

Brewster Conservation Trust

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

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

Spring 2024

Conservation and Housing – A Winning Partnership

Sometimes the right place and the right time come together. In a community where housing is in short supply, this is indeed good news.

Brewster's zoning in the 1980s established large building lots that slowed the unmanageable growth of the time but are now impeding the development of sorely needed workforce housing. Today's Brewster needs denser housing in areas close to services and undeveloped parcels further out that are critical to protecting water quality.

BCT has the opportunity to purchase nearly 14 acres on Route 6A, including a single-family home, once the property of cranberry farmer Washington Chase. To preserve the family legacy and to improve the Brewster community, Washy's son-in-law, David Dalgarn, has agreed to sell the property, which appraised at \$1,240,000, for \$700,000. With help from a state grant of \$175,000 and CPC funds of \$225,000 the balance we need to raise is \$300,000.



The property is comprised of both wetlands, where Washy's cranberry bog was located, and upland forest, adjacent to the house. BCT has long prioritized wetlands and water resource areas for conservation purposes and protects them as open space whenever possible. That is what we will do in this situation.



The former cranberry bog is well hidden by vigorous spring growth

At the same time, because the property includes a pre-existing home and is located close to transportation and other services, we see an opportunity to add to Brewster's limited housing supply. Therefore, our plan is to save the current home and, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, build two additional homes on a 1.6-acre house lot. We also hope the remaining upland and the adjoining five acres of wetland may be able to be restored to their original state and opened to the public for passive recreational use.

Applicants for Habitat homes must work locally or regionally, with buyers chosen by lottery from a pool of qualifying candidates. The Habitat homes will have two or three bedrooms, be owned by the residents, and be deed-restricted to remain affordable in any future resale.

Habitat homes can be found in every town across the Cape. In Brewster there is a 14-home community off Tubman Rd., four homes on James Burr Rd., and two homes off Red Top Rd.

Please help this partnership to thrive. BCT needs to raise \$300,000 through contributions. Help us preserve the legacy of the Chase and Dalgarn families, protect 12.4 acres of conservation land, and assist in the building of two homes for working families.

With your help we can accomplish it all.

Into the Woods and Along the Trail at Eddy Sisters

You've got your hiking shoes on and the weather is glorious. You're ready for a "walk" but you need someone to help with the "talk". Consider this your step-by-step guide to the stories, sights, and scenes of the public walking trail at BCT's Eddy Sisters property on Lower Rd.

It's only a quarter mile long, but step onto the trail and you are cast back into history. This ancient land was first farmed by generations of the Saquatucket and then by European settlers, including Augustus Thorndike, who eventually left it to his granddaughters Ruth and Mary Lousie Eddy. The two sisters donated it to BCT in 1984.

The upland trail is surrounded by the swampy wetland characteristic of West Brewster. This boggy area was worth little to the small farmers of 19th century Lower Road, but after cranberry farming was discovered, the value shot up. The cranberry farmers dug the creek deeper and straightened it with wooden work along the side. If you're walking in the spring, you'll see soggy-soil loving species like ferns, Red Maples, and the purple headed Skunk Cabbage announcing the end of winter. Step onto the bridge, reconstructed by BCT volunteers in 2011.

As you continue, you might also find sweet smelling pinkish-white azalea flowers that attract birds and moths. They sometimes grow a gall tasting of watermelon and apple that the early colonists would eat. Another spring-time favorite are the giant Cinnamon Ferns, which have tall brownish fruiting bodies the color of cinnamon. Later in the summer, you will come across Sweet Pepper Bush, likely humming with honeybee activity. While you'll need to be careful to avoid the native poison ivy along the trail, you can delight knowing this human nuisance is kinder to the birds than to us, providing them with an abundance of edible berries. Birds and other wildlife, such as raccoons, squirrels, deer, and foxes, dine well along the trail, finding sustenance in the oaks and cherry trees growing there.



On the right, the topography is rough, not from the glacier but from hard working men who cleared and smoothed the ground for cranberries and dug the borrow pit to provide sand for the bog. Further along, a stone wall, noted on early colonial maps, marks the western boundary of the Eddy Sisters land. Look for the scaly bark of pitch pines and mature white oaks that have bark that can look like large plates. Tupelos, with limbs perpendicular to the trunk, also like damp ground. As the forest ages, the oaks, beeches, and tupelos will take over from the pitch pines.

