

CHATHAM CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BULLETIN

Winter
2018

The Chatham Conservation Foundation preserves land for the benefit of the people, plants, animals and ecosystems of Chatham.

Thank you for the opportunity to lead this Foundation

*By Matt Cannon
Executive Director / Land Steward*

It is an honor to be appointed the first full-time Executive Director/ Land Steward of the Cape's first land trust!

Transitioning from Director of Land Stewardship to the leader and face of the organization has been an incredible opportunity. Knowing all our properties and our many supporters, trustees and volunteers has proven invaluable in getting off the ground.

My main goal is to implement the Foundation's first-ever strategic plan. Thank you to the Board of Trustees for spending so much time articulating those goals, especially former President Rachel Barnes.

They spent many hours focusing on this effort, and it was well worth it. The plan is forward-thinking and is my main guideline for day-to-day work and long-term planning.

We've had some early successes. Since starting full-time last September, we have recruited 15 volunteer land stewards, hosted an AmeriCorps Cape Cod member one day a week, sent out our first town-wide membership appeal, moved my operations to the Mayo House, started an Education Committee, transitioned to new membership software, updated our land stewardship software and consolidated our finances.

Whew! Each day is challenging.

After meeting our strategic plan goals this winter, I see interesting opportunities on the horizon:



Matt at the front door of the Mayo House, where his office is located.

-- We will hold an open house at the Mayo House in late spring or early summer.

-- We may hold a fundraising event this summer.

-- We are researching potential properties to restore and enhance, including parcels adjacent the Atwood House Museum and Nickerson Family Association property on Orleans Road.

-- Next summer, we plan to install new kiosks at our walking trails and on culturally significant properties.

-- To keep you, our members, up to date, we would like to collect your e-mails so we can more efficiently let you know about events or activities.

I would like to personally thank the Board of Trustees and our membership for giving me this opportunity to lead the Foundation into the future.

Honorary Trustee Andrew Young was also instrumental in ensuring that the Foundation could afford to pursue this position. Thank you!

President's Message on page 2

Cape Cod's oldest private land trust, 1962-2018

President's message: It's an exciting time at the Foundation.

*By Oonie Burley
President, Board of Trustees*



It gives me great pleasure to report that the energy at your Chatham Conservation Foundation is positive and strong. We have a talented and very dedicated Board of Trustees. Matt continues to work diligently on behalf of the Foundation and our mission. All of our committees have been working hard this winter to develop and implement

policies and practices that enhance our growth. There has been evolution and new developments - indeed a busy and productive time!

Much has been happening at the Mayo House (see related story on page 1). Our land stewardship program continues to expand thanks to an increased number of volunteers. Roy Meservey is stepping down after 36 years of dedicated service as our treasurer, and thankfully will continue to serve on our Board. We are collaborating with other organizations in town -specifically with the Nickerson Family Association with their archeological dig, Eldredge Public Library's poetry walk and others in the formative stages.

Summer is here; so do enjoy walking our trails. Trail guides are available at the Mayo House. Also please stop by to say hello and to enjoy our

newly planted "Mini Meadow on Main"! I am sure you will be interested to see the parlor with its historical exhibit of original Mayo family items and our new and expanded office spaces.

We greatly appreciate your increased membership and support. We are working hard and will continue to strive to deserve this support and trust. I look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual Meeting at the Boathouse at Chatham Bars Inn on August 7th.

Once again I wish to thank our trustees, employees and volunteers for their dedication to our conservation vision

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oonie Burley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Beineke, environmentalist and 'an American icon' dies

*By Tim Weller
Board of Trustees*

William Sperry Beinecke, a passionate environmentalist who helped the Foundation acquire Strong Island in 1973, died last April at the age of 103.

Protecting the Cape's lands and waters were priorities for Mr. Beinecke.

His family foundation contributed \$250,000 of Strong Island's asking price of \$700,000, then owned by the Horst family.

"I guess I was the spearhead in terms of money contributed," he said then. "I was able to do it, and I'm glad I did it. I'm glad I took it (the island) off the market."

Considered the gem of Pleasant Bay, the island consists of 75 acres of upland (owned by the Foundation) and 69 acres of town-owned marsh. Three acres are privately held, with one house on site.

Jay Cashman, along with his wife Christy and their children, spend their summers on the island. He reflected on his friendship with Mr. Beinecke.

