

Eddy Sisters: A “Growing” Community

Its peaked roof points to the sunlit clouds as if suggesting the sky's the limit. The new Outdoor Classroom commissioned by the Brewster Conservation Trust is raising a lot of hopes and realizing one of the organization's long-held visions: to bring educational programming about the outdoor world into the outdoor world.

The pavilion-like structure next to the Brewster Community Garden and the Orchard at Eddy Sisters is the most recent addition to BCT's Eddy Sisters Property located at 660 Lower Rd. in Brewster.

BCT acquired the 18.5-acre property in 1984 as a donation from the Eddy sisters, Ruth, Mary-Louise, and Jean, three longtime Brewster residents and heirs to the property owned by their grandfather. Originally an open meadow adjacent to an expanse of woods and shrubs, a portion of the property was cleared in 1985 after BCT partnered with the Town of Brewster and agreed to have the Town community garden sited there. In 2007 an additional space was cleared to make room for the Children's Garden in a joint project with BCT and the Cape Cod Master Gardeners, a program run by the Barnstable County Cooperative Extension Office.

In spring of 2023, another plot was cleared to lay the groundwork for an apple orchard, again with help from the Town of Brewster and the County Cooperative Extension Office. BCT volunteers planted seven heirloom apple saplings and surrounded them with field wire cages to ward off deer, mice, and voles. Over the summer, additional volunteers watered the trees, monitored their growth, and groomed the grassy areas.

By fall, as the orchard was taking root, materials for the outdoor classroom began arriving. Employees from Pine Harbor Structures quickly turned the Lincoln Log-type pieces into a solid pavilion on a patch of level ground with the orchard on one side and the community gardens on the other.

“The plan is to have the classroom used for educational workshops and programs as soon as possible,” said Amy Henderson, BCT executive director. “We hope to build movable benches soon so they can be positioned according to the needs of the program being taught. We're researching the best materials and design to use, and, of course, there's always the matter of finding money to pay for them.”

Eventually, as the apple trees start producing, BCT will use the outdoor classroom for apple-themed activities in the fall in addition to the other programs. Youngsters working in the Children's Garden are also sure to put the structure to use as they escape the sun and share gardening tips. Two finishing touches will be finalized in the future as fundraising permits: a perimeter of eco-friendly landscaping around the pavilion to integrate it into its unique setting and resilient weatherproof signage identifying the apple varieties in the orchard.

People interested in helping to fund these projects or build the benches can email Amy Henderson at amy@brewsterconservationtrust.org.