



Brewster Conservation Trust

A PRIVATE NON-PROFIT LAND TRUST

Fall 2024

Family's Conservation Legacy Continues



This story started three generations ago when Ralph and Blanche Doble purchased over 70 acres along Satucket Rd. in 1955. Summer after summer, the couple's son, five daughters, and 18 grandchildren would visit. Over the years, the land was subdivided and each Doble child received a house lot of approximately ten acres. The daughters each built a house on their lot, while their brother sold his.

In 2005, the Doble children donated 4.43 acres along Satucket Rd. to Brewster Conservation Trust in memory of their parents. This parcel with its landmark glacial boulder anchors the east end of what is now known as the Upper Mill Pond Watershed Forest Project. Fast forward to Memorial Day weekend 2018 when BCT and representatives from each of the five families who still owned the original land reached an agreement to protect even more of the Upper Mill Pond Watershed land. Thanks to Nancy Doble Berbrick, the first 5.47 acres were protected by BCT in 2019 and were followed by 8.05 acres owned by Betsy Doble Ward in 2020. And although their brother Frank Doble had sold his lot, BCT was able to work with the new owners, Peter and Ann Lambertus, to acquire it by an outright donation in 2023. This 11.17-acre parcel anchors the Upper Mill Pond Watershed Forest on the west end.

Now, this story – and the family's legacy – is poised to continue. Working with the children of the late Jane Doble Ker, BCT is in a position to protect the next 2.77 acres along Satucket Rd., and we need your help to raise the negotiated sale price of \$385,000. BCT has secured a State Conservation Partnership Grant of \$192,500, but the remaining project costs must come from BCT and its supporters.

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Family's Legacy (cont'd from p. 1)

The parcel is in the watershed of Upper Mill Pond, a nutrient impaired pond, and part of the parcel is in Brewster's Zone II drinking water supply area. Once a sheep pasture in the 1800s, it became a traditional Cape Cod forest of pitch pine and oak with both white and black oak trees. It is priority habitat for wildlife, including the Eastern box turtle, a species of special concern in Massachusetts.

Once the Ker property is protected, we have plans to move forward with the protection of land owned by the families of the other two Doble sisters, closing the gap between the east and west sections of the Upper Mill Pond Watershed Forest and creating a 35+ acre continuous forest.

Upper Mill Pond Watershed Project

The Mill Ponds system includes Walkers Pond, Upper Mill Pond, and Lower Mill Pond. It is my favorite place to freshwater kayak in Brewster. A few days ago, a friend and I began at Lower Mill Pond, paddled (and dragged) our kayaks through the shallow water passage to Upper Mill Pond, and then over the spit to Walkers Pond following the route of the spring herring run from Paines Creek to the spawning grounds of the freshwater ponds. Along the way we saw spotted turtles sunning themselves on logs, an osprey nest on a powerline pole overlooking Upper Mill Pond, a great blue heron and egret fishing next to each other at Walkers Pond, diving cormorants, several large snapping turtles, lots of freshwater mussels, and schools of small fish. With sunlight glittering across the water, wildlife all around,



Upper Mill Pond

Project Budget

Upper Mill Pond Watershed Forest Project Budget

EXPENSES

Property Purchase \$385,000

Purchase Expenses \$ 11,550

PROJECTED PUBLIC FUNDING

MA Conservation Partnership Grant . . . \$192,500

PRIVATE FUNDS TO RAISE \$204,050

and few houses visible along the shore, we felt like we were magically experiencing the Cape as it must have been 100 years ago.

Wishing not to break the spell, I hesitated to tell my friend that over the last two decades the Mill Ponds have become impaired by an overabundance of cyanobacteria leading to occasional toxic blooms which in turn has prompted the Board of Health to post water use advisories at public landings. The main cause of the overabundance of cyanobacteria is nutrient pollution from septic systems, stormwater runoff, and fertilizer use.

There are few remedies for improving pond health, but there is a sure way to block added human-caused pollution: prevent development of the existing open space around the ponds. Absence of homes means absence of septic systems, absence of stormwater runoff from driveways and roofs, as well as absence of lawn and garden fertilizer. The Brewster Conservation Trust has thankfully made numerous strategic land purchases over the last 40 years that have not only helped to protect our beautiful ponds, but also the watersheds surrounding Brewster's public wells.

