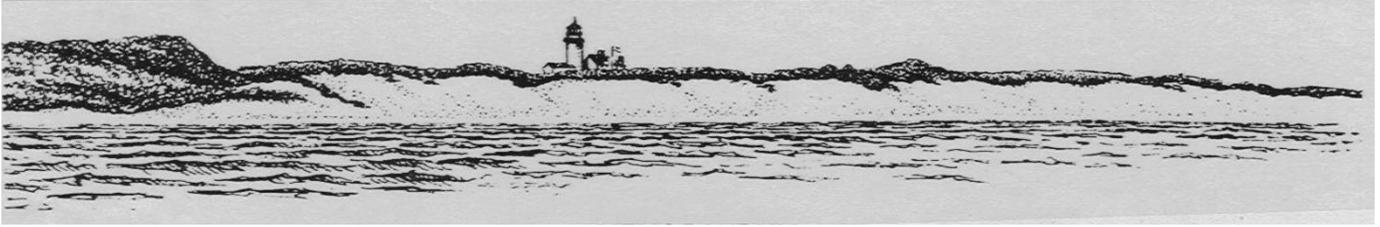


TRURO CONSERVATION TRUST



Volume 9 No. 1

NEWSLETTER

June 10, 2009

Trails and Benches

Dalsheimer

The Trust's Stewardship Program encourages public access to conservation land owned by us. We recently installed two simple benches at the Dalsheimer property located off Great Hills Road. The benches were purchased from Mike Locke, carpenter for the Truro Department of Public Works, who built and installed them. We hope the public will enjoy them and their surroundings all year long.

This trail can be accessed by parking at the Fisher Beach town parking lot and walking down Great Hills Road – a private road. Please be respectful of the local residents' quiet and privacy.



Gaechter

Goldstein

The Trust recently acquired, by private donation from Leonard & Diane Goldstein, a 2.61 acre parcel of land just off Ryder Beach Road, abut-



Gaechter

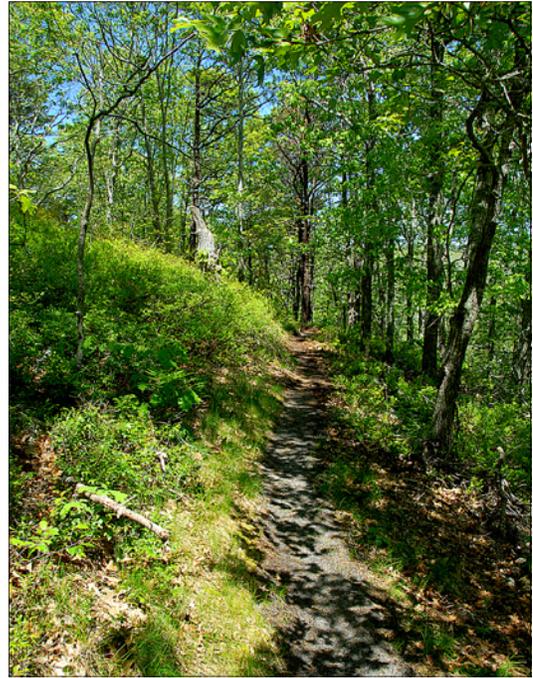
ting the old railroad bed. In late May, the Trust used the AmeriCorps volunteers to clear a trail to a high point on the property. The short path follows a longstanding deer trail to a spot with spectacular views across heath lands to Cape Cod Bay. We have placed a simple bench here so the public can enjoy another place to appreciate where we live. From this vantage you might think the peepers in neighboring swamps will drive you deaf in early spring, but they won't. Right now, in the evening, the gentle croaking of bull frogs might lull you to sleep as the sun sets over the Bay, except for when you might hear the yipping of coyotes. You can access the trail by walking in from Ryder Beach Road along the old railroad bed. Keep your eyes to the right where you will see the trail a few hundred feet in from Ryder Beach Road on which there is no designated parking, but you can figure out where to park without being in the way.

more →

Trails and Benches—Continued

Keezer

The Keezer property on Francis Farm Road has been in Trust hands since it was purchased in 1997, with private donations from neighbors, and with an especially large donation from Berthe Ladd, on behalf of the Keezer family. A long trail exists across this property from Francis Farm Road to Hatch's Road. Along the trail are three benches and a memorial plaque honoring Anne & Dexter Keezer. AmeriCorps also cleared a major portion of the Keezer trail from Francis Farm Road to the site of the plaque. There is a fenced parking area on Francis Farm Road, about 250 feet before the trailhead. This is a heavily wooded area and is magnificent when fall colors paint the surrounding area.



Gaechter

Save the Date:

The Truro Conservation Trust Annual Meeting

Join your friends and neighbors for the traditional gathering
Thursday, August 13th at 4:00 p.m. at the Pamet Harbor Yacht Club

Orgy In The Sand

Now that I have your attention, let's remember the central mission of TCT: Preserve the rural character of Truro by acquiring or protecting undeveloped land--more about the orgy later.

