



# Brewster Conservation Trust

[www.brewsterconservationtrust.org](http://www.brewsterconservationtrust.org)

June 2013

## SAVING WINDMILL MEADOWS - AGAIN

It's one of the most loved places in Brewster. And you have a chance to help save it.

In February, a local realtor hammered a For Sale sign on a one acre building lot right next to BCT's Windmill Meadows on Route 6A. Asking price - \$175,000. Immediately, the BCT saw the opportunity to save the whole sweep of meadow in front of the windmill down to the Bay. We couldn't take the chance that someone would buy it and build a big house on this historic property - blocking forever the open view to the windmill and beyond.

Windmill Meadows I was BCT's first purchase when the group was only three years old. Now we are celebrating our 30th anniversary. Will you give us an anniversary present? \$30.00? \$300.00? Maybe \$3,000.00?

The Brewster Conservation Trust understood very early the importance of this Bayside view. In 1986, BCT took a leap of faith to purchase the acre of meadow directly in front of the old Higgins Windmill, for a whopping (for us) \$146,000. For a few years at BCT monthly meetings the trustees would pass the hat just to pay the interest on the loan. But saving that acre was the most important thing - to preserve the feel and look of an older time, when open meadows abounded. When you drive by on Route 6A, the acre between the road and the windmill is saved forever - as Windmill Meadows I. Now you can add to it with Windmill Meadows II.



All over Cape Cod are memorable views: signature scenes that we see, remember, and carry with us. Many of these iconic scenes barely escaped disappearing forever. The Fort Hill meadow was already laid out as a subdivision when the National Seashore came along; Nickerson Park was donated to the Commonwealth, so all can bike and walk the trails and delight in the broad view from the hill above Cliff Pond; Brewster Town Meeting found the funds so we can enjoy forever the sweep of the Brewster marshes and the view from 6A across Drummer Boy Park to the Bay beyond.

*continued on page 2*



**CELEBRATE  
30 YEARS OF  
CONSERVATION**

**BREWSTER CONSERVATION TRUST ANNUAL MEETING**

**Thursday, August 1, 2013, 7 pm at the Brewster Ladies' Library**

**For more information, visit our website: [www.brewsterconservationtrust.org](http://www.brewsterconservationtrust.org)**



## WINDMILL MEADOWS (cont'd from page 1)

The two acres next to Drummer Boy Park are invaluable! Strewn with large glacial erratics, including Whale Rock; dotted with native wild cherry trees; home to nesting swallows; verdant with meadow flowers; filled with butterflies – Windmill Meadows joins the host of great Cape Cod views and open space, for all time.

Please -- join the effort to protect the heart of Brewster. A donation to the Windmill Meadows II campaign will support efforts to enhance the beauty of Brewster's Main Street, one of the few glimpses of Cape Cod Bay

from Route 6A, a reminder of the open meadows of times past, a regretful last good-bye to summer visitors and a welcome home to returning Brewsterites. Mark your donation envelope "Windmill Meadows II" to help save one of the most signature scenes in town – or on all of Cape Cod.

BCT spent years raising funds to purchase Windmill Meadows I. Now we have an opportunity to double the view and the habitat. Let's do it in one year this time. We did it in 1986, and we CAN do it again.