That is why I fully support the BCT's plan to purchase a 2.77-acre parcel off Satucket Road, adding to the nearly 30 acres already protected within the Upper Mill Pond watershed.

Susan Bridges
President, Brewster Ponds Coalition



From the President

I am honored to be asked by my fellow trustees to take over BCT's helm. Of course, I stand on the shoulders of those who have preceded me as president and traced a positive

trajectory for the Trust. I thank Tino Kamarck for his achievements, including expanding our membership and completing the largest fundraising effort by far to support the Town's purchase of the Sea Camps.

I have long appreciated BCT's contribution to our community's character and its partnership with the Town in protecting open space and making Brewster a conservation town. The successes are undeniable. I've also appreciated seeing the Trust grow as an organization to one of the strongest private land trusts on the Cape with a variety of programs that complement the land preservation focus. I look forward to helping BCT continue this positive trajectory.

Here are some immediate priorities we will focus on.

Strategic Planning The Trust has evolved and conditions in Brewster have changed so it is time to develop a new five-year strategic plan, building on previous plans and incorporating the community's vision of how to move forward.

Land Acquisition Two major land acquisition projects now underway – the Chase Bogs on Rt. 6A and the Ker property on Satucket Road – are vital pieces of our land preservation strategy and raising funds from our generous donors and partnership with the Town is critical.

Land Stewardship We must also continue to expand our stewardship program and the volunteers who help with it so all our properties get the attention they need.

The E-Spa Project - Finally, completing the E-Spa project through the demolition of the existing structures and the creation of a public park in the center of town is a special opportunity.

All these projects will enhance the character of our community. I look forward to working with the BCT staff, board and volunteers and to continuing our partnership with the Town of Brewster to make them a reality.

Charlie Sumner,
President

Life After 40? You Betcha!

As we turn the page on another year, we pause a minute to reflect on the many highlights of the last year. Most notably, you may recall the goal we set to protect 40 more acres of important conservation land in celebration of our 40th year. With the help of several conservation minded property owners and all of you, our supporters, we not only met that challenge, but we surpassed it! In total, we were able to put 45.40 acres under agreement during our 40th Anniversary

Year To date, we have already closed on 28.56 acres and anticipate completing the rest of the projects by spring 2025. Each property will play a role in protecting Brewster's drinking water supply area, protecting important natural habitat, or improving local resiliency in the face of climate change and all will contribute to Brewster's rural character. Spreading out the projects provides us with the flexibility to raise the funds needed to complete each project.

**DO WE
HAVE
YOUR
EMAIL
ADDRESS?**

WE'D SURE LIKE TO!

We do our best to keep track of our members, supporters, and newsletter recipients, and to communicate with you as efficiently as possible. Help us save postage and keep our records up to date by sending your email address to bct@brewsterconservationtrust.org. Thank you.



New Leadership for BCT

After three years as BCT President, Tino Kamarck is passing the torch for incoming President Charlie Sumner. Bonnie Newman, BCT's Vice-President for the past 11 years, is also stepping aside and making that position available to Seamus Woods.



Tino Kamarck, Charlie Sumner

During Tino's and Bonnie's tenure, BCT successfully completed its Conservation in the Community campaign to raise funds to support the Town's acquisition of the Long Pond property formerly owned by the Sea Camps. They also oversaw BCT's acquisition of the Washington Chase Bog, which adds conservation property to East Brewster and memorializes a historic bog and an important Brewster farmer.

Finally, Tino and Bonnie were at the helm in 2023, when BCT celebrated its 40th anniversary and set a goal of adding 40 acres of land into conservation protection, a goal that was fully realized.

Prior to that, under Bonnie's direction as VP, BCT transitioned from an all-volunteer organization to one led by a professional staff, a move that improved efficiency, expertise, and output.

An accomplished photographer, Bonnie is also responsible for many of the iconic images of BCT properties and landmarks that go into our public messaging. She will continue serving BCT as chairperson of the Land Stewardship committee, while Tino will continue on the Board's Fundraising Committee.

