



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

Newsletter

Fall / Winter 2022

www.TruroConservationTrust.org

Nancy Fales Bequest to the TCT

We learned this August that Nancy Fales, of Westport Connecticut and Truro, bequeathed her 3-acre property and summer home, in the National Seashore at 71 North Pamet Road (see photo), to your Truro Conservation Trust (TCT). It is a densely treed and gently landscaped parcel with a well-maintained 2-bedroom Cape Cod-style house.

Nancy grew up in Bronxville New York before moving to Connecticut. She was a conservationist, a wildlife/nature enthusiast, and a nationally recognized travel and nature photographer. She exhibited her photography in shows and galleries throughout Connecticut, in Washington DC, and on Cape Cod. She was featured in several travel and nature publi-



Fales house on 3-acre Lot.

cations. She was a volunteer at the Earthplace nature conservancy and wildlife sanctuary in Westport Connecticut, eventually being

elected its President and Board Chair. Nancy loved sharing her Truro home and frequently hosted

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Preserving Truro's Watersheds

When we think of a "land trust" we are usually visualizing the conservation and stewardship of the land itself. But here in Truro we have what is just as precious to protect – the water that replenishes our Truro and Provincetown drinking water and supplies our watersheds. Native Americans depended on the watersheds for drinking water and crop irrigation. In 1620 the Pilgrims landed in Provincetown after a long voyage and found pure water in the ponds of Truro.

A "watershed" is a land area that channels rainfall to rivers and ponds, and eventually to the bay. The rainfall that does not reach the rivers or ponds infiltrates deeper into the soil and recharges the aquifer. Truro has five main watersheds that have a large portion of

their area outside the National Seashore; they feed the Herring River, Pamet River and Harbor, Little Pamet River, Great Pond, and Pilgrim Pond. The accompanying map shows these watersheds in blue.

These watersheds are important parts of our natural environment and ecosystem. In addition to their health, scenic, recreational, and rural character value to our residents and visitors, the native species that reside in and around them and the year round and migratory wildlife that inhabit and depend on them and their surrounding upland are such a valuable part of our beautiful Truro.

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The Passing of a Dear Friend

The Trustees honor the passing of our dear friend **Susan Howe**. She was a passionate protector of Truro's history, natural beauty, and its citizens, all of which she worked tirelessly for to ensure the sustainability of our present and our future. Susan, we miss you!

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This Newsletter adds two new series of articles. We've added a Trustee Profile series to offer you a more in-depth introduction to your Trustees. We've also added a Property Highlight series that will inform you of the history, characteristics, and environmental significance of one of our 107 TCT-owned properties. We hope that you enjoy these added series in this and future Newsletters.

Since our last Newsletter, we've been particularly busy with two unusual, for us, projects; both of which are further detailed in separate articles.

First, the bequest of Nancy Fales's 3-acre property and house affords us an opportunity to try a new approach. Your TCT will maintain ownership of the land for conservation in perpetuity while selling the house separately to a qualified purchaser as on-site workforce or affordable housing. The housing crisis in Truro, and throughout the Cape, is real and adversely impacts the sustainability of our community. When workers and families can't afford to live in Truro, jobs go unfilled, and services become scarce and more expensive. We believe that this new approach is an example of one way that we can help address the housing crisis while simultaneously treating the environment with the respect and care that it requires.

Second, the article on the High Head Conservation Area reports the volunteer work that has occurred to progress the creation of an extensive new public trail system. We hope that you will join us at the spring-2023 official opening of the trails — it is

truly a beautiful area and a worthy accomplishment.

The article on Truro's watersheds informs us all of the value of open space throughout all of Truro in order to protect our water quality, our waterways, our ponds, and their adjacent wetlands and wildlife habitats — another component of a sustainable community.

What else are we working on? We're updating our antiquated web site, bringing our Stewardship Program into modernity by computerizing our records and providing on-site access to data for our stewards. We're also negotiating two new exciting land acquisitions, one as a donation and another as a below-market sale. We'll report on all these projects in our spring-summer Newsletter.