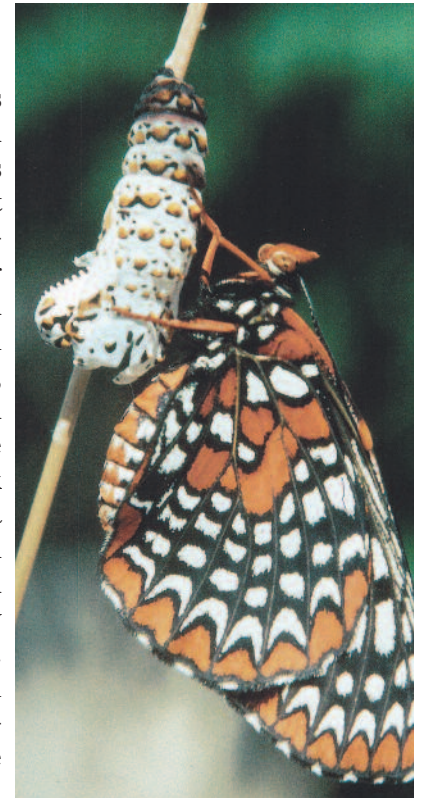


## BUTTERFLIES IN THE MEADOWS

Many common butterflies are found in woodland bordered fields that offer a mosaic of several different habitats. On Cape Cod, Brewster's Windmill Meadows stands out both for its open field, the vegetation within it and the adjacent woodland. This grassy meadow supports over 42 species of moths & butterflies as well as birds, insects, important amphibians and reptiles, and mammals. The springtime yellow covering of Cyprus Spurge provides nectar for the Silver-bordered Fritillary. Yellow clover provides food for the American Copper.



Windmill Meadows II, the proposed acquisition, provides red clover for at least five species of skippers, milkweed for Monarch larvae and nectar for a dozen kinds of butterflies, Lanceolate-leaved Plantain for Baltimore Checkerspots, black cherry for Cecropia larvae and Coral Hairstreak moths and high bush blueberry for Eastern Pine Elfins. The cherry, viburnum and oak shrubs nourish the silk moths like Cecropia, Prometheus and Red-spotted Purple butterfly.



All in all, the land acquisition is important as host to flora and fauna of Cape Cod and to procure habitat in its optimal natural state, contiguous to pre-existing conservation land.

With thanks to Tor Hansen, co-author of *Butterflies Across Cape Cod: A guide to finding, attracting and observing butterflies on the Cape*. Published by the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History and the Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies, 2004.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Some of you may have heard the old line about raising children: "The first 30 years are the hardest." We believe that is true for a small non-profit group as well.

The next 30 years won't be easy. There are challenges ahead. How do we oversee management of the 1000 acres in Brewster that have been entrusted to our care? How will we respond to the challenges of preserving new tracts of ever-more valuable real estate?

But those are questions for another time—for today, we dance!

The Brewster Conservation Trust has passed its 30th anniversary milestone!

We got to 1,000 acres in small steps, keeping at it over time. The Town's Punkhorn Parklands at 875 acres and Nickerson State Park with 1,700 acres are magnificent open spaces that anchor the west and east ends of town. Our 1,000 acres help to fill the gaps between those two major areas. Our 100 acres around Lower Road alone have preserved much of the rural country feel of that lane.

Celebrate our 30th anniversary  
with a donation

We need to grow our organization the same way, adding supporters one person and one family at a time. Please help us get the word out. Give this newsletter to a loved one or a Brewster lover and ask them to join us.

As our organization matures, we know that we do not succeed alone. We need members to grow our ranks, our influence and our coffers. We need volunteers to prune and mow our trails and to haul trash from our holy woods. We need partners—like-minded non-profits and sometimes town agencies—to fund our land acquisitions. We need voters at town meetings to endorse the open space purchases. We need you—pitching in your time, talents and treasury as you are able.

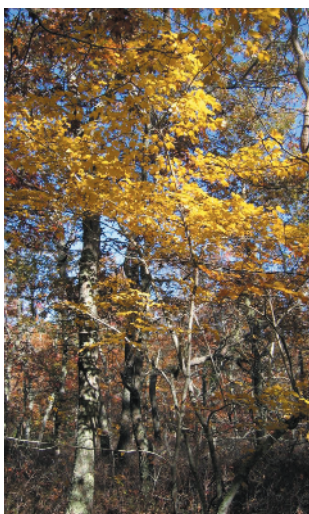
As we have grown acre by acre, we have been funded donation by donation. Continuing annual donations keep us going year by year. Larger gifts from an estate or from community-minded local foundations make possible larger plans with greater impact. Whatever you can do helps make your town healthier, safer and more beautiful.

As always, thank you for your support.

