



30th Year NEWSLETTER

June 2012

Truro Conservation Trust, P.O. Box 327, North Truro, MA 02652-0327

www.TruroConservationTrust.org

SAVE THE DATE:

**TUESDAY AUGUST 7TH
AT 5:30 PM**

**AT THE HIGHLAND HOUSE MUSEUM
COME CELEBRATE 30 YEARS OF LAND
CONSERVATION AND OUR BIRTHDAY AT
OUR ANNUAL MEETING
held jointly with
The Compact of Cape Cod
Conservation Trusts**

FOOD AND LIBATION PROVIDED

30 YEARS OLD AND STILL GROWING!

When is an organization born—when is its birthday? The Trust acquired its first piece of open space in 1982, which seems like a good event to mark our birth even though the genesis began before this date. A 30 year birthday seemed a good time to recount our history, especially since memories fade with time. Based on a smattering of written records along with help from some senior members, this article will try to tell part of the story of how your trust got from 1982 to now. It's a story about people and land, a story about individuals who realized they lived in a special place that would remain special only if they helped protect it.

Dr. Charles Davidson and Ansel Chaplin were the two moving forces in founding the Trust, who, like so many who have either given land to, or served on the Trust, started coming to Truro as part-time residents. Davidson was a doctor who came down from Cambridge in 1957 to find a weekend place. According to his partner Bob Bednareck, who is a current trustee, Davidson looked at several Cape towns before realizing Truro was where he wanted to be, and where he purchased 10 acres for five thousand dollars. All of that land will one day come to the Trust.

Ansel Chaplin's roots in Truro go back to 1911, when his grandmother bought a house on Depot Road after summering in Truro for several years with her five children. Ansel still owns that house and has provided several parcels of land to the Trust, mostly along the Pamet River.

Chaplin became chairman of the board of trustees at some point during the Trust's first 25 years. Initially the Trust didn't want a hierarchical organization. Eventually though, a leader was necessary and Chaplin became Chairman and didn't retire until the Trust's twenty-fifth anniversary. He was followed by John Marksbury, and then Fred Gaechter who took over leadership three years ago. Two of the original trustees are still on the board: Bob Bednaek and Betsey Brown. She and her husband gave land to the Trust before Betsey moved to Orleans from where she commutes every month to serve as a trustee. Chaplin is a trustee emeritus.

It was out of desperation that Davidson approached

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Chaplin about forming a conservation trust back around 1980, after the Truro town meeting rejected a bequest to the town of 2.4 acres overlooking Mill Pond. Why? There was a fear that accepting donated land would deprive the town of tax revenue, not to mention the cost of lawyers to accomplish the transfer. Davidson, Chaplin and other conservationists in town realized how valuable gifted land might be to keeping Truro the most rural town on the Cape. A conservation trust would be the easiest way for accepting and preserving land, and would also provide a depository for gifts of money to purchase and preserve open space in Truro.

Back then, only Provincetown, Eastham and Orleans had land trusts on the Lower Cape, but within years there were six, which is when The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts was organized, at Chaplin's urging, to help trusts preserve open space. Now, the Compact works with 22 trusts and watershed associations to purchase and manage open space. Mark Robinson has been Executive Director since the Compact's founding in 1986. He got his early training under Chaplin's and Davidson's tutelage as a consultant to our Trust. His and the Compact's assistance is invaluable in every land purchase and every conservation restriction the Trust undertakes.

The Trust's first piece of property was a gift from Dorothy Cook in 1982, comprising .56 acres, half wetland and half upland, located on Pond Road, just up from Pilgrim Pond where Myles Standish and 15 other sailors from the Mayflower camped for their second night on American soil. In 1992 she gave an additional 7.17 acres to the Trust. Since

its beginning, the Trust has come to own land or manage conservation restrictions on about 100 differently designated pieces of property of varying sizes. Some are small jewels on which your Trust is building trails and benches. Some are large and spectacular. Amongst the larger, accessible crown jewels are four significant accumulations of open land that are remarkable for their undeveloped and publicly accessible contribution to the serene beauty that is Truro:

(1) The Trust's first major preservation effort was the 22 acre, \$3 million purchase in 1986 of what is known as High Head. This is the land off to your left of Route 6 just before you descend to Pilgrim Lake on your way to Provincetown. There are parking and trails to walk where you can see the bay, P-town, and its harbor framed by the "Monopoly houses" along Route 6A. Now imagine not being able to see this tableau. Instead, you see a large concrete, noise-barrier wall behind which sits a subdivision of trophy homes. That was the plan for this land before the Trust engineered its purchase. And *engineered* is the right word here because, of course, the Trust has never had that kind of money to purchase land. But largely under the guidance of Ansel Chaplin and others (see the adjacent cartoon), the Trust agreed to buy the land if the owner(s) gave the Trust a year to raise the money. This was risky, but for the first time on the Cape, a conservation trust used a combination of federal, state and non-profit funds to buy property for open space. Nowadays, this kind of funding is old hat. (see art cartoon from that period for persons who made it happen)

