



# BREWSTER CONSERVATION TRUST

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## Restoring the forest on Satucket Road

Last spring BCT was approached by William and Tricia Stallings, who were interested in buying a 4.25-acre parcel next to their 35-acre property on Satucket Road in order to preserve it. The Stallings had already previously placed 32 acres of their abutting property into perpetual conservation. Great! we thought. It only got better when we learned that the one catch in the deal was that BCT would have to take charge of removing a cottage and shed from the property and restoring the lot to a woodland state. Now that's a catch we can live with!

Fortunately, the lot was already heavily forested right up to the edge of the small house. There was no lawn or manicured grounds. The house was not a historic structure and not useful to be moved for affordable housing elsewhere (we checked with town officials). So we solicited bids from contractors and are ready to move forward with demolition.

BCT Trustee Bob Lindgren has taken the lead in serving as a "clerk of the works" for the effort. BCT will hold a perpetual conservation restriction on the parcel which abuts another 32 acres under restriction. There will be one less house in Brewster and a new stand of trees as "housing" for birds, chipmunks and others. Tricia is an animal welfare activist who has devoted her life to lessening the suffering of animals.



*Now you see it, soon you won't: cottage to be un-developed by BCT on Satucket Road; pines and oaks will take its place.*



*Former President Beth Finch and new President Peter Johnson*

## New hand on the helm

Peter Johnson, who first came to Cape Cod to wash dishes, is the new president of the Brewster Conservation Trust. He succeeds Beth Finch, the Trust's leader since 1999.

Johnson, who has an energetic conservationist record in both western Massachusetts and Cape Cod, has been a member of the BCT board of trustees for two years and chair of its land management work. The board elected Johnson at its October meeting, when it also reelected Elliott Carr as vice president, Roger O'Day as secretary and Peter Soule as treasurer. Johnson is the BCT's sixth president in its 23 years.

A little explanation about the dishwashing: while a student at Denison College in Ohio, Johnson, a South Hadley native, worked summers at the once renowned Mayo's Duck Farm, on the road to Nauset Beach in Orleans. "They grew ducks and chickens for steamship lines and Cape restaurants and also did a takeout business, fixing food for folks going to and from the beach. I was in the kitchen, cooking and washing dishes."

Thus it was that he met Ellie Rogers of the Casserole Kitchen down the road (now the Nauset Beach Club restaurant site), then a student at Mt. Holyoke College. And the rest, as they say, is history. Johnson returned home to the family business, a popular bookstore in Springfield – "almost a department

*(continued on p. 3)*



# BREWSTER CONSERVATION TRUST

Box 268 Brewster, Massachusetts 02631

Dear Brewster friends,

In June 1962, a young college student arrived in East Orleans to take up a summer job at Mayo's Farm Kitchen. Despite the dishwashing chores, he found the Cape a wonderful place and it became more wonderful yet when he met a girl working nearby.

As it happens, the girl had very deep roots in the town of Brewster and that is how I first connected with Brewster. It was beautiful in 1962 and it is beautiful today. The girl became my wife and now we are "year-rounders," enjoying the beauty of this place.

Enjoyment carries obligations to preserve the joy for others, I believe, and now I have an opportunity to continue the good work of Beth Finch and the members of the Brewster Conservation Trust. I have seen through the years the huge role the Trust has played in preserving the special qualities of Brewster and it's an expanding role. We plan to do more to protect water quality, the open spaces and the quiet spaces we all value so much.

One such space is the four acres on Rafes Pond, just south of Nickerson State Park and next to the town wellfield. It's a two-fer, protecting both water quality and recreational uses, and we are committed to raising \$62,000 for the purchase. The Trust trusts in the generosity of our neighbor townspeople. Please help with this project and our future work.

Sincerely,

Peter Johnson  
President

*Please clip and return.*



## BREWSTER CONSERVATION TRUST ANNUAL APPEAL — 2006

*Help preserve open space and protect water quality, scenic vistas and wildlife — forever.*

- I wish to make a special contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- in memory of \_\_\_\_\_
- in honor of \_\_\_\_\_
- My employer will match my contribution; please contact me.
- I would like to know more about preserving my land and the related tax benefits.

**Special additional contribution to the Priority Ponds Project land acquisitions:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail your tax deductible contribution to: Brewster Conservation Trust,  
P.O. Box 268, Brewster MA 02631 or use the enclosed return envelope.*

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

## A period of change under Finch

Beth Finch led the Brewster Conservation Trust since 1999 until she stepped aside this fall, a long and sometimes arduous responsibility for a volunteer and a working woman -- she was head librarian at the Brewster Ladies' Library and now works in the development office at the Riverview School in Sandwich.