Peter Johnson

## BREWSTER'S MOST WANTED: The Seemore Cabin Woodlot

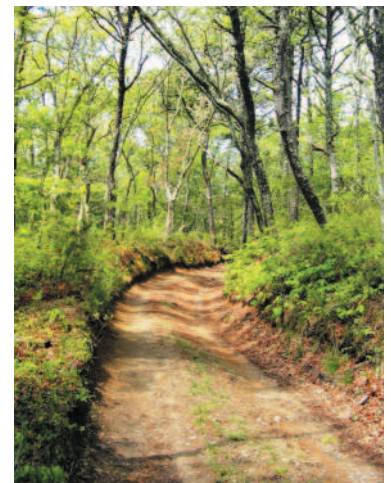
While our Windmill Meadows II project is our most visible one in recent years (see page 1 story), we are hard at work preserving more obscure parcels too. Ones that are equally valuable.



Beech and maple trees dominate the wooded slopes in this part of the Punkhorn.

This spring BCT was able to secure rights to the last missing link in the southeast entrance to the Town's 875-acre Punkhorn Parklands. A 2.2-acre woodlot was up for grabs, building permits were being sought. We knew that a house out here in the Brewster "wilderness" would interfere with all the hard work the Town and BCT had done over the years to assemble a forest with such width and breadth. So we stepped up, put our money on the barrel-head and agreed to buy the lot for \$110,000.

The Cahoon family, large landowners in South Brewster in the 1800s, built a hunting shack on this parcel and called it "Seemore." A play on words, perhaps, for the shack's elevated view of Seymour's Pond out the rear window. The view is gone now, the forest having grown up around the parcel in the past century, and the shack collapsed in the past decade. This parcel is surrounded by Town conservation land and land owned by BCT. A small maple swamp on the edge of the lot drains to Seymour Pond. If you love the Punkhorn for riding, hiking and swimming, won't you help us save this last piece in Brewster's "other" big park? You can make a donation on-line via our secure website: [www.brewsterconservationtrust.org](http://www.brewsterconservationtrust.org)



Punkhorn Road rises to meet the hiker as it nears the Seemore cabin site.





## CLEANING UP CANOE POND

Some people talk and some people act. And sometimes it takes a strong leader, a known problem and a lot of good will from a lot of people to turn talkers into doers.

The residents around Canoe Pond could see the decreased

clarity and the increased algae. The Brewster Pond and Lake Stewards have been studying the quality of Brewster ponds for years; and when the 2009 report declared Canoe Pond impaired, it only confirmed their observations. It had too much phosphorous and chlorophyll and too little oxygen.

The Canoe Pond community decided they would do something to help their pond. Eight years ago about 50 families began donating to a fund to help their pond whenever a solution seemed viable. In 2011, with some \$20,000 in the bank, they formed a committee to look at options. They met with experts, researched solutions and held community meetings.

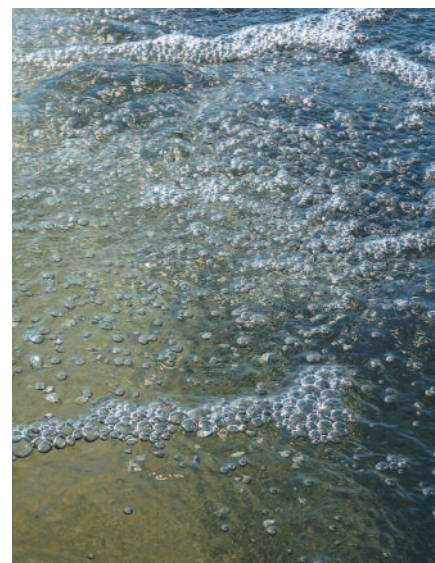
Dredging the pollutants on the bottom of the pond or adding alum to contain the phosphorous were considered too expensive, and some suggested possible health hazards of alum. They decided on aerators.

The system consists of two compressors on shore that run six bubblers spaced throughout the pond during all but the coldest months. Aerators do not reduce the phosphorous, but they stir the water to continually add more oxygen. Adding oxygen throughout reduces dead zones. To some degree the oxygen can combine with phosphorous to reduce its availability.

