



Brewster Conservation Trust

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

Spring 2022

The Long Pond Parcel ◆ A CONSERVATION JEWEL ◆

After the community's overwhelming vote to acquire the two former Cape Cod Sea Camps properties, we now have to get down to the hard work of planning for their use. BCT pledged \$1.75 million toward the Town's purchase of the Long Pond property because we consider it one of the conservation jewels in Brewster. Mass Audubon, also a funding partner to the Town, has made an extensive assessment of the property to document its high conservation value. At 66 acres, the Long Pond parcel is one of the largest undeveloped parcels in Brewster not under conservation protection.



◆ Approximately 35 acres on the northeastern part of the parcel, bordering Rt. 137, are within the drinking water supply area for the Town wells. Brewster residents have demonstrated, through Town meeting votes and public surveys, that protecting our water supply is one of the highest priorities for our community.

◆ With approximately 1,200 feet of shoreline on Long Pond, the largest freshwater pond on Cape Cod, the parcel provides the opportunity for protecting both pond water quality and the rare habitat associated with pond shorelines. While about 300 feet of the parcel's shoreline have been used for recreation by the Sea Camps, the remaining beach is in a natural, undisturbed state and provide a unique habitat associated with the fluctuating water levels of the Cape's ponds. The coastal plain pond shore is home to numerous animal species, some of which are threatened or rare: over 45 species of dragonflies and damselflies, a variety of turtle species, several species of fish, and freshwater mussels. Bald eagles have been documented recently over Long Pond.

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— OUR MISSION —

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

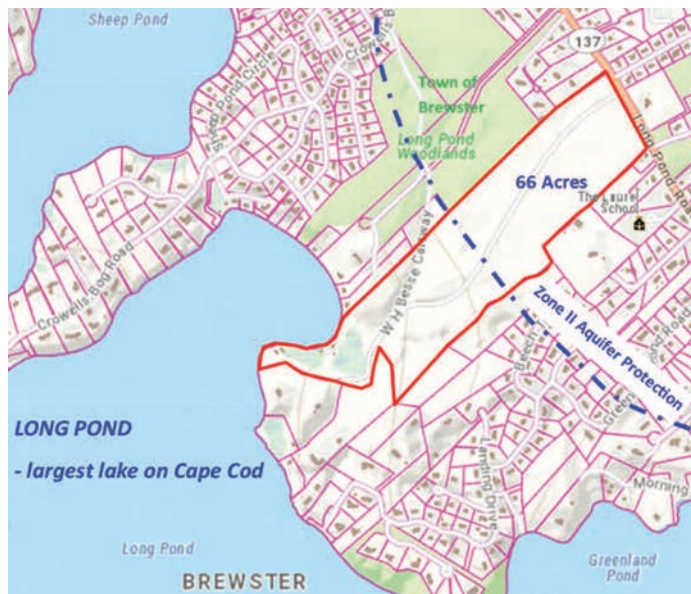
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◆ The upland forest on the Long Pond parcel includes pitch pine and black and white oaks which are typical of the Cape. It also includes more stands of holly and beech than is typical of Cape forests. The forested area is home to a wide variety of bird species, insects, reptiles (such as box turtles), and mammals. Because the Long Pond Parcel is adjacent to the Town's 41-acre Long Pond Woodlands, the effective area of wildlife habitat is even more significant.

◆ Forested land plays an important role in mitigating climate change by capturing and storing carbon dioxide. A recent analysis by the Cape Cod Commission concluded that the Cape's forested land captures the equivalent of 9 % of the carbon emitted by vehicles, industries, and homes on the Cape.

◆ The Long Pond parcel and the abutting Long Pond Woodlands offer special recreational potential. In recent years the demand for hiking trails in town has soared with more and more people appreciating the many and varied benefits of being outdoors.