A 1913 innovation by Augustus Thorndike and his manager, Fred Young, is the reason there are bogs on both sides of the trail today. They put in a hydraulic system to pump water uphill from Cobb's Pond to flood the bogs.



Skunk cabbage flowers unfold in early spring.

In addition to the Skunk Cabbage, ferns, sedges, and Red Maples seen earlier, you'll also come across reeds, mosses, and another food source coveted by wildlife and humans, blueberries.

And now out into the meadow with different soil, moisture, and light conditions. Here are three-branched Bracken Fern, as well as milkweed and Joe Pye weed, both popular with Monarch butterflies. If your spring and summer hiking lure you back for another walk in the fall, you'll be dazzled by the meadow's colorful carpet as grasses and Goldenrod bloom into a sea of tawny emerald and vibrant yellow. It's a satisfying way to conclude both an encounter with nature and a growing season.



Winter will soon prevail.

Large cabbage-shaped leaves appear shortly after.



President's Letter

A friend used to joke, “You can learn something new every day – if you don’t watch out!” With no background in natural sciences, I’ve particularly enjoyed my more than ten-year involvement with BCT as a learning opportunity. Through my BCT experience, I’ve come to see that the mutual dependencies in our many ecosystems are the fierce – yet fragile – threads that form the web of life. Simply put, everything matters. We all need each other.

That’s why partnerships are so important to us. First, and most importantly, we partner with you, our friends and neighbors who care enough about Brewster to help us set priorities and to provide the financial support to carry out our mission. We also have a long and productive history of partnering with Town administration, complementing each other’s strengths whenever civic, community, and conservation goals align, such as protecting the water quality in our wells, ponds, and watersheds.

We have long partnered with other environmental groups and organizations, including Mass Audubon to provide programming to Eddy School fourth graders and with Brewster Ponds Coalition to support conservation advocacy.

On Brewster Conservation Day, we annually bring together over 40 exhibitors and more than a thousand individuals to promote and celebrate a conservation ethic.

Recently, we’ve renewed one former partnership and formed another. When Steve and Kate Backus donated the former E-Spa on Main Street to BCT for use as a park, we learned the old barn on the property has significance as Brewster’s “School House Number 3.” That’s when we turned to Brewster Historical Society, a familiar partner from past projects, to explore how we can respect the building’s historical significance even though initial plans to relocate it have proven impractical. Similarly, BCT has agreed to acquire 14 acres in East Brewster that are mostly comprised of upland forest and the old Washington Chase cranberry bog but also include a house lot with access to Main Street. This gives us the opportunity to preserve the open space, to potentially restore the bog, and, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, to explore possibilities for affordable housing on the developed lot.

In all of these collaborations, we have learned from our partners. We have benefitted from their expertise, their perspective, and their passion. As our fortieth year comes to a close, BCT continues to seek and celebrate new partnerships – all with a view to keeping Brewster a wonderful place to live and visit, now and for generations to come.

Tino Kamarck,
Conservation Trust President

Old E-Spa to get a Makeover

How many times have you driven past the former E-Spa building on Rt. 6A and seen it just sitting there? The buildings and surrounding half acre were donated to BCT by the former owners, Steve and Kate Backus, in 2021 with the idea that the land would be turned into a public park. BCT has high hopes for the property, but like many things, it takes a while for plans to develop. Initially, the idea was for the Brewster Historical Society to move the former cranberry barn/Schoolhouse#3 on the left side of the complex to Windmill Village where it would sit with the Windmill, the Blacksmith Shop, and the Harris Black House. BCT would take down the E-Spa building and, in its place, build a public park.

Unfortunately, plans to move the building proved unwieldy and impractical, but our hopes are still alive to do something in partnership with BHS. We’re considering a range of options that would honor the historic significance of the old Schoolhouse and its later history.



Our hopes for a park are also still alive. With the existing E-Spa structure demolished, the site could become a quiet place for rest and reflection with a view over the pond and wetland in the back of the property – right in the middle of Brewster – making it a welcome spot for walkers, joggers, and cyclists. We harbor hope that the Town and the state DOT will eventually put in a sidewalk on that side of 6A which will make the park easily accessible.

We don’t yet have a specific plan for the park, but we hope to invite the public to contribute ideas for what features it should have. So stay tuned, the park at the E-Spa will become a reality!

