

TRURO CONSERVATION TRUST



Volume 6 No. 1

NEWSLETTER

June 6, 2006

Poor's Hill: Promises Made, Promises Kept

The Trust's pledge of \$500,000 towards the town's \$2 million purchase of Poor's Hill galvanized Truro's 2005 Annual Town Meeting, helping convince voters to approve the project. It represented the depth of the TCT's commitment to our stewardship mission, and marked a step forward in our ongoing partnership with the town.

Today, little more than a year after the TCT's bold promise, we can see that partnership moving forward, working to open public access to the site. Thanks to the generosity of Trust members, we're paying off our pledge at the same time, raising nearly 90% of the promised \$500,000 in contributions.

Poor's Hill is one of the Outer Cape's natural treasures, the last remaining wild hill on Pamet Harbor. A 3.5 acre "sand dome," it rises 70 feet straight up, offering panoramic vistas across Pamet Harbor, Cape Cod Bay and the National Seashore. Coastland heather blankets the hillside, a dwindling vegetation type once common on the Cape, with low-growing groundcovers like bearberry, lichens and lowbush blueberry growing in the sandy, acidic soil, stunted by the winds whipping off the bay.

Before the purchase, Poor's Hill was slated to be divided into two large house sites. Instead it remains a treasure to be shared by all of us, a symbol of how much a community working together can accomplish.

"The next step forward at Poor's Hill will be a walking trail," according to Truro Open Space Committee Chair and TCT trustee Brenda Boleyn. Design and management are currently being planned by the Open Space Committee, the Truro Conservation Commission, Paul Morris's team at Truro's DPW, and representatives of the Trust.

"It has been a late spring," Boleyn reports, "typical for us on Cape Cod, and worth the wait. The salt marshes are bursting forth with their palette of greens, particularly wrapped around Poor's Hill, Truro's finest display.

"The walking trail will open up that extraordinary spot for public access. It will trace the hill's perimeter, following a route that in earlier times was a wagon path and proprietor's way. Parking will be available on Fisher Road where the walk will begin on Salt Marsh Lane.

"Of simple design, the trail will be level and easy to walk. Three benches are planned, to be located at different viewpoints across the marsh. One of them is to be placed overlooking the site of the wreck of the *Helen*, an old trap boat that found its final resting place at the foot of Poor's Hill. We look forward to a history and explanation display of some sort at that spot.

"Also, presently in draft form, is a conservation restriction for the property, which will dovetail with a management plan; together these documents will set forth the means by which this extraordinary glacial dome and its rare heathland habitat will be protected into the future.

"In the fall, we may be looking for volunteers for a work party, so stay tuned!"

POOR'S HILL FUND-RAISING NEARS ITS GOAL

The TCT pledged its future for Poor's Hill last October, borrowing \$272,000 in order to make the promised \$500,000 payment to the Town. But today, little more than six months since that payment was made, the Trust is close to being able to repay its debt, thanks to the ongoing generosity of its members.

"News on the Poor's Hill fundraising front continues to be good," reports Ansel Chaplin, TCT's fund-raising chair for the project.

"As of May 1, we had raised \$377,000 in contributions and \$76,000 in outstanding pledges. The total of \$453,000 means we have reached 90.6% of our \$500,000 goal. Thus, there is good reason to hope that the initial phase of the campaign can be concluded in this calendar year. It will take additional time to collect all of the pledges, some of which run until December 31, 2008, but, if the past is any guide, defaults will be extremely rare.

"Thanks are due to the almost 450 Trust members who have so generously supported the Poor's Hill acquisition. Because of their contributions, only \$80,000 of the Trust's outstanding Poor's Hill loan remains to be discharged. In addition the Trust needs to repay the \$50,000 borrowed from the TCT endowment account."

Meeting the Future: The Trust Reorganizes

The challenges for the Truro Conservation Trust have never been more demanding. Development continues to accelerate, threatening the open space and rural character we treasure, while soaring land costs make conventional land purchase strategies ever more difficult.

The reorganization of the TCT, completed last February, was designed to help us meet those challenges, creating a new organizational structure, revised bylaws and procedures, and expanded board of directors that promises to generate new energy and ideas.