The Town has recently appointed a nine-member committee composed of representatives of Town boards and committees as well as citizens to develop a master plan for



the Long Pond parcel (and another committee for the Bayside parcel). BCT and Mass Audubon will have non-voting representation. The committee will consider the natural resource values of the property and community needs and values to determine what parts of the property should be permanently protected, what types of recreational activities should be enjoyed, and what potential other uses may occur. BCT will keep you up to date on the committee's work.



BCT 2022 Event Calendar

July 9: Drummer Boy Park, 9:30 am – 1:30 pm - Brewster Conservation Day (BCD)

July 12: Brewster Ladies' Library - "Butterflies & Pollinators", Master Gardener, Fran Raleigh

July 11: Nature Walk at Eddy Sisters at 9:00 am

August 18: BCT's Annual Meeting at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History

StoryWalks® - Read a book while taking a walk with BCT's monthly StoryWalks®

See the full list of StoryWalks® on our website. (April through December)

See current schedule of events on our website.
www.brewsterconservationtrust.org



President's Letter

My childhood home backed onto a wooded hillside, and those woods were blessed with several magnificently mature American beeches. These silvery gray giants had such dense canopies that each created its own magical (to my young eyes) surrounding open circle of soft moss and

shade-loving wild flowers. Later in the spring, blankets of mayapples would dominate these open spaces, coyly hiding waxy flowers under parasols of green. But early on, when crocuses and snow drops were first appearing in cultivated gardens, these oases of the understory would suddenly sprout drifts of tiny pink and blue-and-yellow flowers—spring beauties and bluets. Gathering a bouquet of these little wonders was, for me, the sign that spring had truly arrived.



A mayapple with fruit

Now, in the Cape's moister environs, I depend on the spring peepers to deliver the same message, and the joy and wonder are the same. Spring is a season of renewed excitement and energy...and new challenges – the Planning Committees for the former Sea Camp property to determine how those 120+ acres can best be enjoyed by the public.

At BCT, we're looking at two crucial tests: First, we need our friends and neighbors to continue their extraordinary support for the Conservation for the Community campaign to assist the Town in preserving the Sea Camps Long Pond parcel. We're more than 80% of the way there but still need to raise \$340,000 in donations or multi-year pledges to fulfill our commitment. In addition, as always, we will be looking for ways to protect available open space with conservation value. Last year, even as we mobilized around the Sea Camps opportunity, BCT preserved an additional 49 acres for posterity. To keep up that pace AND top off the Conservation for the Community campaign, we need to double our typical fundraising goal.

Join us in enjoying spring time's Best of Brewster: our greening, flowering meadows, forests and marshes. And please join us with your support, so that future generations will know that same joy.

Tino Kamarck, *Brewster Conservation Trust President*

WELCOME NEW TRUSTEE SEAMUS WOODS

Seamus Woods is a man on the move, and he has been since a young age. "I grew up in Brewster, swimming in its ponds, exploring Nickerson and the surrounding trails, and walking its beaches," he remembered. He moved to Pennsylvania for his college, graduate school, and early career years; but he returned to Brewster with his young family to be closer to family, and to begin a new life as an independent businessman. While seeking the job that fit right, he built his own house and worked part-time at Secure Storage, doing much of the management and keeping the books. Eventually he bought the business which gives him time for other interests. Seamus has volunteered as mountain bike leader for the students of his wife's eighth grade classes at the Lighthouse Charter School and he continues his interest in sports.

Having grown up in Brewster he has an understanding and love of place and possibilities. "My grandmother Tilli was a big supporter of BCT and I hope to honor her legacy by helping to preserve our natural world for Brewster's present and future citizens."



BCT welcomes Seamus, his skills, his energy, and his knowledge.

GET OUR e-NEWS! Sign up to receive BCT's e-newsletter and see our latest news on upcoming walks, talks, and special event invitations! Sign up on our website: **brewsterconservationtrust.org**

— And follow us on Facebook and Instagram —

CONSERVATIONISTS OF THE FUTURE

What Is an Aquifer: *breaking down the basics*

Cape Cod gets its water from an aquifer, a body of freshwater underground. The aquifer was formed when Cape Cod was formed and glaciers covered most of this area of the earth.