Many Brewster residents will recognize the name of incoming BCT President Charlie Sumner since he long served as Brewster's Town Administrator and continues in the role of Town Moderator. With over eight years as a Trustee, Charlie brings a deep understanding of BCT's priorities, challenges, and opportunities as well as his years of experience in Town government to his position as President.

Seamus Woods, a two-year Trustee and a local small business owner, steps into the VP role with a background in optical engineering and a life-long love of Brewster and its outdoor spaces.

BCT is fortunate to have had the capable leadership provided by Tino and Bonnie and we look forward to the energy, enthusiasm, and talent Charlie and Seamus will bring to the organization.



Bonnie Newman, Seamus Woods

Bird Watching: Trends in the Cape's Bird Populations

Brewster Conservation Trust's Annual Meeting this year was held in splendid sunshine overlooking Cape Cod Bay from a terrace at Ocean Edge Resort. And yet, everybody agreed, it was for the birds.



Or about the birds, to be more accurate. Mark Faherty, Science Coordinator at Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary, delivered the address. Mark's birding expertise along with his enthusiastic voice were immediately familiar to many in the audience from his Weekly Bird Report and Bird News spots heard locally on WCAI.

Mark opened his presentation, "The Cape's Bird Population Changes Through Time: Winners, Losers and Future Predictions", with sobering news: the stunning

estimate from Mass Audubon's State of the Birds report that nearly 3 billion birds have been lost since 1970. He explained that while some species have gained, this represents an overall 27%-30% loss in bird populations. The main drivers of change are habitat change, climate change, new predators, and chemicals affecting bird food sources.



One of the many interesting aspects of Mark's presentation was how these changes interact to favor some bird species and discourage others.

You can view Mark's entire presentation including his many captivating images of the Cape's bird species by going to YouTube-Brewster Conservation Trust.

A United Call: Further Study of the Long Pond Property is Needed

Out of concern for potential negative impacts on our community's water resources, BCT and the Brewster Ponds Coalition recently approved a joint resolution calling for a review and further study of the proposed housing development of the Long Pond property.

In May 2024, Town Meeting approved a plan for the 66-acre former Sea Camps Long Pond property. While that plan protects 55 acres in conservation, it also proposes up to 44 housing units and a wastewater treatment facility be built on the remaining 10 acres that front on Rt. 137. The BCT-BPC joint resolution calls for the Town to conduct a feasibility study to identify the best location(s) for affordable and attainable housing before finalizing plans for the Long Pond parcel.

Additionally, the resolution calls for a second study to ensure current plans will not result in long-term threats to

Brewster's drinking water supply and pond water quality, conditions that if they develop will be difficult and costly to resolve.

The proposed development sits on Brewster's drinking water recharge area (Zone II) and drains into Long Pond, which is part of the nitrogen sensitive Herring River watershed. The study we have asked Town government, to conduct using the highest standards possible, will investigate treatment options and costs for pollutants including nitrogen, phosphorus and chemicals of emerging concern (such as PFAS) and their potential impacts on our water resources.

We look forward to reviewing the scope of work for this feasibility study and, subsequently, to analyzing its findings. We also urge our members and supporters to closely monitor the planning process for this development.

Writers' Retreat Participants Share Their Stories

The John Hay Writing Studio (JHWS) sits in the trees at one of the highest elevations in Brewster. Once the writing studio of acclaimed nature writer John Hay, it was refurbished this past spring by a crackerjack team of volunteers and opened in June as a daytime retreat for local writers. Over the course of 16 weeks, 14 writers took part in a program to test the feasibility of a long-term writers' retreat in Hay's former studio.

Each writer was given dawn-to-dusk access to the studio and the surrounding acreage of the Hay Conservation Center and its walking trails. Some were authors with multiple publications, while others were first-time manuscript writers. Some wrote fiction, others wrote nonfiction. Poets, some familiar and some just getting started, also participated. What they all shared was an appreciation for the focus and inspiration a quiet week in the woods could offer them.

In proper punctuation of this novel experiment, the writers came together for the first time at an event held at the Brewster Ladies Library in October. Some read from material they created while in residence at the JHWS, while others described their creative process and what the studio experience was like. All expressed gratitude to BCT for launching the program.