Executive and administrative authority have been shifted from a paid administrative trustee to the elected officers of the board of directors. John C. Marksbury will serve as Chair for the next year, with Brenda Boleyn, Vice Chair; Fred Gaechter, Treasurer; and Robert Bednarek, Secretary. All serve as unpaid volunteers.

Adding 3 new members to the board brings an expanded range of skills to TCT leadership, while the new organizational structure increases participation, collaboration, and transparency. The changes bring TCT's mode of operation into line with our sister land trusts on Cape Cod, too, and into conformity with the Land Trust Alliance, a national service organization.

After 8 years of distinguished service as administrative trustee, founding TCT Trustee Ansel Chaplin was named trustee emeritus. He continues to serve as chair of the Poor's Hill fund raising effort and to offer counsel to the board on an as needed basis.

Newly elected TCT Chair John Marksbury has served as a Trustee for the past five years. A fundraiser in Boston, he served as a member of the Committee for Truro Town Hall; along with his partner, Chuck Steinman, he led the effort to acquire the former Watts Service Station site as a park.

Vice chair Brenda Boleyn is one of three newly elected TCT board members. As chair of Truro's Open Space Committee, she led the campaign to purchase Poor's Hill, and currently serves on the Advisory Commission for the Cape Cod National Seashore. An educator and naturalist, she is an authority on the horseshoe crab and Truro's recognized expert on ticks.

Treasurer Fred Gaechter, a 3-year member of the TCT board, is in his third year as chair of the Truro Board of Selectmen and Board liaison to the Open Space Committee. He is also a Cape landscape and nature photographer and a singer in the Outer Cape Chorale.

Secretary Bob Bednarek is a 31-year Truro resident and a 10-year member of the TCT Board. A retired architect from Cambridge, he serves as Secretary of the Truro Conservation Commission. He lives at Blossom Hill, the 10-acre woodland property formerly owned by the late TCT founder Dr. Charles Davidson, and now owned by the Tryst.

Two additional new trustees were added to the board, joining founding trustee Betsey Brown, 10-year TCT board veteran Carol Green, and 3-year TCT board veteran Howard Irwin. Curtis Hartman, elected to the Truro Board of Selectmen in May, served as chair and lead author of the town's Local Comprehensive Plan and as chair of the town's Community Preservation Committee. Joel Searcy, also named a Trustee in February, served as Chairman of the Truro Finance Committee where he remains a member, and also serves on the Community Center Building Committee.

The Trust's revised bylaws are available to members upon request.

Annual Meeting and 25th Anniversary Kick Off

Save this date: the annual meeting of the Truro Conservation Trust will be held Thursday, August 24th at 4:30 pm at Carol Green's home on High Ridge Road Extension in North Truro.

Come celebrate community. We'll mix a few brief remarks on the past year with the chance to reconnect with friends and neighbors.

Sunshine is almost guaranteed, along with food, drink, and a long view over the little Pamet Valley.

This year's meeting will have an added purpose, however. It will mark the kick off of the 25th anniversary of the Trust, a celebration currently in the early planning stages.

We know the anniversary festivities will have three parts -- education, celebration, and outreach. But everything else is up for grabs. The Anniversary committee is actively looking for volunteers to help make the plans, then to make them happen.

The centerpiece of the education component, for example, might be a "Discover the Trust" program, a tour of key TCT parcels over a long fall weekend. We'll want to do something with Truro Central School, perhaps an art contest, or an essay award, or both. Add a forum for planners and conservationists as well, perhaps a day-long conference on the critical issues facing the Cape Cod National Seashore in the decade ahead.

The details of how and when have yet to be decided.

There is certain to be a party, as well. Probably some sort of benefit. But here, too, the details have yet to be set.

We hope to upgrade our communications over the Trust's anniversary year, too, with an improved newsletter, a website, and closer and more frequent contact with members. The next step is to figure out how to make it happen.

Any of these projects sound interesting? Email Curtis Hartman to lend a hand or for more information, at curtis@hartmanpartners.com.

Call to Action: North of Highland Campground

Can the North of Highland Campground be preserved? This 57-acre property located off Head of the Meadow Road would be a developer's dream -- and could soon be put up for sale as 3-acre house lots within the Cape Cod National Seashore unless The Trust for Public Land receives the \$6.1M appropriation necessary to acquire this land for the Park.