The aquifer is right below us. If you are standing in the lower Cape area (Brewster, Harwich, Orleans, Chatham) there is about 30 feet between you on the surface and the aquifer below.

It is critical to keep our aquifer safe to protect our drinking water. Think about the things that we put down our drains. All those soaps, cleansers and waste end up in our septic systems. It drains into a leaching field in our yards and then directly down into the ground. Eventually the drained sewage water ends up soaking down into our aquifer.

This same cycle applies to our lawns. Chemicals on our lawns seep into the soil and end up contaminating the aquifer. Rainwater helps push whatever is in our soil deeper under ground and that waste reaches the aquifer faster. If we use

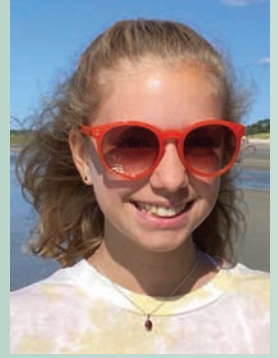
irrigation systems on our lawns the toxic waste drains into the aquifer more quickly.

People who live near ponds have an important responsibility to the health of Cape Cod's water. Lawn chemicals drain directly into the ponds. Chemicals contaminate the water and create a bacteria reaction. When ponds have bacteria reactions, they become toxic to humans and dogs that use them. This can cause them to become sick and the ponds to be closed to swimming.

We know that the aquifer is right below us. But how do we protect it? If we contaminate this aquifer enough, we won't be able to drink from it anymore.

by Zoe Simmons

Nauset Regional Middle School 7th grader



Eddy School 4th Graders at BCT's Hay Conservation Center

Audubon staff, BCT volunteers and teachers introduced Eddy Elementary Schools students to the Hay Conservation Center. One fourth grader said, "I didn't realize how many sounds could be heard in the quiet of the forest." What did they learn? "We identified different trees by studying their bark, looking at the shape of the leaves or counting the number of pine needle bundles," said one young scientist, and "We discovered a red-backed salamander living under a rotted log and heard squirrels and birds rustling in the leaf litter," said another.



Middle School Students in the Middle of Nature



What better way for eight students from Nauset Regional Middle School to spend a Wednesday afternoon than to walk in the woods, learning about nature on Cape Cod?

Led by leaders from the Brewster and Orleans Conservation Trusts, the students explored Huckleberry Hill and learned about native plants. The young naturalists learned the importance of conservation lands, how the land cleans the water we drink and swim in - and purifies the air we breathe.



LONG-RANGE WATER PROTECTION

Everyone in Brewster enjoys our many wonderful ponds and fine drinking water quality. Brewster has done much to protect our fresh water, notably purchasing extensive buffer lands around town wells. The Brewster Conservation Trust has also played a significant role in protecting the lands needed for well-head and pond protection. But there is a major and growing threat to our ponds: septic systems. Already, a number of ponds have had closures to swimming and other recreation due to cyanobacteria “blooms” – and these closures are increasing. They are caused by excessive nutrients in ponds – phosphorus and nitrogen – much of which comes from septic systems.

In Brewster, all water flushed down the toilet or from sinks, showers and washing machines goes to septic tanks, then out to underground leaching systems that release the wastewater to the ground. This same groundwater is the source of all water in our ponds, and also of all drinking water in Brewster, whether from private wells or the town. Septic systems were fine when the town population was low, but studies now show that they are the largest threat to our ponds and overall water quality – and that their impact is occurring faster than once thought. The now-required Title V septic systems do a good job destroying harmful bacteria in wastewater but only remove a small portion of nutrients and do little to remove chemicals that do not biodegrade easily.