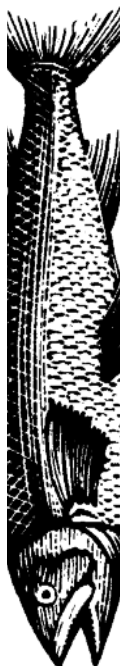


Of course, this doesn't solve the continuing problems. The neighborhood is also working to avoid road runoff into the pond and reduce fertilizer, both of which are contributors to the excess phosphorous.

This is a new project. No results are yet available. But we will be watching – watching to see what a group of ordinary citizens who love their pond can do. Watching to see if they will inspire others.



## MERCURY RISING



Global mercury additions to the earth's surface are on the rise, three times higher than prior to 1900, according to U.S. Geological Survey scientist emeritus, and self-described fisherman, Michael Bothner who spoke at a Harwich Conservation Trust lecture on groundhog day of 2013.

Rather like the film "Groundhog Day" in which events keep recurring, so too does mercury keep recycling itself from inorganic to organic as bacteria transforms it to lethal methyl mercury. "Once released to the environment, you can almost never get rid of it," Bothner says. All rocks have mercury in them, and "cooking rocks" such as burning coal and smelting ore releases inorganic mercury to the atmosphere, which mixes around the globe and eventually settles onto the earth surface and into sediments where the transformation to organic mercury can take place.

Ingested methyl mercury attacks brain cells, and unborn and young children are the most vulnerable. The most severe case of contamination, infamously well known, was in Minamata, Japan, resulting in thousands of deaths and severe neurological damage.

Microorganisms ingest mercury in water. Mercury levels intensify up the food chain so fish most laden with toxins are larger, older fish that eat other fish. Omnivorous and younger fish are less contaminated. Topping the "do not eat list" are swordfish, tile fish, shark and king mackerel. The EPA advises limited consumption of striped bass and bluefish from our coastal waters.

So be especially wary if you are pregnant, or a child. Forget those daily tuna cheese melts, Mum. Even one can of tuna per week may be pushing it—and that tuna should be chunk light. Instead feed your family cod, wild salmon, flounder and sardines, usually below the danger thresholds. And to check out safe levels, yes, there is an App and an EPA website which can help you.

## MEMBER PROFILE: John and Diana Lamb

*"We must preserve what we have or we lose what the Cape should be."*

John Lamb

John and Diana Lamb grew up an ocean apart, but they found their home place in Brewster. John is from Yorkshire, England, where as a boy he hunted for birds' nests and walked the countryside with his dog. Diana grew up in Shrewsbury, MA and spent every possible moment fishing in summer, skating in winter and exploring the woods behind her home.

John became an engineer, working in Australia, Africa and eventually the US. Over time John's work moved to consulting, focusing on making things work better. It was engineering, but the human side of it. He now concentrates on creating a culture so people can more easily work together. As a nurse, Diana has travelled from one end of the Cape to the other, getting to know all the towns.

John and Diana raised their three young daughters outside New York City, but they moved to Brewster in 1998 for the rural village atmosphere and so the girls could attend Nauset schools. In New York they enjoyed a few acres of woods behind their house, and when the woods turned to houses the girls took it hard. But in

Brewster there were woods and beaches near their home and near where their new friends lived as well.



"I know how easily things can encroach," said John. "The things you take for granted can suddenly be taken away." When an area in their Brewster neighborhood had been illegally cleared, "It was hard work to get it restored," he said.

It is not just the changing appearance of the Cape that John, the engineer, decries. "We must preserve what is our natural environment; it is part of our human psyche," he said. "If we care about others we must realize that the direction of the 20th century is not sustainable. Continuous growth and using up resources is not sustainable."

This is why the Lambs appreciate and support conservation organizations such as BCT. "These groups look to find agreements with all parties. They look for solutions, coalescing all forces to work together."

## CAPE COD BAY MONITORING: "HOW IS OUR BAY?"

Cape Cod Bay defines our sense of place and quality of life; and the Cape's economy is inextricably linked to the environmental health and productivity of the Bay. While it is a biologically diverse and rich ecosystem, the Bay is also fragile and easily threatened by human activity. The Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies has analyzed five years of data to understand how the Bay and its conditions change over time and how human activities affect the Bay. Information from 25 inshore, 30 nearshore, and eight offshore stations, found the following:

- Conditions deteriorate each year in the summer months in the near-and inshore stations.
- Health and growth of eelgrass is affected throughout the Bay.