Saving the campground, arguably the finest on the lower Cape, would keep affordable family camping available in Truro. It would help preserve Truro's rural character, too, protecting fragile wetland and limiting the spread of mansionization inside the Cape Cod National Seashore.

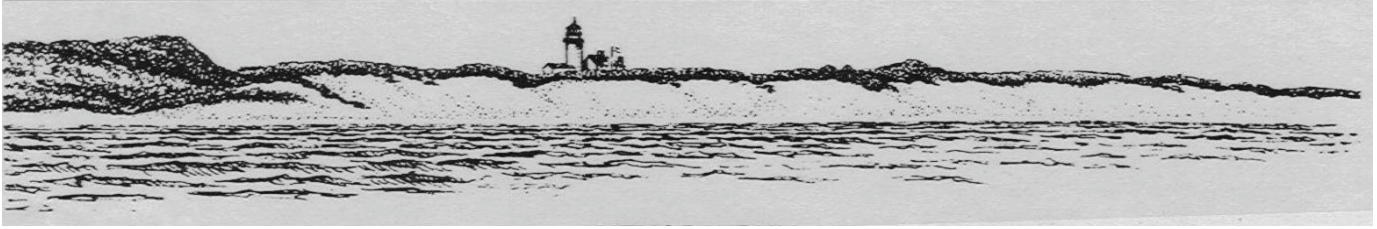
You can help. Let your elected representatives know with a phone call, email, or letter that you support the North of Highland Campground appropriation.

Our campgrounds are a shrinking and increasingly precious asset. Once they are lost to development, they are lost forever -- and all of us pay the cost.

For further information, contact TCT trustee Brenda Boleyn at 508-487-4794, or truro-dune@comcast.net.



THE TRURO CONSERVATION TRUST



A Letter from the Chair

June 2006

Dear Fellow Member of the Trust,

This summer at our annual meeting the Truro Conservation Trust will begin a year-long celebration of our founding in December of 1981, when a group of dedicated and farsighted neighbors came together with a shared commitment to conserving Truro's extraordinary natural beauty and rural character.

Our anniversary marks a chance to look back, honoring 25 years of accomplishment by Cape Cod's first land trust. More importantly, however, it is a chance to look forward, to consider the many ways we can continue to fulfill our mission. In the process, we hope to involve Truro citizens young and old, make many new friends, and bring the entire community into a discussion of our role as stewards for preserving important pieces of Truro's open space and the Town's unique character as the Cape's smallest and most protected community.

The last twelve months have been among the most successful in Trust history, as the enclosed newsletter reports. It highlights the progress of the partnership between the Town of Truro and the TCT to protect Poor's Hill. It describes our new governing structure, as well, and asks for your help in urging federal officials to purchase a Cape Cod National Seashore holding of critical recreational and open space value.

Much of the credit for the last twelve months must go to the Trust's many members and volunteers. You are the source of the energy behind the continual renewal that has kept the Trust vital and focused on our mission. For that, we thank you.

Over the past 25 years Trust members have shown consistent generosity, particularly when confronted by fiscal challenges like the Trust's \$500,000 Poor's Hill pledge. This summer, as we move closer to the beginning of our anniversary celebration, we ask you to be generous again, making the Trust one of the priorities of your giving this year.

We critically need to complete our Poor's Hill fund-raising challenge. Those of you fulfilling pledges made to the purchase of Poor's Hill will receive gift payment reminders based on the time of your commitment last year. We ask for additional help from those of you who haven't given yet, or who can find a bit more.

In addition our funding for the on-going operating activities of the Trust is running low. Property liability insurance, legal fees related to land acquisition, mailing costs, auditor's fees, membership in the Compact of Cape Cod Land Trusts, and other necessary expenses quickly add up. Without on-going unrestricted support we simply could not continue the Trust's work.

So please be as generous as you can: help us fulfill our stewardship mission. You have my deepest thanks, and the thanks of your neighbors.

Yours,

John C. Marksbury

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.

Please use my gift as follows:

Unrestricted, where needed most

Poor's Hill

I wish to make a pledge to Poor's Hill in the amount of \$_____ payable in the following installments:

_____ 2006

_____ 2007

_____ 2008

Enclosed is my first payment of \$_____.

(Reminders will be sent on the annual anniversary of the initial payment).

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.

Truro Conservation Trust
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North Truro, MA 02652

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City/State/Zip: _____
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