All of this work takes financing. Our financing comes from you and your passion for and commitment to our mission of protecting Truro's environment and beauty. So, once again, please support us to the best of your ability and we will do our best to deliver on your expectations.

Once again, we wish you a Happy Holiday season and a prosperous and healthy 2023. Your Trust and Trustees look forward to another productive year for conservation.

Fred Gaechter, Chairman
On the Behalf of your
Board of Trustees



*South to Corn Hill Beach
and South Truro.*

PROPERTY HIGHLIGHT

Each Truro Conservation Trust (TCT) Newsletter going forward will include an article highlighting a TCT-owned property. The intent is to share with you its history and its environmental value to Truro.

0 Pond Road

What better way to start this series of articles than with the first property acquired by your Trust? The TCT was founded in November 1981. In 1982, Dorothy Cook, a Pond Village resident, donated the lot at 0 Pond Road (see photos and map) to the TCT. Dorothy was a conservationist, a supporter of the founding of the TCT, and a neighbor concerned about the health of Pilgrim Pond.

Although the property – part upland, part wetland – is only a little over a half-acre, it fronts on the wetlands at the northeastern edge of Pilgrim Pond. Therefore, it also became the first property of what is now known as the Pilgrim Pond Preserve, a collection of TCT-owned properties abutting or neighboring Pilgrim Pond, an environmentally valuable

watershed area.

The health of Pilgrim Pond has long been threatened by development, stormwater runoff, and underperforming septic systems. Protecting what open space remains in Pond Village through conservation was on Dorothy's mind and others, through the years, who have helped your Trust acquire 11 properties within this watershed area. Additionally, the Commonwealth and the Town of Truro have embarked on a remediation project to control stormwater runoff into the Pond and there is now a requirement to replace all remaining cesspools with Title 5 systems or better by the end of 2023.

Recently Pond Village citizens have formed the Friends of the Village Pond Watershed (FVPW) to study the Pond's condition. They have also joined the Cape Cod Ponds Network to seek Cape-wide input and support from others' experiences with ponds in other Towns, and, ultimately, intend to develop an action plan to restore and protect Pilgrim Pond's health.

As environmental stewards and as a good neighbor, your Trust is an active member of the FVPW and will support its objective in any way that we can.

This was all started 40 years ago by Dorothy's concern for Pilgrim Pond and its environment with her donation of this important land to the TCT. What a vision she had!

“IN PERPETUITY”

One of the frequently asked questions that we get is: “If we donate land or the funds to purchase land to the Truro Conservation Trust (TCT), can the TCT eventually develop or sell the land?”

Surprisingly, it is legal in the Commonwealth for non-profit conservation organizations to sell land donated to or acquired by them. The TCT opposes such a potential.

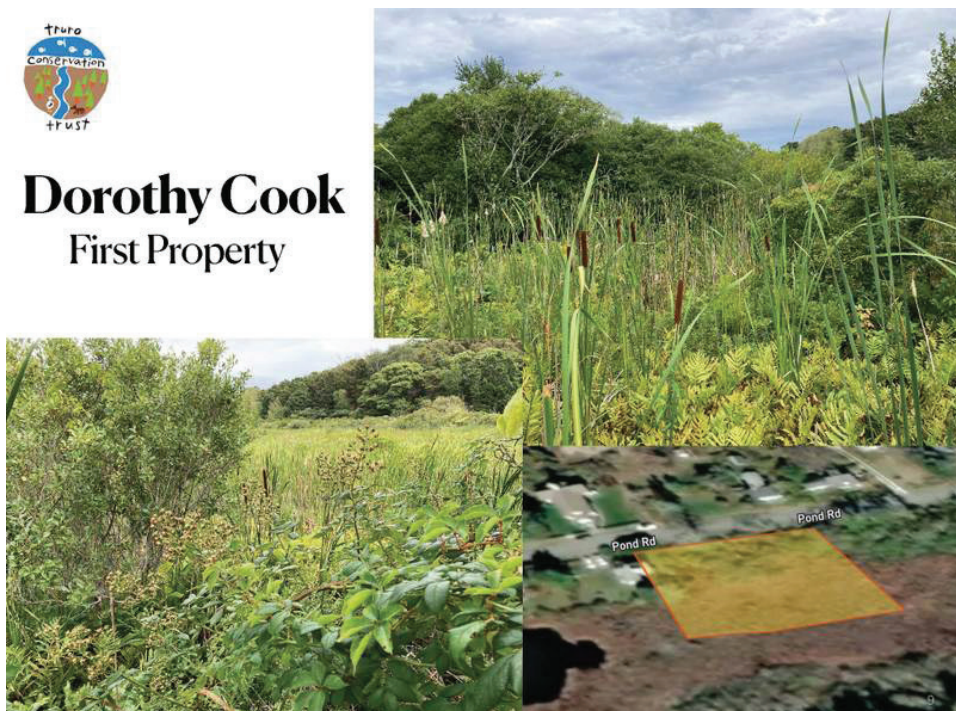
When we realized this legal potential several years ago, we modified and re-registered the deeds to every property that we owned at the time to state clearly and emphatically that each and every one of our properties can never be developed or sold, in perpetuity. On a going-forward basis, every property that we've acquired since and will acquire in the future has and will have the same deeded statement. Many of our fellow Cape Cod conservation organizations have implemented the same policy and procedure.