- Invasive species increase in numbers and extent.
- Pharmaceutical compounds are detected in areas of high nitrates, generally associated with wastewater.
- Conditions in 40% of the stations have declined, notably in areas that are the highest demand for human activities – swimming, boating, fishing, and shellfishing. Improvement or no change in conditions was found in 61% of the stations.

A number of towns around the Bay have started taking management and planning actions to improve water quality and protect marine habitat in the Bay. Let's encourage Brewster to take action!

## ANNOUNCING: EDDY BAY TRAIL OPENS

The Eddy Bay Trail on Lower Road, a nature/hiking trail, is a mile-long round trip between Lower Road and a bluff over Cape Cod Bay. Designed to link up with the Eddy Sisters Trail near the Community Gardens, the trail passes stands of white pines and hollies to a 150° marine panorama stretching from Plymouth to Eastham.

Read more on the BCT website: [www.brewsterconservationtrust.org](http://www.brewsterconservationtrust.org)



## SAVE THE DATE: Brewster Conservation Day 2013: Saturday, July 13 10 am to 2 pm



Bigger and better! Building on our first BCD, Brewster Conservation Day 2013 will be a festival at Drummer Boy Park (Route 6A) with more interactive exhibits, kids' activities, food from local restaurants, and a raffle! Join us...it's all free!

Exhibitors will include local and regional organizations that are in the business of saving the Cape's water, land, wildlife, energy, and providing environmental education.

General exhibits and activities will include the Brewster Fire Department ladder truck, the Brewster White Caps baseball throw, oyster raising and oyster bar, and the Windmill and other historic facilities at the Drummer Boy.

Speakers: Graham Geise - Our changing beaches  
Scott Landry - Whale disentanglement  
Paul Gasek - The History of Stony Brook  
Sandy McFarlane - Shell fishing on Cape Cod



### Brewster Walking Trails



## THE FIRST GUIDE TO BREWSTER WALKING TRAILS

Just in time for the opening of our newest trail, the Eddy Bay Trail, Brewster has its first compilation of trail maps. This spring, BCT, in collaboration with the Town's Natural Resources and Conservation Department, will publish the first guide to public walking trails in Brewster—some owned by the Town, some by BCT.

The guide contains brief descriptions, trail maps, and directions to eleven walking trails across the Town. It will be a great resource for the casual hiker and those who want to explore the depths of Brewster's parklands and woods. The Guide is free and will be available at Town Hall, the Brewster Ladies' Library, and other locations around Town. You can download it from our website [www.brewsterconservationtrust.org](http://www.brewsterconservationtrust.org).

## PAY AS YOU THROW

### Save on Taxes, Help the Environment and Improve Your Garden

From plastic bottles to cardboard boxes to junk mail, people generate a lot of trash. Brewster sends trash to the Covanta SEMASS facility. With solid waste disposal costs set to double in 2015, the Board of Selectmen voted recently to launch Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) on October 1, 2013. PAYT gives households an incentive to dispose of less trash and recycle more – and it can save money.

Massachusetts communities using PAYT typically see a 25% to 50% solid waste reduction. That's good for the environment and good for municipalities with tight budgets. "Pay-As-You-Throw has proven to be a very effective way to reduce trash," said David Quinn, Barnstable County's Solid Waste Reduction Coordinator.