Walker's Pond: Gerald Beetham for APCC

Brewster needs a comprehensive long-range water protection plan, evaluating different solutions. The Town must be the leader of the needed evaluation and action plan development, and has started work on this. However, everyone in Brewster needs to recognize the problem and support the development of solutions. And everyone must accept that the solutions will have a cost – a cost essential to protect our water quality and the ponds we so much enjoy.

The Brewster Ponds Coalition will help the Town on this issue by helping monitor pond water quality and cyanobacteria blooms, and helping with awareness efforts needed as studies are done and alternatives developed. The Brewster Conservation Trust will also support these efforts, notably by continuing to focus on land conservation in areas that protect our wells and ponds. All residents of Brewster also have a role to play in protecting our ponds and water supplies, by periodically pumping out their septic tanks, minimizing use of lawn fertilizer, picking up pet wastes and preventing storm runoff from paved or roofed areas from reaching ponds.

John Keith, Brewster Ponds Coalition

Future Park on Main Street

BCT is grateful to Steve and Kate Backus for their help with three conservation projects that protect critical habitat off Main Street. Most recently, the Backuses donated the 0.44-acre property with buildings located at 2342 Main Street. You can see the E Spa and old barn, but what you don't see are the important resources we want to protect. Directly behind the spa is a small pond that connects to the Consodine Ditch, draining the center of town west to Freeman's Pond and out to the Bay. The restoration and preservation of the property will continue to protect the woodlands and wetlands, including a vernal pool. The establishment of a little sitting park – Backus Park – on Main Street will allow passersby to stop and enjoy the serenity and beauty of the area.

SAVE THE DATE!

**BREWSTER
CONSERVATION DAY**

Saturday, July 9, 2022

**9:30 am – 1:30 pm
at Drummer Boy Park!**

Sponsored by
Brewster Conservation Trust, Town of Brewster Natural Resources Depart.,
Brewster Ponds Coalition, and Brewster Historical Society

For more info on Brewster Conservation Day:
brewsterconservationtrust.org/brewster-conservation-day-2022/

Preserving What's Important

When Jake and Barbara Brown bought a Cape Cod summer place in 1962, they reached it by a three-mile travel through woods on a dirt road leading to a cranberry bog. Jake had grown up summering on Wychmere Harbor and Barbara on Lake Winnepausakee, so when a relative wanted to buy land on a Cape Cod lake, Jake and Barbara were willing to share the cost. That's how they came to bring their growing family to Hinckleys Pond every summer.

Over the years they acquired an adjoining cranberry bog with a small house right on the pond. Teenagers and friends now had their own place with a swimming beach. Later Jake and Barbara bought the back land until by 1976 they had 40 acres spanning the Harwich/Brewster line. Those were good days for cranberry farmers, and the bog helped put one son through school. As the children grew older and had their own families, the original dirt road was paved leaving only the last half mile of the dirt road. Houses, garages, and lawns replaced the Cape Cod woods. With the children now adults, Jake and Barbara transferred title to most of the land to them; and by 2017 the family made the decision to assure nothing happened to the land.

It is more than land. It is also water and herring. 150 years ago a Harwich cranberry grower named Cahoon dug a canal from Seymour Pond to Hinckleys to more easily flood his bog. This allowed herring, coming from Nantucket Sound and up the Herring River in Harwich to Hinckleys Pond, to find their way to Seymours Pond as well. The Brown family wanted to protect the run, the bogs, the ponds and the land. Since 2017 the family has transferred more than 23 acres to conservation with another 12.4 acres promised in the future. The cranberry bogs have seen their final harvest and Jake is supporting the restoration of the bogs to their original marsh state.

All three children are backing these plans. "I may not leave them as much money," Jake said, "but they will have the cottage and the pond." And they will have memories and clean water, a herring run, a restored marsh, and a bit of Cape Cod woods.