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The Truro Conservation Trust

Preserving Truro for Generations to Come

The Trustees:

Fred Gaechter, chair

Phil Smith, vice-chair and treasurer

Robert Bednarek, secretary and clerk

Betsey Brown, Carol Green, Tony Hodgins,

Larry Lown, John Pendleton, Amanda Reed,

Robin Robertson, Irma Ruckstuhl,

Bill Worthington

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

Out and about? Use this QR code on your mobile device to see a list of all 300 Trust landholdings; see stunning color photos of some Trust properties; see past newsletters; and see much more.



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This Newsletter is largely in celebration of the Truro Conservation Trust's Thirtieth Anniversary. It was 30 years ago that our founding members had the vision to embark on a journey to preserve the natural beauty of our magnificent environment for all to enjoy for the infinite future. The current Trustees are honored to carry on that tradition and we hope that you who are our members, supporters, and neighbors will help us celebrate this landmark year.

First, please enjoy the article on the history of your Trust. The Trustees thank all who contributed to this article, and we thank all who have contributed to our success over the last thirty years. Second, please join us at a celebratory Annual Membership Event to be held at the Truro Historical Society's Highland Museum – what better place to celebrate the Trust's history? The celebration will be on Tuesday, August 7, 2012, from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM. In honor of this event, we have invited the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts ("The Compact") to help us celebrate by holding their Annual Meeting jointly with us. So, please, come help us celebrate our successes and hear about the many Cape-wide successes of the Compact, as presented by its Executive Director – Mark Robinson.

As you can see in the article written on stewardship, the protection and preservation of all the land under our stewardship (currently 317 acres) continues to be a major Trust goal and a focus of our work effort on your behalf. In that regard, at Truro's Annual Town Meeting this year, the citizens of Truro voted unanimously to transfer stewardship of four Town-owned conservation properties to your Truro Conservation Trust. We will report more on this groundbreaking cooperative effort between the Town and the Trust in our next Newsletter.

We continue to work to acquire new land for conservation. Two parcels of land, one over an acre and one over four acres, are in the process of been donated to the Trust for protection in perpetuity. They are magnificent parcels in very sensitive areas and we will report to you the specifics of these generous donations in our next Newsletter. We hope that some of you will also consider donating land to the Trust for conservation in perpetuity, particularly in the context of current State and Federal tax credit programs (see related box in this Newsletter).

As usual, on behalf of our Trustees, all of our members, the people, and the wildlife of Truro, I once again thank each of you for your support of our mission and efforts. We are encouraged by your correspondence and generous financial support. I look forward to talking with you at our Annual Meeting.

Fred Gaechter
Chairman



LtoR back row: Mark Robinson, Dr. Graham Giese (Center for Coastal Studies), Dr. Charles Davidson, Joel Lerner (of the State's Environmental Affairs office), Ansel Chaplin, Richard LeBlond (a botanist at the Center for Coastal Studies and Pres. of the Provincetown Cons. Trust), and Jack Clarke (of Mass. Coastal Zone Management). (Cartoon a gift to the Trust courtesy of Bob and Joan Holt)

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(2) A second valued collection of protected property rests around Fisher Beach and includes some very spectacular open space along the beach, the harbor and the Pamet. There are more than 20 acres of land preserved in this area, parts of which have trails and benches that give the visitor some of the best views of the bay, the harbor, the river, and of Provincetown. This land was accumulated over the years through generous gifts and conservation restrictions given by the Dalsheimer, Moriarity, Kava, and Grossberg families.

(3) Poor's Hill is an important property your Trust was instrumental in acquiring for the town of Truro in 2006 by agreeing to raise \$500,000 of its \$2 million purchase price. It is significant not for its 3.5 acre size but for what it is---a "salt dome," a 70 foot high hill overlooking Pamet Harbor that is covered with bearberry, blueberry and even some rare broom crowberry. This land was slated to become two building lots if the town and the

Trust had not joined efforts to save it. The Trust built a trail for public access, and there are even two designated parking places on Fisher Beach Road, all of which are clearly signed.

