matt Sienkiewicz, Brewster’s AmeriCorps volunteer who grew up in a suburban area outside Detroit, MI, graduated from the University of Michigan and plans to go to law school; but along the way he was a Boy Scout and later spent time on his grandfather’s charter salmon boat on Lake Michigan. The beauty of being on the water for long hours confirmed his interest in environmental protection and led to his joint AmeriCorps appointment to the BCT and the Town. Matt has spent Wednesday and Thursday each week drawing up management plans for the Town’s conservation lands and developing descriptions of BCT properties for the website (brewsterconservationtrust.org).

The other days of the week the AmeriCorps teams work on community projects. For Cape Cod towns they have worked on oyster beds, cleaned up trash and done landscaping, and they have helped the Red Cross with safety projects.

Our thanks to all AmeriCorps volunteers for making Cape Cod a better place.



SAVE THE DATE!

Brewster Conservation Day - July 14, 2012



Hikers at Walkers Pond

BCT and the Town of Brewster, through the Conservation Commission and the Department of Natural Resources, are jointly sponsoring the first Brewster Conservation Day, dedicated to showing the value of our collective conservation efforts to protect water quality, preserve the Town's rural character, and provide passive recreation opportunities. The day-long celebration will include guided walks on some of Brewster's best walking trails, as well as exhibits and children's activities at Drummer Boy Park.



Quivett Marsh Vista

Guided tours will highlight the natural and cultural history of **eight** sites around Brewster:

Quivett Marsh Vista demonstrates the transformation of a former motel site to a beautiful overview of Quivett marsh;

The South (Lee Baldwin) Trail at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History crosses the Stony Brook marsh restoration and the mature beech forest;

Eagle Point in the Punkhorn with a view over Upper Mill Pond includes an optional kayak trip on the Pond;



Crosby Mansion

Crosby Landing includes a tour of the Crosby mansion and a beach walk to Namskaket Marsh;

The Eddy Sister's Trail at the Community Garden on Lower Road, runs along the stone walls and old cranberry bogs of an old Cape Cod farm;

Mother's Bog, off Slough Road shows nature's reclaiming of old cranberry bogs and a variety of other habitats;

Huckleberry Hill next to Nickerson State Park, climbs to the highest point in Brewster;

The Hay Trail, across from Drummer Boy Park, traces a colonial road.

Each of the walks will start at 10 am and 2 pm and will be led by a knowledgeable guide.



Huckleberry Hill

Refreshments will be available at each site.

At **Drummer Boy Park**, a number of organizations will have active exhibits and educational material, many designed especially for kids: a Brewster fire truck, a mobile marine lab, a recycling puppet show, oyster shucking, AmeriCorps' "edible aquifer", and exhibits by area conservation organizations.

BREWSTER'S COMMUNITY GARDENS a legacy from the past; a path to the future



Fred Young, manager of Pinecroft Farm, bringing in the hay in 1927

Farms have all but disappeared from Cape Cod, but the Brewster Community Gardens on Lower Road preserve a sample of traditional agriculture. Once part of Pinecroft Farm, hay is no longer a major crop; but tomatoes, eggplant, lettuces, flowers and even corn thrive.

In 1984 Ruth and Mary Louise Eddy gave 18.5 acres of their Grandfather Thorndike's farm to the Brewster Conservation Trust to represent what was once common on the Cape – farms, meadows and woods. 65 garden plots now produce harvests for Brewster residents in a program managed by the Council on Aging. An adjacent area is set aside for young people whose efforts are mentored by members of the Master Gardeners. The nearby meadow attracts butterflies and fills with colors that vary by season.



Woods have taken over the old Thorndike cranberry bog, but a newly-cut walking trail winds through meadow and the beautiful maple/tupelo swamp that has taken



taken over the old bog. For almost half a mile the trail crosses old cranberry ditches and damp patches of ferns. It leads the visitor through stands of tall oak, pine, birch, and tupelo; past old cranberry ditches and damp patches of ferns. The rough trail will be cleaned and a brochure prepared for a dedication in the future. While we are polishing up the trail guide, you can find a simple map of the property adjacent to the community garden and its trail at: www.brewsterconservationtrust.org



The Eddy Sisters Trail



"THE BREWSTER CONSERVATION TRUST MUST BE HAVING A MEETING COMING UP."

BREWSTER CONSERVATION TRUST'S ANNUAL MEETING

**Monday, August 6 at 7 p.m.
Brewster Ladies' Library**

We miss our dear friend Gordon Brooks who was always so generous with his time and talents.

Contributions to BCT

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”? 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.