BCT Unveils New outdoor Classroom and Apple Orchard

Brewster Conservation Trust achieved a milestone on May 1 by officially opening the outdoor classroom and heirloom apple orchard at our Eddy Sisters property. Adding these two features to this parcel further helps to solidify Eddy Sisters as a true “growing community.”

Already home to the Town-run Brewster community garden, the Children’s Garden program run by the Master Gardeners of Barnstable County, the Eddy Sisters public walking trail, and a wildflower meadow, the property now has even more potential for hosting education and outreach activities.

The outdoor classroom will offer shade, shelter and a learning space for gardeners, hikers, and others using the property. As the apple orchard matures and produces fruit, it will offer further opportunities for community events and horticultural workshops.



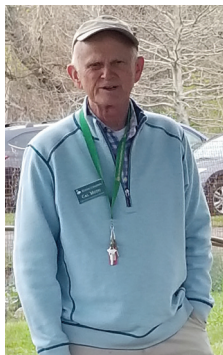
BCT volunteers ready the grounds surrounding the new outdoor classroom, planting native species favored by pollinators.

Robust educational use of the Eddy Sisters property pays tribute to the generosity of Ruth and Mary Louise Eddy, who donated the land to BCT; and the agricultural emphasis of our programming harkens earlier uses of the land, first by generations of the Saquatucket and later by European settlers.

BCT hopes the orchard and the outdoor classroom at Eddy Sisters will make this property a true community hub.



Board Chair Ned Chatelain offers congratulations for another step forward.



Cal Mutti, of the Master Gardener Assoc. of Cape Cod, praises the structure.



Though the lion’s share of the work for this undertaking has been accomplished, a few tasks remain, including adding signage and raising the last \$7,000 of the project’s cost.

BCT Trustee Hal Minis, Cal Mutti, Ned Chatelain, and BCT President Tino Kamarck use landscaping loppers to ceremoniously unveil BCT’s outdoor classroom.



SAVE THE DATE

BCT Annual Meeting

Wed., Aug. 21, 2024

5:00-7:00 pm

More information at
www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

GET OUR e-NEWS!

Sign up to receive
 BCT’s e-newsletter
 and see our latest news
 on upcoming walks, talks,
 and special events!

Go to our website:
brewsterconservationtrust.org

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John Hay's Writing Studio to Host Local Authors

The great naturalist, author, and conservationist John Hay left many things behind when he died in 2011 at the age of 95. First, the marshes he helped to conserve while serving on the Brewster Conservation Commission, including Quivett, Stony Brook, and Namskaket. Second, the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, which he co-founded in 1955 and led as president until 1985. And last but certainly not least, the 18 books he wrote in his “writing shack” on Dry Hill at his Brewster home. His legacies honor the natural world and proclaim the need to conserve it.

Hay built his studio just a stone's throw from his house, both of which sit on acreage purchased by BCT in 2015.

BCT is now taking steps toward converting that “shack” into a writers' retreat program. The goal will be to offer Hay's writing studio to local writers in search of silence and solitude in which to work on literary projects of their own. BCT is beginning with a pilot program to run 16 weeks through the summer of 2024.

Helped by local authors familiar with writers' retreats, BCT hopes to host writers from across the Cape throughout the summer in one-week increments. If successful, the program will be expanded in 2025 to include additional weeks in the spring and fall.

“We're excited about the idea of expanding BCT's audience and engaging with the arts community on the Cape,” said BCT Trustee Dirkie Van Antwerp. “We think this is a meaningful way to see that John Hay's spirit and legacy live on and to further spread the word about the value and vision of BCT.”



Final upgrades to the interior of John Hay's writing studio included a fresh coat of paint to the walls and Hay's bookshelves.

Brewster Ponds Coalition Citizen Science

The Brewster Ponds Coalition (BPC) has been sampling ponds in town for cyanobacteria since 2017 in support of its mission of “protecting and improving the health of Brewster's ponds through science, education and advocacy.” Cyanobacteria, sometimes called blue green algae, can form blooms that pose health risks to humans and pets through water contact and ingestion. For the first time in the last five years of monitoring, no “Use Restriction” advisories were posted by the Town of Brewster in 2023. Schoolhouse and Walkers ponds had a general use warning posted throughout the season due to low visibility, but repeated testing showed them to be otherwise acceptable. These cyanobacteria results were noteworthy since over 275 samples were collected from 19 ponds by 53 volunteer citizen scientists from May 30 to November 1. The 2023 cyanobacteria report card on all Brewster ponds is available at www.brewsterponds.org under the Programs and Citizen Science tabs.