So, to be perfectly clear:

**LAND OWNED BY THE
TCT CAN NEVER BE
DEVELOPED OR SOLD.**



Dorothy Cook First Property



Because I Believe

Irma Ruckstuhl

I awake on a brilliant sunny morning. The bay glitters, the leafy bank in front of me is still green. Overhead a hawk, nearly motionless, ignores a passing gull, seeking out easier prey, a mouse perhaps. The sense of peace is profound, made more so by the events and contrasts of the past days, for I have just returned from a trip to Oman and the subsequent emotional bewilderment and difficulties of air travel in the few days after 9/11.

Today, more than twenty years later I still look out at the same scene. That I can say this seems remarkable for population growth has created more buildings, more traffic, more problems. I read that undeveloped land is disappearing throughout our country at the rate of 6,000 acres a day and Cape Cod has not escaped the trend.

Why does this matter to me? And why should this matter to you? I joined the Truro Conservation Trust (TCT) believing society's need for cement and asphalt is enhanced by plants and birdsong, fruit, shade, and wildlife being around us. To understand this, go to one of the trailheads maintained by the TCT, sit on the bench there and silently be drawn into your surroundings. Or walk one of the trails and revel at how many different greens exist in the mosses, the ferns, the lichen, and the leaves.

I have often wondered if one person, one vote, one small donation can make a difference. If you have doubts, look at what groups, all "ones," have accomplished on Pond Road and elsewhere to preserve a neighborhood. I will not permit myself to believe future "ones" will not continue these efforts and derive the joy and pride I have had over the years working with and supporting the Truro Conservation Trust.

Trustee Profile

Tom Bow

My wife Laurine and I discovered Truro in 1989. We had previously vacationed in Eastham, and had decided to give the small town before Provincetown — Truro — a try. It did not take long for us to fall in love with its simplicity and the magnificent sunsets that Truro is blessed with. After a few years of renting, we were fortunate enough to purchase our house on Great Hollow in 1991. We met wonderful neighbors and friends, and enjoy the serenity and unique landscape the town of Truro excels in.

In my working life I traveled extensively throughout the country, and discovered that there is no place like Truro, not even a close second. I have been retired since 2008 as Director of Sales and Marketing at a nationwide health products company that myself and two other partners founded in 1976.

Although our family's main residence is still in Connecticut (our children and five grandchildren reside there), our time in Truro is always special.

Over the years I have been involved with Truro Treasures, the Open Space Committee, and other various town committees in an effort to give back and assist the Town. In 2014 I was honored and humbled to be considered and then elected as a Trustee of the Truro Conservation Trust

Recognition for Their Service

Three valued Trustees have resigned from our Board of Trustees for personal reasons. We thank them for their years of service and dedication to the environment. We will miss them.

Valerie Falk served as a Trustee for 7 years. She brought a "can do" spirit and a passion for conservation that inspired us and often reminded us to focus on our mission. She encouraged conservation not only for the protection of the physical environment and its wildlife, but for what it meant for the health and well-being of all of us who live here and are sustained by it.