"One of the most inspiring things about Bill was that even at 103 his spirit was never diminished. Even at 100, his communication skills were as sharp, but welcoming, as any Fortune 500 CEO half his age. Once you've known Bill Beinecke, you really understand why men of this time were



called 'The Greatest Generation.' He is an American icon, and I feel blessed to have known him," Cashman said.

Over the years, the Mr. Beinecke's foundation has contributed to the Harwich Conservation Trust, the Cape Cod Fishermen's Alliance, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, Massachusetts Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Friends of the Cape Cod National Seashore, and the Latitude 41 Under Siege Symposium, which addressed ocean nitrification and acidification.

Mr. Beinecke was the grandson of an immigrant who founded the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston and the Plaza Hotel in New York City.

He became a Naval officer in World War II and was decorated with 11 battle stars while serving on two destroyers. After the war, Mr. Beinecke rose through the ranks of his family business, the Sperry and Hutchinson Co., ultimately becoming chief operating officer. The company was known for S&H green stamps, which were redeemable for house goods and sports wares.

The Beinecke family continues to be an inspiration to environmentalists both on and off the Cape.

1818-era Mayo House is 'new' again

By Edie Tuxbury
Board of Trustees



The Mayo House as it looks from Main Street.

Inside and out, the Foundation's Mayo House has a new look – and a new use. It's almost become a "living museum."

First and foremost, the Foundation wanted to keep the historic character and charm of the early 17th-century building.

The Bradford pear tree – which threatened and obscured the building – has been cut down, to be replaced in the spring with native plantings. A new outside sign has been installed noting that the building is home to the CCF. An 1800s-era lantern has been

installed over the front door

Thanks to an \$83,166 grant from the Community Preservation Act, the exterior has been completely renovated. Inside, the house has been repainted, while the wood trim has been restored. It is also home base for Executive Director / Land Steward Matt Cannon, whose office is there. The house will host volunteers and meetings in the future.

As one enters the house, a volunteer in the reception room will welcome visitors. This volunteer will give a brief history of the house and provide information about the Conservation Foundation. The front room or main parlor will remain the same with a large picture of Josiah Mayo, an original needlework by Katherine Mayo at age 12, the family Bible, and other original artifacts. This room will have a leaf table for CCF committee meetings. Matt's office is in the center room, or "keeping room." The small back room will have a desk and other office equipment. Plans are underway to use the upstairs for volunteer office space.

It is exciting to see the Mayo House becoming a vital part of the Chatham Conservation Foundation. Josiah Mayo and his family would no doubt approve!



A new sign has been installed on the property.

Photos by Tim Weiler

Mayo House seeks preservation award

The Mayo House, located at 540 Main Street, is applying for a 2018 Chatham Preservation Award. The house has been owned and operated by the Foundation since 1976. The house was built between 1818-1820 by Josiah Mayo and his brothers.

The awards are sponsored jointly by the Town of Chatham Historic Commission, the Historic Business District Commission and the Chatham Historical Society. The awards are presented annually to local

projects for a broad range of preservation activities. Award-winning projects can include private residences, commercial properties, publicly owned buildings, not-for-profit institutions and historic landscapes. Properties must be at least 75 years old and primary emphasis will be given to exterior preservation, rehabilitation or restoration.

The winners will be announced in May during a ceremony at the Wayside Inn in Chatham.

Volunteer Training Day - photos by William Hayes



Matt Cannon, left, welcomes David McNally, Michele Moloney Kitts and Janet Williams to Barclay Pond.



Matt points out the trail.



The group looks for invasive plants.



Among other tasks, volunteers will check boundaries.

The Foundation's first volunteer land steward recruiting drive was a great success! In addition to members who expressed interest in volunteering, we publicized this effort through the *Cape Cod Chronicle*, social media and our e-mail list. Fifteen people committed to monitoring our trails and properties. Trail monitors walk Frost Fish Creek, Barclay Pond, and Strong Island looking for hazards, trail issues or illegal dumping, while keeping an eye out for interesting native plants or animals.

Other land stewards monitor the properties we own: walking the boundaries looking for encroachment, illegal use, invasive plants, or other interesting sightings. They complete a monitoring report either in paper or on our website.

So, if you see people in red Foundation hats, say hello and thank them for their efforts!