This mission also helps to create habitat for the wild animals and plants. From time to time this newsletter will focus on some of these organisms that our work benefits, even if indirectly. The focus here will be on an animal deserving more of the public's attention and concern than it now gets. TCT owns little land directly on the bay that is habitat for the horseshoe crab, but we all need to be advocates for this threatened creature. It plays a direct role in your and my daily health.

Ever heard the expression about someone being so ugly that he or she is beautiful? This description fits the horseshoe crab to a tee. Upright, this 300 million year old, primordial animal could also resemble a spaceship or Darth Vader's helmet. Last summer I came across a group of tourists new to the Cape trying to turn over a horseshoe crab, afraid they might be hurt by it. One rarely sees dead or living horseshoe crabs on the beach nowadays. What the tourists were afraid of was one of the 18 shells molted by the animal until it becomes a sexually mature adult in the tenth year of its 15 to 20 year life-span. But even when alive the horseshoe crab is not dangerous.

The deadly looking tail is used primarily as a rudder on the floor of the bay, or to turn the animal right side up should a wave cause it to land on its back. Once the tourists turned the shell over, they recoiled in horror at its underbelly, for the horseshoe crab really isn't a crab. Upside down it looks more like a spider or a scorpion, to which it is related. "Horseshoe" is descriptive. "Crab" is simply a misnomer.

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Orgy In The Sand—Continued

What those tourists didn't realize is that their health is protected by a horseshoe crab blood product, *Limulus ameboycte lysate* (LAL), and this is only one reason this animal is so wonderful and important. Except for penicillin, it may do more for human health than any other organism on the planet. Back in the 1950's it was discovered that horseshoe crab blood has an unusual clotting agent that can detect toxic bacteria in pharmaceutical products like vaccines. If you've had a flu shot, the purity of that vaccine was tested with LAL, a product now used world wide.

Needless to say, the demand for horseshoe crab blood has increased significantly, but the animal doesn't have to be killed to get this precious stuff. All the crabs caught for their LAL are returned to the water alive after extracting some of their blue, copper based blood, and some 85% to 90% survive. The returned crabs might possibly donate blood again--well, donate is the wrong word. More importantly, those returned may breed more horseshoe crabs.

So, why are these animals' numbers declining if use of their blood isn't killing all that many? You may be part of the problem if you eat eel or conch sushi. Horseshoe crab bait is a delicacy these animals can't resist in a fisherman's trap. Actually, most of the eel and conch caught are shipped abroad. In 2007, \$2.3 million worth of conch (New England Whelk) was caught in Massachusetts waters. Who knew?



Averback

No one really knows how many horseshoe crabs there are. They are found only in two areas of the world: Asia where they are possibly near extinction; and along the Atlantic seaboard. Massachusetts is near the end of their northern range. Projects to count the population are underway. You can volunteer with the Audubon's Wellfleet sanctuary to count horseshoe crabs in May and June of each year. Locally, horseshoe crabs are most easily found on Monomoy (where they are protected), in Pleasant Bay and in Wellfleet Harbor. They have been seen at Corn Hill Beach, Mill Pond and in Truro harbor where they are being tagged to see what they are up to from year to year.

This year, the state was concerned enough to lower the allowable catch for bait by half, to 165,000. Anecdotal evidence indicates that years ago in the spring spawning season it was difficult to walk among the mating animals on some beaches.

Finally, we have arrived at the orgy!

Each spring during May and June, preferably under a full moon when the tide is highest, the female horseshoe crab crawls up to the high tide line to lay her eggs in the sand. The males who are much smaller than the female will use special claws to grab onto her shell. She may have several males attached to or surrounding her, which makes for good cross fertilization for the 100,000 eggs she may lay during this period. So perhaps this saga of the horseshoe crab doesn't end so much in an orgy as in a love story. After all, what could be more romantic than coupling on the shores of Cape Cod Bay under a full moon in June? Patty Page would have understood.

Truro Turns 300

The Truro Tercentennial Committee has completed construction of the “*Truro 300 Commemorative Circle*,” which was dedicated on May third. The Circle sits between the library and the new Community Center. Ed Yaconetti, a Trust member, designed the circle. Please visit! It is a wonderful site with great historical context.

Three tall American Holly trees (see photo) have been planted, one for each century of Truro’s incorporation. The American Holly is an indigenous species to the Cape, but its numbers have declined, particularly on the Outer Cape. We felt it appropriate for the Trust to purchase and plant one of these trees to reestablish their presence. A plaque, memorializing your Trust’s donation will be placed by one of the three trees.