Ave Gaffney was only on our Board for two years, but her years of experience as a teacher brought insight to the development of our educational outreach regarding conservation and stewardship, including what articles of interest in our Newsletter might help in that regard.

Irma Ruckstuhl served as a Trustee for 10 years. As a longtime resident of Truro and a businessperson, she often shared that perspective in our decision making. She was a steward of and consistent donor to our financial well-being, including the donation of a valuable parcel of land in North Truro. She often stepped in to help with the business aspects of running a Conservation Trust. Although retired from the Board, she has offered to continue assisting us, in that regard, when she can. (Please see the related article "Because I Believe".)

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Nancy Fales Bequest to the TCT

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patio parties for friends and neighbors.

This is the fifth time in recent memory that your Trust has acquired a property with a house. Three of the five houses were not salvageable and were demolished; the properties were fully restored as open space. Recently, we acquired the historic bay front property and Bunker cottage on Corn Hill Road and leased it to the Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill for summer artists' housing.

Our Board of Trustees has decided on a new approach for the Fales house. Since it is in move-in condition, after the replacement of the cesspool and with some relatively minor work, and considering Truro's housing crisis, the TCT will maintain ownership of the land for conservation in perpetuity and sell just the house for affordable or workforce housing. This enables a qualified buyer to acquire housing for approximately one-quarter of what the entire property and house would cost while also maintaining the land for conservation. Nancy Fales did not specify how the TCT could/should use the property and house, but we are confident that, based on her life, she would be excited about both conserving the land while continuing her tradition of welcoming people to her home.

Based on preliminary discussions, the Town of Truro has expressed an interest in acquiring the house, in the above context, as workforce housing for a current or future Town employee in order to help fill the many staff vacancies, including fire fighters, paramedics, police, and teachers, still vacant due to the lack of affordable housing. If these discussions are not successful, for whatever reason, the TCT will identify a qualified Truro person or family seeking workforce housing to acquire the house. We already have several inquiries. In either case, the sale will include a condition that any resale of the house must also be within the guidelines for workforce housing.

We thank Nancy Fales for her generosity towards the people of Truro and your TCT.

Trustee Profile

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(TCT), which has always been considered a top conservation group on Cape Cod. With climate change at our doorstep, we all share in the responsibility to protect our fragile land and water resources. I am committed to assisting in the TCT's mission of conservation for present and future generations.