In addition to cyanobacteria sampling, the BPC will continue its work that started in 2022 of ground truthing NOAA satellite data for Long, Lower Mill, Seymour, Sheep and Upper Mill ponds. This involves lowering a white and black secchi disc at the deepest point of these ponds to measure transparency while a satellite passes overhead taking images. This summer they plan to take 60 measurements, capping a very busy season of citizen science work.



To learn more about these projects and ways to protect Brewster ponds please contact:

Ron Essig
ron.essig@brewsterponds.org

or Marty Burke
marty.burke@brewsterponds.org

Dave Simons and Bill Dermody
collecting a tow net sample
on Upper Mill Pond
(photo by Roy Bellush)

People Spotlight



Michael Lindgren

As a boy, Michael Lindgren scrambled through the woods, fields, and streams near his Granby, CT, home. He watched nature shows on TV and loved Earth Science in high school. During the summer he explored the flats, estuaries, and marshes near his family's rental cottage off Crosby Lane.

Flash forward some 50 years, and Michael's love of nature has led him to a position as a Trustee on the Board of Brewster Conservation Trust. His tenure began in January, 2024, making him not only our newest board member, but also our first (and only) second-generation Trustee. His father Robert Lindgren served on the BCT board some 30 years ago.

Besides serving as a BCT Trustee, Michael also pitches in on stewardship workdays and outreach activities. In rare non-volunteer moments, he pals around with best bud Oscar, a curly-haired sheepadoodle.



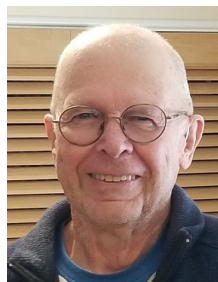
Roger O'Day

If you're in college and you have a friend who has a fraternity brother who says to come to the Cape because he's got a place for you to live and can get you a job, don't believe him.

That's a lesson Roger O'Day learned the hard way, but things worked out for him anyway.

After scrambling to find a job, roommates, and an affordable living situation that fateful summer, Roger was on his way to becoming a full-time Brewster resident. Fifteen years later, in 1983, after a stint on the Brewster Planning Board, he became one of the founding members of the Brewster Conservation Trust. And forty years after that, he's still proudly serving as one of two original Trustees.

A long-time attorney with a keen understanding of real estate law, Roger has performed pro bono all of BCT's legal work over the years, making him especially instrumental to BCT's success.



Peter Soule

Along with 59 other high school seniors, Peter Soule received his diploma as part of the first graduating class of Nauset Regional High School in 1960, making him one of the area's "60 in '60".

After heading off-Cape for a period, he returned in 1971 to settle in Brewster. His work as a land surveyor was known in the community, which is why he got the call in 1983 inviting him to be part of the newly-forming Brewster Conservation Trust. Peter served as BCT's treasurer after Ruth Eddy passed onto him the wooden box of index cards she used as the membership log.

After 40 years on the BCT Board (and some serious modernizing of our internal systems), Peter admits BCT's epic journey of accomplishments has been remarkable, even to him. "I just never expected that," he says.

A colorful poster for Brewster Conservation Day 2024. The top half is blue with a red border. It features a large green tree with the word "TREES" in yellow letters. Below the tree is a red speech bubble with the text "SUPERHEROES OF THE NATURAL WORLD" in yellow. The bottom half of the poster is red with white text. The text reads: "Save the Date for BCD", "BREWSTER CONSERVATION DAY 2024", "Saturday, July 13, 2024", "Drummer Boy Park", and "9:30 am - 1:30 pm".

**Save the Date
for BCD**

BREWSTER CONSERVATION DAY 2024

TREES

**SUPERHEROES
OF THE
NATURAL WORLD**

**Saturday,
July 13, 2024**

Drummer Boy Park **9:30 am -
1:30 pm**

How will you leave your legacy?

The Brewster Conservation Trust is committed to preserving the places people need and love to build healthy communities and protect our natural heritage. And we couldn't do it without individuals like you.

Because everybody benefits from a healthy, scenic, and sustainable environment, everybody can play a part in protecting and preserving it. If you're a landowner, you're in a position to ensure that future generations will be able to walk the same trails, enjoy the same views, and savor the same sights and sounds as you. Forever.