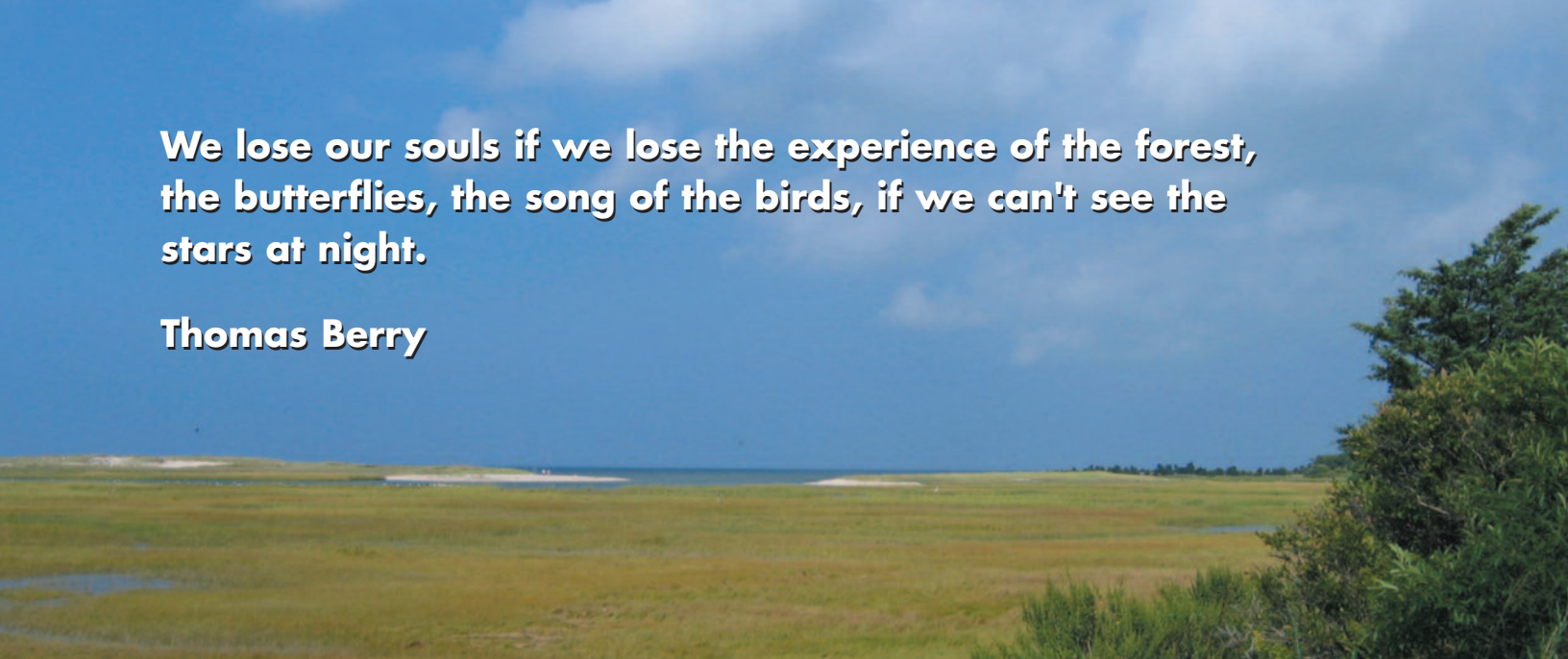
PAYT bags for trash will be sold at Brewster locations and local supermarkets. There is no fee for discarding recyclables, but all vehicles entering the Transfer Station are required to have a valid vehicle pass.

The first step to cutting costs is reducing waste: do not buy products with lots of packaging, stop junk mail, and even avoid some purchases. Compost food waste. Better composting and recycling is the cornerstone of PAYT – it conserves resources, sustains the environment and will reduce costs for both residents and the Town.

One avid recycler noted, "I've begun to act like every bag I take to the dump is already costing me money. By aggressively recycling, I only throw a bag of trash once every three weeks, instead of every week - and that's the idea. Now I make twice as many trips to recycle stuff."