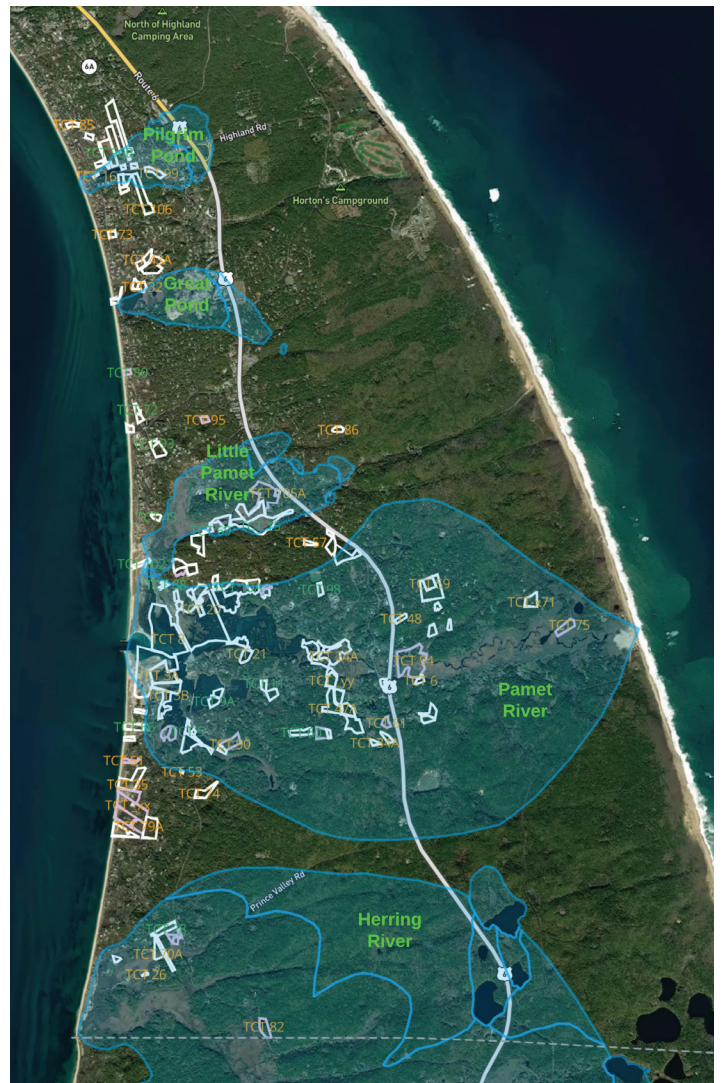
Preserving Truro's Watersheds

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Yet, the rivers and ponds these watersheds feed have seen increasing stress from human-sourced nutrients, primarily originating from septic systems and fertilizers. If the TCT can preserve a piece of land in a watershed, we protect that watershed, the river or pond and, eventually, the bay and aquifer, fed by that watershed. We consider that a double win: preserving the land and the watershed with its resident and surrounding habitat.

As it turns out, the majority of TCT-owned land, outlined on the map, are in or abutting one of these five environmentally critical and sensitive watersheds. As you can see, there are many parcels that are now serving to protect both the land and the water.

Centuries later, we hope to honor the history and culture of Native Americans and the Pilgrims with our efforts to preserve what they knew was precious and life-sustaining.



Truro's five main watersheds are shown in blue on this map.

Phase 2 Completed for High Head Conservation Area

Your Truro Conservation Trust (TCT), with the help of The Cape Cod Compact of Conservation Trusts, is very excited to report that we are well on our way to completing the numerous components of Phase 2 of the High Head Conservation Area project. This 48-acre coastal heathland situated between Route 6 and Route 6A (Shore Road) in North Truro is jointly owned by the Town of Truro and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with land management oversight by the Truro Conservation Commission.

Phase 1 of the project was comprised of gently clearing the 30"-wide trails with minimal impact on the habitat while affording public access to visit and view this amazing and rare environment. Phase 2 focuses on signage, identifying points of interest throughout the 1.5 miles of public walking trails – view and resting points (benches have been placed strategically along the trails), peaceful settings, and rare habitat viewing areas. Parking and access are provided from the Town of Truro parking area on Route 6A (thank you to our DPW crew). The trails can also be accessed from the rest area on Route 6. Both trailheads have a kiosk which will display the High Head Conservation Area map, educational information, rules, and regulations. The trails are well marked with color-coded arrows and the parking/access areas denoted.

In the Northeast corner of the red trail, you'll find a bench overlooking East Harbor/Pilgrim Lake and the



Route 6A Trailhead (sign coming).

dunes beyond. In the Southwest corner of the blue trail, you can rest for a minute or two on one of our six benches throughout the trails and experience a spectacular view of Truro and across Cape Cod Bay to Plymouth, as well as Provincetown, Long Point, the West End Lighthouse, and down the coast to Wellfleet. While walking the trails you'll be surprised by the tranquility, and the fact that you are indeed in the woods where scrub oak, pitch pine, bearberry, reindeer moss, blueberry, mushrooms, and lichen abound. On one of the trails, you'll find a magical Wolf Oak or two, and on another a rare sighting of broom crowberry.

The Trustees will continue to expand and fine-tune the signage and develop educational resources, including information from the Wampanoag Nation. A public ceremony, officially opening the trail system for public use, will be scheduled for the Spring of 2023.

Phase 3 will be the removal of invasive species that choke or shade the growth and expansion of the native species typical of a coastal heathland, which will enable the long-term survival of this rare habitat for generations. This last phase will occur slowly and deliberately over the next few years.

This project was made possible by the many onsite volunteers (including your Trustees), your donations, and a Community Preservation Act grant approved by the Truro Community Preservation Committee and the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, with support from the Truro Select Board.



Route 6 Trailhead.