The Truro Conservation Trust

Preserving Truro for Generations to Come

The trustees:

John Marksbury, chair,
Fred Gaechter, vice-chair and treasurer,
Robert Bednarek, secretary and clerk
Betsey Brown, Carol Green,
Tony Hodgin, Larry Lown,
John Pendleton, Joel Searcy,
Phil Smith, Bill Worthington

To learn more about the work and workings of the TCT, visit at our website, www.truroconservationtrust.org



Gaechter

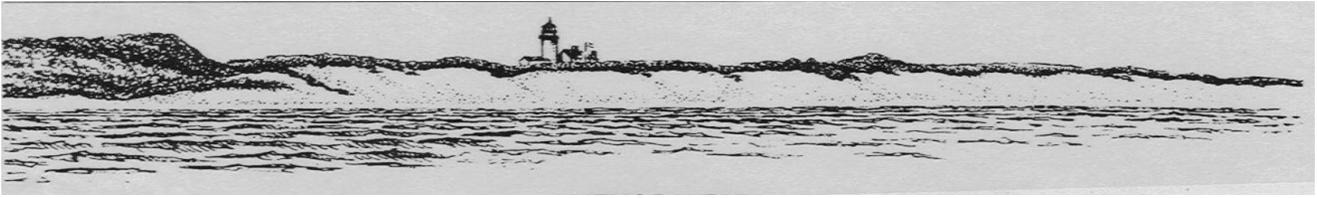
Stewardship Fund Expenses

Our Stewardship Fund is used primarily for property maintenance and property protection. The Dr. Willie and Gloria Cater litigation is an example of a “protection” expense. The Trust is a defendant in litigation asking us and several of our neighbors to provide an easement across our and their property for access to “landlocked” land purchased years ago in the “Hopper Landscape.” The owners sought relief in Land Court which has ruled that they, indeed, have an inherent right to access at the expense of neighboring property owners who must provide easements across their properties. The second phase of the litigation has just ended and the judge will now determine where, and what type of access will be authorized; i.e., either a driveway for a single family dwelling or a much wider road for a two-lot subdivision. Either way, part of the access will be across our land, and will be destructive. The amount of damage will depend on the route of access and whether a driveway or a roadway will be allowed. The Trust’s land was purchased in a fundraising campaign by area neighbors, and donated to the Trust to be protected in perpetuity.

We are currently filing a brief for a set of concessions to minimize the damage. We will not have a judgment until late summer or fall. Our legal fees for this issue over the past 10 years have exceeded \$57,000. The funding of this defense has come from our Stewardship Fund which is being depleted rapidly by this litigation. We must replenish this Fund to perform proper maintenance activities on our other 300+ acres.

Such cases have become more common in the life of many Conservation Trusts.

THE TRURO CONSERVATION TRUST



Preserving Truro for Generations to Come

A Letter from the Chair

Dear Friend of the Trust,

What makes Truro special? There are great stretches of wildland sheltering a variety of plant and animal life; sandy bay and ocean beaches, salt marshes, ponds, heathlands, dramatic headlands offering majestic views and even a “sourceless” river. In fact, much remains of the Truro character immortalized by Thoreau over 150 years ago.

Since 1981, The Truro Conservation Trust has been working with landowners, neighborhoods, the Town citizens and their agencies, Cape conservation organizations and the National Seashore to protect land that contributes to the specialness of Truro. The Trust plays an important role in maintaining our community and its quality of life where growth and development are balanced by land conservation.

The some 300 acres we preserve in perpetuity are places that

- Protect habitat for plants and animals
- Provide passive recreational opportunities for walks, bird watching, enjoying the views
- Contribute to the coastal ecosystem where wetlands protection controls flooding, nourishes shellfish and other marine creatures important to the chain of life.

Also what makes Truro special, and our organization blessed, is our people. It is friends like you who care enough for Truro’s beauty that you contribute to The Truro Conservation Trust. These are times that are forcing so many of us to make difficult choices, and we hope that you will continue to make the Trust a priority based on what our work means to the town and to you personally.

As this newsletter records, much of our attention and resources last year and this are being devoted to the stewardship of existing properties; wherever appropriate installing benches and trails and clearing growth to open views. Some of this attention, unfortunately, must be devoted to protecting properties from encroachment and heedless intrusion. All of this costs money and that is why two years ago we established a special Stewardship Fund to provide a designated source of ready funds to undertake major initiatives to enhance or defend the character of our properties.

Please support this fund or make an unrestricted gift to the Trust, as generously as you can. After four years as your chair, I am stepping down from this role though I look forward to remaining on the Board. It has been a great privilege and pleasure to serve the Trust in this capacity, especially during the Board’s transition into an all-volunteer body, members of which serve without remuneration. I am delighted that my friend and colleague, Fred Gaechter, who has served as Vice Chair and Treasurer of the Trust, will now assume the reins.

All best wishes,

John C. Marksbury
Chair

Truro Conservation Trust
P. O. Box 327
North Truro, MA 02652

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Summer Mailing Address
(if different): _____

My check for \$_____ (payable to the Truro Conservation Trust) is enclosed.

I pledge a contribution of \$_____ to the Truro Conservation Trust, to be paid by _____, 2010.

I wish my contribution applied as Unrestricted Stewardship Fund

Enclosed is my first payment of \$_____.

Please also contact me with more information about how to:

- Volunteer with TCT
- Donate land
- Protect my land with a conservation restriction

Gifts to the Truro Conservation Trust are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.