**REDUCE  
REUSE  
RECYCLE**



**We lose our souls if we lose the experience of the forest,  
the butterflies, the song of the birds, if we can't see the  
stars at night.**

**Thomas Berry**

## **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](mailto:mark@thecompact.net).

#### **In Memory of**

**Ken Berbrick**  
Ellie and Peter Johnson

**Betty Bledsoe**  
Claire Chytilo

**Diane Bouchard**  
Susan and Franklin Burroughs  
Annamarie Crocker  
Beth Finch  
Ellie and Peter Johnson  
James Twite

**Thomas H. Christmas**  
David and Maureen Christmas

**Ruth and Mary Louise Eddy**  
Stephen and Diane Jones

**Steve Erickson**  
Bernard F. Albers  
Heather Baxter  
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Ronald and Carolyn Dickens  
Sarah E. and Scott Dickens  
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Scott and Stephanie Erickson  
Roger and Mary Hartman  
Karen and Cal Mutti  
John and Jane Nixon  
Don and Sherry Presar

**Stanley Gasek**  
Paul Gasek

**Diane Gately**  
James H. Gately

**Paul and Dorothy Grueninger**  
Susana B.G. Lopatka

**John and Kristi Hay**  
Georgene Riedl  
Don Schall

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Joan Keegan

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Ed and Karen Daly

**Susan McNair**  
John McNair

**Doris C. Milligan**  
Terry W. Milligan

**Everett Nelson**  
Kate Nelson and Don Burrows

**Constance Rollins**  
Nancy M. Wills

**Peter Schilke**  
Margaret Schilke

**Jeanne Shellenberger**  
Joan Lange

**Willard Stewart**  
Christine Stewart

**Bob Syvanen Jr. & Richard Syvanen**  
Pat Syvanen

#### **In Honor of**

**Laura Boice**  
Edmund Woollen

**Kay Bradley**  
Frank Bradley

**Brewster's commitment to conservation**  
Mary Chafee and Don Arthur

**Debra Johnson**  
Elizabeth Johnson

**Pete and Ellie Johnson**  
Jean and Roy Smith

**Herb and Cindy Lach**  
Michael Lach

**Hal Minis**  
Elaine Merritt

**The Minis Family, Sarah and Sophie**  
Ellen Gallagher

**Steve Petruska**  
Elizabeth Petruska

**Vicki Plaut**  
Karen and Don Taranto

**Carolyn Sprogel**  
Kathryn Taylor and Jonathan Sprogel

**Kathryn Taylor and Jon Sprogel**  
Carolyn Sprogel

**Betsy Unger and Paul Parsons**  
John and Mitzi Unger

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**Brewster Conservation Trust**

P.O. Box 268, Brewster, MA 02631

**BCT'S  
ANNUAL MEETING**

**August 1, 2013  
see page 1**

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## GREEN TIPS

Here are some ideas to help you save money, time and the environment while building a better lawn.

### USING FERTILIZER WISELY

Fertilizer adds about 15 % of the nitrogen in our saltwater and some of the phosphorus in freshwater ponds. Phosphorus is the cause of the annual algae blooms in our ponds, turning them green and foul smelling.

These tips will improve our environment (and property values) and reward you with a healthy lawn and garden.

- **Know what your soil needs**

Test your soil BEFORE you apply fertilizer. There is often enough phosphorus in Cape soils. Less than the recommended nitrogen is often adequate.

- **What should a good fertilizer contain?**

Nitrogen in the slow release insoluble form is better than the rapid release types that move rapidly into the water table. Use a fertilizer with at least 35 % water insoluble (WIN) nitrogen. Buy lawn fertilizer without phosphorus as it is only needed in initial planting if at all.

- **How much to apply to a lawn?**

No more than 1 lb. nitrogen annually per 1,000 sq. feet, applied between late April and mid-October only. Leaving grass clippings on the lawn is the equivalent of one fertilizer application. Use only 1/4" of water after applying fertilizer.

## MORE GREEN TIPS

- Improve your topsoil: even 1/2" of compost in spring may substitute for a fertilizer application. Mulching fallen leaves improves soil structure.
- Over-seed bare spots with fescues or a Cape Cod seed mix.
- Lime only if your soil pH is below 6.5.
- Keep sharpened mower blades set at a minimum of 3".
- Weed problem areas early in the spring. Herbicides aren't needed; try organic substitutes such as corn gluten.
- Pesticides are not needed on healthy lawns.
- Even better, use native shrub borders within 25' of water bodies.

*With thanks to the Orleans Pond Coalition*