Also, please keep taking pictures of nature and send them to Matt Cannon (matt@ccfinc.org).

Land Steward Management Committee

By Matt Cannon
Executive Director / Land Steward

The Land Steward and Management Committee (LSMC) oversees the management and maintenance of our properties.

We have budgeted several land surveys a year to discover if property owners are encroaching on our properties. We also properly mark our boundaries. When problems arise, we reach out to educate neighbors on our properties and our mission.

In many cases, people do not know about the Foundation and think our properties are “empty lots.” In general, our property is private property with the explicit goal of land conservation, and should be treated as such. The goal is to continue to mark all our boundaries, especially along boundaries with homes. This will help minimize future encroachment and let people know we are here to stay. Keep a lookout for our roadside signs and tree medallions along our properties!

Next summer, we will install kiosks at our three walking trails. This is long overdue, as we are seeing an increase in foot traffic. The kiosks will include trail maps and a brief history of the area. As we do this, we will continue to open our trailhead parking lots for safety and visibility, using our own land stewards and AmeriCorps volunteers.

Since summer 2017, AmeriCorps member Emma Forbes works with us. In addition to her group service projects, she is in Chatham one day a week; two other days a week she is with Harwich Conservation Trust and the Harwich Conservation Department. Her help has been much needed! She is completing much of the property monitoring, baseline photographic reporting, inventorying our stewardship needs, organizing our volunteer monitoring reports, updating our mapping system, and implementing our new stewardship software. All in one day a week!

Cape Cod's herring populations threatened

By Tim Weller
Board of Trustees

Ever wondered about herring? Well, maybe now's the time.

Herring are a critical link in the coastal food chain. Other fish and a variety of animals eat them, especially when they migrate to and from spawning areas.

Chatham's only herring run runs through CCF property from Lovers Lake to Ryder's Cove.

Herring populations have been in decline since the 1990s, which is troubling conservationist and commercial fishing groups.

The Cape Cod Fishermen's Alliance, based in West Chatham, has proposed a “no fish zone” on the backside of the Cape designed to keep herring trawlers out.

The Alliance's Seth Rolbein, director of Cape Cod Fisheries Trust, laid out the plan at a Compact of Conservation Trusts meeting last fall in Brewster, which several Foundation board members attended.

Herring are harvested in large numbers by mid-water trawlers off the Cape, who often work in pairs to scoop



Mid-water trawlers at work in Cape waters.

up the fish. They can harvest an entire school of herring at one time.

In the spring and fall, the trawlers fish the waters off the Cape, targeting herring when they migrate.

“We have a lot of fisheries that are dependent on having herring present,” said John Pappalardo, the Alliance's CEO.

The Alliance's plan would prohibit mid-water trawlers from operating in five 30-mile squares

east and south of the Cape, roughly 25 miles offshore.

The New England Fishery Management Council will have the final say in the matter.

Pappalardo predicts the council ultimately will choose a compromise rule that is more conservative than before, but not as strong as conservationists want.

“The herring industry will feel it somewhat,” he said. “And we'll end up with a rule that's better than the one we have today.”

Students search for life in Foundation's vernal pools

[Editor's note: This article was originally published last November in *The Cape Cod Chronicle*. It was written by Editor Tim Wood. It is reprinted here with his permission.]

There's no such thing as just leaves and dirt."

That mantra, recited by Monomoy Regional Middle School science teacher Melinda Forist, was repeated by students recently as they dipped nets into the brackish water of a vernal pool located behind the school. The nets came up with leaves and dirt, for sure, but also contained several wriggling and squirming creatures.

Students counted nine tadpoles, dragonfly larvae and various other larvae floating in a plastic pan. Exactly what species they'd captured was not certain; that was their next task after last week's field trip.

Two vernal pools in the woods behind the school, created in April 2015 in a cooperative program between the school, the Chatham Conservation Foundation – which owns the land – and Mass Audubon's Long Pond Pasture Sanctuary, provide a convenient laboratory for students in fifth and seventh grades. With field trip money tight, the quick walk to the vernal pools means they can be used almost year-round during a regular class period.

"The challenge is getting kids to visit a vernal pool," said Foundation Executive Director Matt Cannon. "So, we brought the vernal pool to them."



Students record their observations in vernal pool notebooks.