Another topic of conversation was what the future holds for the writers' retreat program. BCT plans to apply for grant money to support additional improvements

to the studio to accommodate more writers. Another top priority is finding a partnering organization that will help BCT administer the program in the future. Both writers and audience members contributed ideas, and the evening ended without answers but with an optimistic sense the program will continue. All in all, a fitting conclusion to the continuing legacy of John Hay.



A few of the John Hay Writers and their writers' retreat.

L-R: Al Starkey, Rose Auslander, Anna Babneau,
John Bonani



BCT 2024 Volunteer of the Year: Dan Harkinson

Dan Harkinson was recognized as BCT's Volunteer of the Year at the Volunteer Potluck this past September. Dan was celebrated for his outstanding service and time committed to furthering BCT's mission through stewardship and land monitoring. He set a record for monitoring 25 properties, and he did it with remarkable dedication, providing detailed descriptions and photos of each property. While he's already indicated he'll be back for more monitoring assignments next year, he doesn't stop there. Dan recruited his son to assist in a self-initiated cleanup of a truckload of old milkcrates that had been dumped on a wetland parcel off Lower Road. Through all of his dedication volunteering with BCT, it is obvious that Dan is truly passionate about conservation efforts in Brewster. We are fortunate to have him as a BCT volunteer.



Conservationist of the Year: Pam Sidford Schaeffer

As a young child, **Pam Sidford Schaeffer** walked the Brewster beaches of Cape Cod Bay, beginning a connection that would last a lifetime. "Pam loved Brewster," observed her husband Leonard, after Pam passed away last January. For more than two decades, Pam and her family have made generous annual donations to BCT. Recently the family also made a major gift to support BCT's contribution to the Town's purchase of the Long Pond property and to protect the conservation values of the Bay property. At the BCT Annual Meeting, Pam and the Schaeffer family received the Conservationist of the Year award for their sustained support for BCT and for supporting the public use of former sea camp properties. In addition to the award certificate, BCT honored the family with a plaque on a bench in the Outdoor Classroom at the Eddy Sisters property on Lower Road.




Not Your Average Volunteer: Caden Halberg

Caden Halberg is not the typical college student who spends his summers on Cape Cod. To begin with, he's not much of a beach guy. Caden would rather spend his free time volunteering in a conservation capacity, and BCT was fortunate to harness his energy, enthusiasm and time for a second summer in 2024. He enjoys reading and his favorite book is *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

Caden attends Elon University in North Carolina during the school year studying Environmental Science and Professional Writing. He lives in Elon's new Eco-village, which is a community that is located off-campus near a farm owned by the college. This connection allows the students at the Ecovillage to work on and take food from the farm. In the summer he heads to the Cape to spend time with his grandfather, long-time BCT Trustee Peter Johnson.

**Brewster Ladies Library
Discovery & Enrichment
BCT Winter Series**



**AT THE
CROSSROADS:
BREWSTER'S
ENVIRONMENTAL
CHALLENGES**

Jan. 15	Coastal Erosion
Feb. 15	Water Quality
Mar. 26	Trees & Forests

Winter with Brewster Ladies' Library

We recently sat down with Susan Rice, a member of the Brewster Ladies' Library Association Discovery and Enrichment committee. What started as a meeting to plan one afternoon program on a pressing environmental issue turned into a brainstorming session that ended up with a three-part series, each on a different aspect of environmental stewardship and resilience. The first will be on Wed., Jan. 15, 2025, and will discuss coastal erosion after the showing of the documentary *No Refuge: The Cape's Coastal Crisis*, which played this summer at the Orpheum Theatre in Chatham. Filmmakers Tim Wood and Jan Crocker will moderate a discussion by specialists who will address how the issue is affecting Brewster.

On Feb. 15, the program will address water quality in Brewster's ponds, groundwater and bays. On Mar. 26, the session will examine the Cape's evolving relationship with trees and forests and how trees impact our environmental wellbeing and sustainability. All programs begin at 2:00 pm. For more information, visit the Brewster Ladies' Library website.