In Memory of

James Baldwin
Helen C. Baldwin

Gordon Brooks
Susan and Elliott Carr
Than Drake
Beth Finch

Al Bursma
Bill and Mary Grace

Stanley Dagget
Louis and Renata Stoia

Blanche Doble and Alden Weston
Gerry Weston

John N. Dwyer
Maureen Milton

Mary Louise and Ruth Eddy
Diane and Stephen Jones

Diane Gately
James H. Gately

Bernard P. Goldsmith
Laura C. Goldsmith

Paul and Dorothy Grueninger
Susana B.G. Lopatka

John and Kristi Hay
Donald Schall

Lydia and Hunley Herrington
Barbara and Phill Balasa

Karen Kelcourse Holmes
Michael Joseph Kelcourse

Joyce J. Jensen
Jacqueline Jensen

Harold Johnson
Chris Pantos

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Thomas and Blenda Jeffery
Martin A. and Elaine C. Kamark

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Jane Sterling

Nancy Landon
Jeffery and Regina Hayes

Richard Lazarus
Ellen L. and Leonard B. Farwell

Gloria Lieberman
Marc Lieberman

Bobby Lindgren
Anonymous

Frederick Lisman
Barbara L. Lisman

Rev. Peter Marshall
Mary and David Marshall

Susan McNair
John McNair

Jill M. Moran
John and Theresa Collins

Kathryn Nissen
Michael Nissen

Nancy Peach
Christine and Crispin Fletcher

Bendix Peterson
Marjorie Moerschner

Werner Plaut
Dee and Stu Anson

Peter W. Schilke
Margaret Schilke

Don Shellenberger
Jeanne Shellenberger

John T. Stewart
Richard and Patricia Logan-Green
Derek Halberg and Christy Johnson

Paul J. Sullivan
Brian and Karen Sullivan

Carl and Mae Trovato
Karen and Don Richards

Carl and Thomasina Trovato
John and Jackie Costaldo

Sparkie and Lee Walp
Thomas and Jane Stripling

Edward and Eugenia Whittle
Stan and Elaine Tenerowicz

Barbara “Bobbie” Williams
Alfred G. Williams III

Tibby and Randy Williams
Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Williams

Thorp Wolford
Pat Hughes and Hal Minis

Suzanne E. Wyman
Charles B. and Elizabeth F. Wyman

In Honor of

BCT Officers and Board
Karen and Cal Mutti

Ken DiCarlo and Clay O'Connor
Ellie and Peter Johnson

John Dickson
Catherine and Mike Murray

Hanna Howard
Judy and Bill Engster

The Hughes Family
Thomas M. & Joanne P. Hughes

Debra Ann Johnson
Elizabeth Johnson

Peter and Ellie Johnson
Davis and Mary Johnson

Merleanne Marion
Ed and Karen Daly

Carolyn and Choki O'Neill
Stephanie Daugherty

Jonathan Sprogell/Kathryn Taylor
Carolyn Sprogell

Fred and Catherine Todenhausen
Janet A. Golden

Ilee Welch
Steven Welch



Brewster Conservation Trust

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www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

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Elizabeth Taylor

Conservation Advisor

Mark Robinson



Brewster Conservation Trust

P.O. Box 268, Brewster, MA 02631

SAVE THE DATE
BCT Annual Meeting
Monday, August 6 at 7:00 p.m.
Brewster Ladies' Library

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WATER . . . WATER . . . WATER

Water Facts about Brewster

- ♦ 81 ponds from 0.1 acres to more than 730 acres
- ♦ 3 great salt marshes
- ♦ 2 herring runs
- ♦ 9 herring spawning ponds
- ♦ 4 towns draw from Brewster's water resources
- ♦ total area of ponds in Brewster: 2028 acres
- ♦ total number of ponds: 81
- ♦ 62% of Brewster ponds are less than 5 acres in size
- ♦ 7 ponds are greater than 50 acres
- ♦ more than half of 26 Brewster ponds that were sampled are impacted by too many nutrients
- ♦ cleanest ponds are Cahoons, Little Cliff, Pine, Sheep, Slough

Water Protected by the Brewster Conservation Trust

- ♦ 24 pond frontage lots
- ♦ 53 acres of pond frontage
- ♦ 9.5 acres of beach frontage
- ♦ 35 acres of marsh
- ♦ 95 acres of wetland
- ♦ 35 parcels in wellfield protection areas

Brewster Conservation Trust needs you. Act now!

- 1) Write a check to "BCT" at P.O. Box 268, Brewster, MA 02631 (envelope enclosed).
- 2) Donate at our secure website:
www.brewsterconservationtrust.org
- 3) Call treasurer Peter Soule at 508-255-4728 to arrange for donation of securities.
- 4) Call Mark Robinson at 508-362-2565 to learn more about the State income tax credit.

