



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

Newsletter

Winter 2023

www.TruroConservationTrust.org

Acquisition Update

17 DEPOT ROAD AND O PAMET RIVER SOUTH

Since signing the Purchase and Sale Agreement with the sellers in 2022, this acquisition (see photo) has progressed towards an anticipated closing in the first half of 2024. We continue to be thankful to the seller for the well below-market sale price for these two environmentally-significant properties (see related "SALT MARSHES" article). Due to the difference between the sale price and appraised value, the seller has qualified for a \$75K Commonwealth tax credit, the maximum allowable. The TCT completed and submitted the tax credit application on the behalf of the seller. (Note: Anyone can apply

for this tax credit, even if you do not pay taxes in Massachusetts. You can receive half of the difference between the appraised value and the sale price, up to \$75K on a \$150K difference)

We were informed in October that our application to the Commonwealth for a \$175K conservation Grant to assist the TCT with the acquisition costs was approved. This is the maximum authorized under the Grant program and confirms our opinion of the conservation and environmental value of this acquisition.

In addition to that, just this month, the TCT submitted another

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View across the Pamet marsh of 17 Depot/O Pamet River South from Castle Road

Environmental Protection Salt Marshes

We may stop periodically along Castle Road, Depot Road, or at the Pamet Harbor parking area to enjoy the beauty of the flowing grasses in a gentle breeze across Truro's salt marshes (see photos – Pamet River Marsh). Or we may wonder where that pungent and earthy smell is coming from at low tide when the muddy surface is exposed. But we probably don't think much about the critically positive impact that salt marshes play in the survival of our wildlife and human habitats. Their importance is often understated, misunderstood, and underappreciated.

Numerous communities of birds and other wildlife depend on these coastal and tidal wetlands for their survival. The Saltmarsh Sparrow breeds exclusively in salt marshes. Every part of a salt marsh is home to marine, land-based, and aerial species. Numerous aquatic species rely on salt marshes for essential food, refuge, and breeding habitat.

Humans also depend on these marshes to protect our community from flooding and for the sequestration of carbon from our atmosphere.

Twenty percent of wave energy and floodwaters are absorbed by salt marshes during storms – 1 acre of salt marsh can absorb up to 1.5 million gallons of flood water – a

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We hope that you had a pleasant summer in Truro or wherever you spent it.

We often hear the question: "How much open space and conservation land is necessary?" or comment: "We have the national seashore; we don't need any more protected

land." On the surface, these are legitimate questions and concerns that require a proper response.

We are, of course, thankful for the existence of the National Seashore from both an environmental and economic perspective. However, much of Truro's land that provides our water supply, protects our wildlife, and offers neighborhood green space for wellness exists outside of the Seashore and requires our protection.

All of the public wells that supply parts of North Truro (including our school, library, community center, and public safety facility) and all of Provincetown, as well as the preponderance of our private wells, are outside of the Seashore. All of the designated watersheds that help to replenish the aquifer are outside of the Seashore. A vast majority of the wetlands and salt marshes (see related article) and dependent aquatic wildlife, such as the clams we love to harvest, and land-based wildlife are outside of the Seashore. Most of the Town's residents live, without 3-acre zoning, outside of the Seashore and also deserve a distributed green space for a physically and emotionally healthy environment to live in.

So, how much open space is necessary? Enough to protect our water supply, our wildlife habitats, and our human sustainability, along with, not instead of, housing, jobs, and economic sustainability. Environmental protection and economic sustainability, including housing, are not binary decisions or mutually exclusive. It is necessary that we have both for Truro to thrive as a safe, friendly, healthy, and prosperous community in which to live.

The vast majority of your TCT-owned land is within the recognized watersheds, protects much of the wetlands and marshes, and provides, at least, a modicum of green space throughout all of our neighborhoods and our community.

So, once again, we ask for your support to continue our mission of protecting the valued open space and conservation land that is such an integral part of our living in Truro, whether full-time or part-time. We thank you for your past, present, and future support.

We wish you all Happy Holidays, a safe winter season, and a healthy and happy 2024.

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



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Salt Marsh at Pamet harbor

Salt Marshes

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critical component of climate change mitigation from rising sea levels and more intense storm activity.

Salt marshes are known to be one of the most effective nature-based climate solutions. Ten times the amount of carbon is sequestered and stored in salt marshes and coastal wetlands than in mature forests. Two species of cordgrass – salt meadow and smooth – are the most prevalent in New England and constitute two distinct habitats – high and low marsh.