Remembering Nature Writer Robert Finch, 1943-2024



Author, teacher, newspaper and radio essayist, conservationist, Robert Finch died on Monday, September 30. In 1986 he was named Conservationist of the Year by the Brewster Conservation Trust for his work with the Conservation Commission and the Land Acquisition Committee of Brewster. The following tribute comes from someone who knew him well.

Bob Finch identified as a writer. He delighted to create and share, the perfect word, the perfect sentence, the perfect mood or idea. He could make you share his fear of being lost in the dark of a small patch of trees that he knew well in the daylight. He could transport you to the dunes when he described the perfect circle traced by a blade of beach grass.

His legacy in Brewster will be as long lasting as the appreciation of his words. He served on the Zoning Board of

Appeals and the Conservation Commission and helped create the Town's Land Acquisition Committee where he served as its inspiration, chief researcher, and co-chair. It was because of his persistence and patience that we have in East Brewster Spruce Hill and the kernel of what has become the Baker's Pond Conservation Area that spans the Brewster-Orleans line. In West Brewster he discovered the land that is now Belmont Park, a community of affordable housing where folks who live and volunteer make Brewster a better place. His most notable achievement was to provide Town Meeting with the inspiration to create The Punkhorn, now Punkhorn Parklands, the place we all love to go, to be away, to exercise with or without dogs, to appreciate nature, and get lost.

The *Boston Globe Sunday Magazine* wrote a cover article about Bob's achievements with a large photo that they titled, "The Man Who Saved Brewster." A fan from out of town good-naturedly wrote to Bob in an envelope addressed only to "The Man Who Saved Brewster."

The envelope was delivered.

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.



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

Capt. Tony Biski
Foster Lott & Katharine Alter
Frederick Budreski
Peter Johnson
Meghan Taylor
Murva Deneen
Donald Deneen
Carroll Johnson
Jane Johnson
Eleanor Johnson
Charles Frazier
Rev. Richard N. Johnson
Christine Johnson

Wilbur "John" Johnson
Lucy Duffy
Lisa Francescon
GreenBelt
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Charles Mitchell
Sally J. Mitchell
Mary Mooney
John & Lisa McDonald
Brian & Rosemary Mooney
Maja & Werner Plaut
Jeffrey & Ellen Plaut
Paul & Dorothy Tivnan
Patricia & John Testarmata
J. Philip Wise
Cobbs Pond Condominium
Trust
Sheila E. Wynne
Patricia Fortier

In Honor of

Amy Chesnut
Robert Jonas
The Henderson & Alvarado Families
Mary Henderson
Peter Johnson
Elliott & Susan Carr
Nancy Ortiz
Dr. Calvin Mutti
Sally & Bob Bullard
Donna Smith
Elliott & Susan Carr
Dirkie Van Antwerp
Sanford & Madeline Zevon

Brewster Conservation Trust

508-694-6720

BCT@brewsterconservationtrust.org

www.brewsterconservationtrust.org

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

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Brewster Conservation Trust

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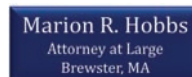
Brockton, MA

Flying High: Tips to Keep Birds Soaring

- **Keep cats indoors.** The American Bird Conservancy says that in the United States alone, outdoor cats kill approximately 2.4 billion birds every year.
- **Make windows safer for birds.** They perceive reflections in glass as a habitat they can fly into. Experts recommend installing screens or using film/paint to break up reflections. All About Birds has several examples.
- **Plan and maintain your yard naturally.** Grow native plants that support birds with food: fruit, seeds, and insects. Leave fallen leaves on the ground to support overwintering insects and invertebrates. And avoid using pesticides and fungicides.
- **Retain oak trees.** Oaks are a keystone species that support over 535 species of caterpillars that are crucial bird food.
- **Preserve standing dead trees** that provide an insect food source and sometimes a nesting site for cavity dwelling birds, such as screech owls, flickers, and woodpeckers.
- **Reduce your contribution to light pollution.** Lighting should be directed downward, or better yet, go dark—especially during migration right now. Going dark is good for lots of critters, including your neighbors.

Thank you to these businesses that support BCT

CONSERVATION HEROES



CONSERVATION PARTNERS



Learn about our Business Partnership Program!

Contact Amy Henderson at
amy@brewsterconservationtrust.org