An uncommon man of great character Don Schall (1943-2021)

In 1969 Don, with his wife, Janet, moved to Cape Cod as Director of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History. He loved to tell the story of the on-the-land quiz given him by the Museum's President, John Hay. He was only hired after he correctly identified all the designated plants.

From childhood Don had an interest in natural history around his hometown of Newark, NJ. His knowledge was refined with a master's degree from the Yale School of Forestry, but his love of connecting with children developed from the Museum's educational classes for young people and his classroom teaching in the Nauset elementary schools. His former students still say that some of their best school memories were learning from a real scientist. He later volunteered with BCT's Eddy School science programs, searching for insects at Windmill Meadow in the spring and studying trees at the Hay Conservation Center in the fall. His delight in discovery and his playfulness made nature fun and exciting for the third and fourth Grader.

After leaving the museum to work as a professional botanist he became a mentor to younger workers. He loved to explore new habitats, searching for plants to identify, perhaps discovering something rare or thought to be extinct. A founder of the Botanical Club of Cape Cod and the Islands, he led regional field trips where novices were welcomed and no question was stupid or naïve.

Always passionate about the natural world and an expert in his field, what made Don stand out was his generosity, his kindness. He was an asset to the Conservation Commissions in Orleans and later in Brewster. His expertise and skill were shared with the conservation trusts of Harwich and Brewster. His many friends welcomed his gifts of identification, advice, and even potted plants.

He had planned to spend more time with his son, Peter, in Vermont. He had hoped to work further on his driftwood mobiles and drawings. He had more to give; but he will live on in the knowledge given to his students, in memories of his kindness and patience, and in the land he helped preserve.



How will you leave your legacy? The Brewster Conservation Trust achieves its mission because of individuals, like you, who share a love for Brewster and want to see the natural and rural characteristic of the town preserved forever.

A gift of land makes sure that future generations will enjoy what you love about a special property. Any donation of cash or securities will be put toward the preservation of open space that will further protect water quality and habitat. Gifts from your IRA can count toward your required minimum distribution.

Consider including Brewster Conservation Trust in your estate plan. Gifts of any size will help BCT carry on its mission and ensure those same valued assets for the next generation. Making a bequest to BCT in your Will can have many advantages – you can reduce the taxable amount of your estate and avoid paying taxes and capital gains. Consult your professional advisor for further information and guidance. BCT can accept gifts of cash or securities.



MEMORIALS & BEQUESTS

Contributions to BCT honor the memory of a loved one; consider a donation to the Brewster Conservation Trust “in lieu of flowers”. Send donations to: 36 Red Top Road, Brewster, MA 02631. For guidance on planning a bequest or gift, contact Amy Henderson at: amy@brewsterconservationtrust.org.

39 years
of appreciation
& preservation



In Memory of

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Deanne Anson

Norma Baker
David & Sally Schrumm

Merton C. Bernstein
Joan Bernstein

Donald Boettcher
Gloria & Geoffrey Wager

Michael Brady
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Brewster Conservation Trust

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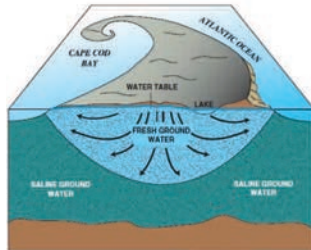
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Zoe's Suggestions for Protecting the Aquifer



- Use non-toxic household cleaners
- Use non-toxic toothpaste, soaps, shampoo
- Do not use fertilizers or pesticides on your lawn
- Plant native plants: they use less water & fertilizer
- Properly dispose of chemicals such as paint or motor oil
- Only wash full loads of laundry
- Only run your dishwasher when it is full!
- Fix leaking faucets
- Take shorter showers
- Water the plants during the coolest parts of the day
- Recycle
- Learn more about our aquifer and get involved:

www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/sole-source-aquifer/

www.pocacapecod.org/

www.capecodgroundwater.org/

www.brewsterponds.org/

Zoe Simmons
Nauset Regional Middle School 7th grader

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