Your Truro Conservation Trust owns, protects, monitors, and conducts active stewardship of over 127 acres of land partially or completely salt marshes, including the property about to be acquired along Depot Road (see related article). Our stewardship program monitors these valuable habitats to ensure they remain pristine. If we detect any detrimental activities or impacts, we consult with the appropriate experts to determine what actions should be taken.

So, please, when observing their natural beauty,



Salt Marsh along Pamet River

from land or by kayak, understand and appreciate their inherent wildlife and human value and treat them with the respect and care that they deserve and require. It is an integral part of our Mission.

Damage to Truro Conservation Trust Property

In September several neighbors reported that a large cut was made in and significant amounts of dirt were removed from the TCT-owned property at 1 Sky View Drive, at the corner of Old Colony Way (see “before” photo). This lot was donated to your Trust by a neighbor, who was naturally dismayed by the blatantly illegal action.

After confirming the report, the Truro Police were notified and a formal complaint was made and filed.

Neither we, nor the Police, were able to identify the culprits after investigating the illegal destruction of our private property. A tour of the neighborhood did not identify any obvious offender.

Your TCT Board of Trustees decided to restore the damage by replacing the removed dirt, installing a temporary split-rail fence (soon), and posting a TCT sign at the site (see “after” photo). Hopefully, this will discourage any future similar incidents. The funding to effect this restoration, of course, comes from TCT funds – your donations – that could have been otherwise used to finance land acquisition opportunities.

We want to thank all of our friends and neighbors in the neighborhood for alerting us to the situation and for their assistance. We also suggest that all of our friends and neighbors, throughout Truro, be vigilant to such actions by others on TCT land and report them to us so that we can take timely and appropriate action.



BEFORE



AFTER

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE

Karen and Fred Ruymann

Pledging our Stewardship of Land and Water Resources

“The land is the real teacher. All we need as students is mindfulness.”

– Robin Wall Kimmerer,
Braiding Sweetgrass

Soon after we became part of the community in Truro, we were inspired to support the mission of the Truro Conservation Trust (TCT): to help protect and preserve the environment, water quality, and wildlife habitat throughout Truro. They accomplish this important mission by acquiring undeveloped land through donation or purchase. This mission goes hand-in-hand with our personal commitment to protect the land and water resources of our nation.

A decade ago, a few neighbors in Pond Village approached us to become involved in the protection of the historically important and ecologically unique Twine Field parcel as conservation land. We about the Village Pond and already had grave concerns about the escalating decline in the water quality of the pond due to nitrogen loading and storm water run-off. The proposed 11 home development in the Twine Fields (situated upland to the Pond) magnified these concerns. We attended an exuberant neighborhood garden fundraiser for this project where we met several TCT Board members who spoke of the multiple preservation projects underway in Truro. We were impressed by their dedication to ecological science and moved by their passion.

A year or so later, another neighbor urged us to donate to TCT’s Great Hollow project. He rightfully admonished that we needed to support conservation efforts throughout Town, not just those in our neighborhood. Because of our concern for the health of our aquifer, we then participated in a campaign advocating for improved wastewater and storm water treatment. We know from Fred’s decades in the medical profession that the degradation of our environment negatively impacts the health of flora, fauna, and humans.

Within a year, Fred Gaechter reached out to our band of neighbors, noting that we had become a force for environmental preservation, and asked if we would help realize a grand TCT vision. Could we be part of an organizing group that would corral the energy of the Village People to help create a nature Preserve around the Village Pond to restore and protect its water quality? Working with a tireless team of Villagers and TCT Board members, in just over a year’s time over 130 extremely generous neighbors met several fund-raising challenges and created the beautiful Pond Village Preserve. We were proud to be part of a huge cooperative effort which safeguarded nearly 40 acres surrounding the Pond and within the Pond Village watershed from any future development and created a sanctuary for the myriad species of plant and animal life.

Later that year, Emily Beebe, Truro’s Health and Conservation Agent proposed during a

Board of Health meeting that we could continue our work by starting a Pond “Friends” group — so we hosted a small cocktail hour to promote this new undertaking. The resulting “Friends of the Village Pond Watershed” is a group dedicated to protecting and preserving the natural beauty and health of the Village Pond through collaboration, education, advocacy, and science.