(4) What has become known as the Hopper landscape has been partially preserved through the almost 25 acres of land owned by the Trust and/or through conservation restrictions held by the Trust. All of this Bay front heathland and dunes is located along Cape Cod Bay between Ryder and Fisher Beaches. The Schiffenhaus family conservation restriction preserves the land where the famed painter Edward Hopper's house is located. The Kline Trust restriction preserves some of the heathland surrounding that family's house. Other pieces of land in this area have been preserved through the generosity of the Callendar, Dikeman and Thornley families.

According to the Census Bureau, there are 13,440 acres of land in Truro, not including bodies of water. Of that, 8,877 acres are inside the National Seashore. The Trust has preserved over 300 acres of land almost entirely outside the National Seashore either through legacies, acquisitions or conservation restrictions. That translates into 6.5% of Truro's land outside the National Seashore. Since that first half-acre gift back in 1982, the Trust has come to own 276 acres of land, and to hold 41 acres through conservation restrictions. That's 317 acres of land preserved as it is forever. Gifts and acquisitions of land are becoming less common in the last several years for many reasons, not the least of which is how expensive land in Truro has become.

The Trust had a goal for the year 2000 to acquire 200 acres of land, which it easily reached. Back in 2002, the Trust set another goal to acquire a total of 500 acres by the year 2020, which will be the 400 year anniversary of the exploration of the Pamet area by pilgrims from the Mayflower.

Five hundred acres may prove a difficult goal to reach, but with your support the Trust will try. You should check out Options for Land Owners at the Trust's website to see how you might be able to help. You might even be able to accrue significant tax benefits from either an outright gift or from a

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conservation restriction on your property, or even significant tax credits and cash as described in this newsletter. Check it out!

HOW DO WE STEWARD?

What better way to experience TCT stewardship than to accompany one of our teams on a virtual site visit. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, trustees check each of our parcels annually. We've divided Truro into four general zones, each with a team of board members assigned to conduct the visits and note any changes in the condition at the site. The northernmost zone includes, generally speaking, places adjacent to historic Pond Road, the Shearwater development, locations along the bay off Fisherman's Road, and inland to sites skirting North Pamet Road.

Since you've read this far, come along to our first stop. This morning we meet at the Cold Storage Beach parking lot and, after determining which properties to observe along Pond Road and checking the folders for details from the last visit and maps and photographs provided in the folders, we begin our amble down the hill. Following a clean bill of health on the first three sites, and taking a few update photos there, we did run into a small pile of brush cuttings that had crossed over one of our property lines. Fortunately the neighbor was home,



digging in his flower garden. After comparison of rose trimming techniques, he cheerfully agreed to remove the ornamental grass clippings. No hard feelings, just the way it should be.

Climbing back aboard we swing out along Bay View

Road to the Shearwater development, an attractive cluster of largely summer homes gathered around a broad pond and only a stone's throw from the bay. TCT owns a small slice of coastal dune that has presented two issues in the past: first, we needed to check the view-clearing that had been authorized at the request of the Shearwater Association, and also to assess winter storm damage to our narrow coastal bank. The pruning had been nicely done by a professional arborist. The bank, however, was another matter and as you can see from the photo below our cliff is not holding up well. We will be discussing an extension of fencing to connect with neighbors on either side to prevent swirls that further compromise the bank. Final stop of the day takes us south to property off Fisherman's Road for which TCT holds a Conservation Restriction. We were fairly unfamiliar with this property, as it was recently added to the list, and so informal



reconnoitering the site seemed to make sense. Stewardship of CR properties whenever possible includes presence of the current owner and an especially careful look at the legal conditions of the restriction. On arrival the thing that sets this property apart is the presence of a well-weathered boardwalk and observation deck. In comparing photos taken in 2009 by the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, it is clear that the deck has been moved back a few feet away from the top of the bank. The owners have lived across the road for years, and built the deck to enjoy the incredible vista of the bay it affords. By putting this parcel under a Conservation Restriction, the owners have preserved in perpetuity this striking part of Truro,

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HOW DO WE STEWARD?

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and made possible the enjoyment of it by others. Lunch time and we return to Cold Storage beach where we fill out the Property Monitoring Reports, with general observations, noting any wildlife and habitat changes, and any recommendations for future action. If remediation is necessary, or major decisions need to be made, the issues will be brought up at our next monthly meeting.

Should any Trust member reading this article be interested in volunteering for the next such outing, just let us know. You would be most welcome!

NEW TAX BENEFITS + CASH

Even if your legal residence is not in Massachusetts, you could give land to the Trust or establish a conservation restriction on land you own in Truro and receive tax credits and/or cash from the state for up to \$50,000. This is in addition to any federal income tax incentives for conservation of land.

Check out the details on how the new credit works at Truroconservationtrust.org