Fifth graders keep vernal pool notebooks, and the pools allow seventh graders to get real life experience in many of the environmental science areas they study, such as biodiversity, water testing and data collection.

Students also journal about the vernal pools and sketch the ever-changing scenery.

"It's also been used as just a quiet resting place," said science teacher Nancy Gifford. Students visit the site at least once a month, said Forist.

Since being created – a process the kids were involved in – the vernal pools have filled with water, vegetation and life.

"Ian (Ives, director of Long Pond Pasture) told us if we built it they will come, said Forist. "And he was right. One of the pools is now two feet deep, the other 16 inches, as recently measured by the students.

A vernal pool is a temporary body of fresh water that serves as a habitat for vertebrates and invertebrates, many of which are rare or endangered. The pools are often shallow depressions in forests and fill with water in the spring and fall but are otherwise dry.

Vernal pools are protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. Although artificially created, the two on Foundation land adjacent to the school are just as functional, or will be as time goes by. Cannon and the students are working to certify the *(continued on page 7)*



The pools were built in April 2015.



Workers install a protective barrier.



One of the pools as it looks today.

Foundation launches Education Committee

By Rachel Barnes
Board of Trustees

When the Foundation's various committees reconvene this year to fulfill the mission of the organization they will look a little different than they have in the past.

While we will continue to focus on land stewardship, membership, and other organizational goals, members will probably notice the addition of an Education Committee in upcoming newsletters and press releases. The decision to change the configuration of our standing committees was driven both by the goals of our strategic plan as well as membership feedback.

While many people are keenly aware of the role of private land trusts like ours to protect and preserve the environment, not everyone understands the impact and importance of local efforts.

The role of the Education Committee will be to examine how we benefit the people, plants, animals, and ecosystems of Chatham and what people might need or want to know about these efforts. Working with like-minded organizations, we hope to plan programs and activities that will help us



Poetry walks, like this one in Vermont, are becoming popular.

achieve both awareness and action to improve local understanding of conservation efforts.

One of our first projects will involve a partnership with the Eldredge Public Library to host a "poetry walk" on one of our trails. Tammy DePasquale and Amy Andreasson of the library staff met with the committee to share this idea which has been well received and successful in Colchester, Vermont at Niquette Bay State Park for the last four years. Working together to foster an appreciation of both nature and literature supports our mission and is a great way to encourage people to view our environment through a different lens.

Do you have an idea for a topic or event to help educate our community about conservation? Don't hesitate to reach out to us. While there are plenty

of things to share with our membership about the importance of conservation we are happy to tailor our efforts to the interests of our community.

Vernal Pools *(continued from page 6)*

pools through the state Department of Environmental Protection's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program.

There are five criteria for certification, Cannon explained, involving two different methods, depending on the species found. There are biological criteria, such as identifying breeding evidence of certain amphibian species or the presence of fairy shrimp, as well as physical criteria, such as a pool with no permanently flowing outlet.

So far, no spotted salamanders – probably the best known of the species that thrive in vernal pools – have been found, but a number of frog species have been seen, and the regular visits aim to document those. Adults, tadpoles or egg masses need to be identified, through photos, videos or audio recording of calls of the frogs. The students are following protocols taught them by Mass Audubon.

Volunteers are largely responsible for finding and identifying vernal pools, and working with the school provides a head start.

"We've got 475 volunteers," Cannon said. Certifying a vernal pool provides protection by putting it on the map, so to speak; that's more important for pools on private property, he pointed out. Because the Foundation owns the property where these pools are located, part of a 20-acre parcel that includes an old cranberry bog, their protection is guaranteed.

Recently students spread wildflower seeds along the banks of the pools, and on a regular basis they check a camera mounted on a tree to track animal activity around the pools. They've seen deer and people walking dogs, but there's been evidence of other animals frequenting the area, including tracks visible after rainfall softens the earth. Eventually, they'd like to set up a website where anyone can monitor the vernal pools, Forist said.

Last week, students participating in a school seminar focusing on the vernal pools visited and dipped nets into the water to find out what's living there. The students are planning to build bird houses and have put down coverboards – square-foot sections of plywood – in the woods and dipped nets into the water to find out what's living there."



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We are grateful for the financial support our members have given to protect over 800 acres of open space in Chatham.

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The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope. -Wendell Berry