If you have other assets besides land, you can contribute cash or securities toward the preservation of open space so vital to the rustic beauty, natural setting, and rural character of Brewster. Gifts from your IRA can count toward your required minimum distribution. There are other ways to donate as well, such as by including BCT in your estate plan, which can provide you with tax advantages and BCT with needed support. Consult your professional advisor for information and guidance. Gifts of any size will help.



LEAVE A LEGACY

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.

In Memory of

Joanne Andershonis Reich

Kevin Reich

Stuart Anson

Alan & Amyjo Bershaw

Bill and Helen Arabasz

Paul & Bonnie Arabasz

Willard Brown

Suzanne Walton

Jean Cammarano

Amy Henderson

Washington Chase

Myron & Rita Heckman

Washington & Mary "Mick" Chase

Joann Otto

Marian "Mackie" Chase Dalgarn

Deanne Anson

Joann Otto

Andrea Illig

Frank "Chip" Delisi

Joanne Hughes

Edward & Valerie Lewis

Murva Deneen

Donald Deneen

Mary Louise & Ruth Eddy

Stephen & Diane Jones

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James Gately

Raymond Girard Sr.

Patricia Girard

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Douglas Wilcock

Timothy Hogan

Elizabeth Gerlach

Ruth Y. Hsiao

William Hsiao

John Hughes

Hal Minis & Patricia Hughes

Carroll Johnson

Jane Johnson

Eleanor Johnson

Deanne Anson

Frederick & Kathleen Budreski

Charles & Barbara Frazier

Robert O'Brien

Jeffrey & Ellen Plaut

Eleanor Johnson (cont'd)

Roger & Jeane Samuelsen

William & Patricia Wood

Karen Young

Nancy Johnson

David & Gwenyth Ruppert

James King

Nancy & Christopher Collins

Copper Hill United Methodist Women

Friends of Brewster Seniors

M. Sylvia & David Lamb

Karen McCullough

Doug Prosser

Susan McNair

John McNair

Donald & Carolyn Miller

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Glenna King Outwin

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Tara & Kenny Mitchell

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Gloria Wager

Ruth Walters

George & Katherine Williams

Joe & Anne Welch

Paula Champagne Lawton & Dennis Lawton

Sheila Eileen Wynne

Patricia Fortier

In Honor of

All Caregivers

Olga Sherry

Amy Henderson

Sandra Rhodes & Robert Singer

Barbara & Peter Schaible

BCT's great conservation work

Dorria DiManno

Brewster!

Suzanne Dean

Children's Gardeners

Calvin & Karen Mutti

David Dalgarn

Joann Otto

Liz Gordon & Tavia Ossola

Frances & Benjamin Ossola

Peter Johnson

Sally & Bob Bullard

Nancy Ortiz

Joan & James Van Baalen

Ben McKelway & Cate O'Neill

Russell Brick McKelway

Charles & Barbara Maldarelli

Joanne Crain

Hal Minis

Patricia Hughes

Cherie & Jack Page

Frederick Felini

Suzanne Renney

Octavia Ossola & Elizabeth Gordon

Nancy Roach

Mary Roach

Carolyn Sproggell

Jonathan Sproggell & Kathy Taylor

Toby Stamm & Jane Ditzel

Peter Johnson

Justin & Karen Wharton

Joseph & Angela Mault

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Save a Tree!

First introduced by European colonists, English ivy (*Hedera helix*) has long been used in landscaping. Loved for its low maintenance and evergreen foliage, ivy can quickly become a thick carpet of groundcover that escapes the garden. Although English ivy has not yet been classified as an invasive, it is an aggressive invader of our landscapes, threatening the vegetation around it, including trees.

As English ivy grows up a tree, it traps moisture, damages the tree bark, inhibits photosynthesis, and can eventually kill the tree. The added weight of the vines to the tree and its branches also makes them more susceptible to falling over or breaking off in a windstorm, which as we know can be a frequent occurrence on Cape Cod.

We can help protect the trees, by removing the English ivy growing up it. Using pruners or a pruning saw clear a swath at least six inches wide all the way around the tree trunk. Be careful not to damage the bark of the tree. The ivy above the cleared area will die. Warmer temperatures will cause the die-off to accelerate. To reduce future management and the chance of it regrowing up the tree, pull out the ivy around the base of the tree. Make sure you properly dispose of ivy debris, to prevent it from putting down roots somewhere else.

**So, this Spring, if you have trees engulfed in English ivy,
throw on your long sleeve shirt and gloves, and help save a tree.**