“The word ecology is derived from the Greek “oikos,” the word for home.”

– *Braiding Sweetgrass*

The Truro Conservation Trust has given us a means by which we can express our gratitude to the magical place that is our home — Truro. We believe in their active stewardship of Truro’s land and know that their efforts help to heal our surrounding waters. We will continue to support their visionary advocacy to preserve the beauty of rural Truro.

“Nature asks us to give back, in reciprocity, for what we have been given...through gratitude, through ceremony, through land stewardship, science, art, and in everyday acts of practical reverence.”

– *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Trustee Profile

Robert Daglio

I first became involved in Conservation Trusts in 1973, becoming the first President of the East Granby, CT Land Trust. I had been active in East Granby's Jaycees, and encouraged several Jaycees to help us form the East Granby Land Trust.

Although living in Connecticut, my wife, Elizabeth, and I vacationed in Truro at the Days Cottages and Truro campgrounds when our children were young. Later in life, after my older brother built a house in Truro, we started visiting more frequently and bought our own home in 2004.

Truro has always reminded us of what many Cape Cod towns looked like in the 1960's. Currently I am Recording Secretary for the Truro Conservation Trust (TCT) and take care of trails and signs, along with some other Trustees.

We are fortunate to be living in Truro. Between the Cape Cod National Seashore and TCT, we are helping Truro preserve open space forever and retaining Truro's rural character.



Acquisition Update

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\$175K grant application to Truro's Community Preservation Committee (CPC), under the Commonwealth's Community Preservation Act (CPA). CPA grant funds are proportionately dispersed to Massachusetts municipalities for Historic Preservation, Housing, and Open Space qualifying projects. The funds are derived from an annual 3% surcharge on property taxes statewide. The Act requires that 10% of the proceeds be used for each of these three categories of projects with the remaining 70% to be allocated at the CPC's discretion and/or in accordance with local policies and procedures. This particular TCT Grant request will allocate only funds from the 10% required to be spent on Open Space projects. So, first, this Grant would not increase property taxes and second, it would not require the use of funds needed for projects in the other categories.

This application will be heard at a public hearing of the CPC in December. Your TCT Board would appreciate your support in the form of a written communication to the CPC or attendance at the hearing.

Subsequently, if approved by the CPC, the Grant will then appear on the Warrant of the Spring 2024 Annual Town Meeting (ATM) with recorded votes from the Finance Committee and the Select Board. Similarly, we would appreciate your support when the article is heard by the Committee and Board, as well as at the ATM.

71 NORTH PAMET ROAD

As you will recall this is a house on a 3-acre parcel in the National Seashore (see photo) that was bequeathed to your TCT by Nancy Fales with no use restrictions. We have been negotiating with the Town of Truro on a leasing agreement to use the house as year-round "workforce" housing for a Town employee while the land remains in restricted-use conservation by your TCT.

This is a new model for cooperative efforts to provide housing while also conserving and protecting the land.

Due to the unique circumstances of this bequest — transferring ownership from a family Trust after the principal Trustee had passed — the Land Court was required to investigate all the legal aspects of the ownership transfer. We are happy to report that after eight months of investigation, the new deed has been approved by the Court and your TCT is now the registered owner of the property and the house.



71 North Pamet Road

High Head Conservation Area — Come Enjoy the Peace and Quiet



View of East Harbor from High Head

If you haven't yet visited High Head Conservation Area, a 48-acre coastal heathland situated between Route 6 and Route 6A (Shore Road) in North Truro, now is the time.

The 1.5 miles of well-marked public walking trails have also been well-worn by our summertime visitors, which makes for easy traversing. This time of year, you can experience the tranquil, pine needle-covered paths, overwintering birds in the beach forest, and from one of our benches, stunning overlooks of Cape Cod Bay, Province Lands and East Harbor. All of this while the sun warms your face and hardly running into another soul.



Your Truro Conservation Trust (TCT) has been busy installing new educational signs throughout. Don't miss our epic Wolf tree and come learn what Broom Crowberry and a Coastal Heathland are. A public ceremony, officially opening the trail system, will be scheduled for Spring 2024.

High Head Conservation Area is jointly owned by the Town of Truro and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with land management and oversight by the Truro Conservation Commission (TCC). Trail building/maintenance is by your TCT with TCC approval and encouragement. This project was made possible by your donations, a Community Preservation Act grant, and many onsite volunteers (including your trustees).