In those years the Trust has added about 90 acres to its holdings and acquired conservation restrictions over about 250 acres. Its total open space holdings, in both fee title and conservation restrictions, are now about 560 acres.

The Trust has seen significant changes in those years, Finch observes. For years its acquisitions came mostly in the form of outright donations of land or easements, she explained, but a more deliberate and planned approach to open space protection was needed, and with it the need to buy land and to raise money for the purpose. In response, the Trust itself has evolved, with a committee structure and delegation of responsibilities.

The framework for these changes, Finch said, was a survey undertaken by The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc. in several towns to locate undeveloped land and determine which parcels are most important to protect for water quality, wildlife and rare plant habitat and which properties are more suitable for development.

Using this information, the BCT focused on the rare value of Brewster's many ponds and developed the Priority Ponds Project -- an ongoing program to protect the town's pond shores with acquisitions of key undeveloped properties, which are growing scarce.

"The Trust has worked with the Town to preserve large parcels that protect water resources and wildlife, reduce population density and provide walking trails," Finch added. And it worked with the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History to permanently protect the Stony Brook Valley, "important for its history as well as its natural resources."

In surveying the period of her leadership, Finch stressed that it has been a group effort, and she paid special tribute to Jim Maddocks, former vice president, who resigned from the board last spring. "His negotiating skills were essential to the success of some of our more important acquisitions," she said. Finch remains a member of the Board of Trustees.

## New hand on the helm *(cont. from p. 1)*

store without the clothing." He and Ellie soon married and had a girl, now a geologist with USAID in Chapel Hill, NC, and a boy, now a graduate student in music composition at the University of Washington.

They also took up the family's conservation causes -- Peter's father had been a founder of South Hadley's conservation trust and his mother had put a conservation restriction on a large tract. Peter and Ellie helped wage the successful battle to protect Holyoke Range from development and Peter served on the town conservation commission.

But that was only part of their lives -- the other part has been here, on Cape Cod. They summered in family homes on the Cape and eventually in the ancestral Winslow home, built around 1690 above Stony Brook. The house, or at least half of it, has been in some branch of Ellie's family ever since. Half was sold out of the family years ago, but Peter and Ellie succeeded in bringing the two halves together again.

They and Ellie's twin brother, owners of valuable waterfront land on Pleasant Bay, arranged a conservation restriction rather than subdivide it. Thus, when Peter closed the Springfield bookstore and they moved full-time into the Winslow house, the BCT board recognized a kindred spirit and put him to work.

It's work that is "very satisfying," Johnson says. "When we protect open space we protect our water and our wildlife and the spirit of the place where we live. It's our legacy to our children."



"WILL WE POLLUTE IT IF WE JUST TAKE A PICTURE?"

Donated by Brewster illustrator Gordon Brooks

## Make ponds your priority

Last month, The Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank Charitable Foundation approved our request for a \$10,000 grant to help us purchase the 4-acre pondshore parcel at Rafes Pond for \$62,000. BCT seeks to raise the remaining funds to fund the land buy from the Sparrow family by the end of 2006. We look to our faithful members to consider making a special year-end contribution to enable us to preserve this pristine pond as a wild area.

Located between Nickerson State Park and Route 6, Rafes Pond is a small and quiet oasis in the busy place that Cape Cod has become. *Each new donor will receive the secret instructions on how to find this hidden gem of Brewster.* Don't delay: the first 20 donors as a result of this newsletter will be invited to a special tour of the property led by certified Cape Cod Guide Mark Robinson.

*Please help us preserve Rafes Pond as a part of our Priority Ponds Project. A special year-end donation will help to meet our goal.*



*Quietude in a canoe: the view across Rafes Pond from the Sparrow property on a lazy, hazy day last spring.*

## A mysterious marsh sickness

Where would we be without our salt marshes -- the broad swath of green and gold that so delights the eye, looking west up Quivett Creek from Paines Creek Beach or east from Crosby Landing at Namskaket Marsh? Surely, this is the one habitat type that is fully protected from development under state law, right? Not to worry?

Well, not so fast. Natural and perhaps man-made impacts pose a new threat to the marshes along the Bay. In recent years, ecologists throughout New England have noticed a phenomenon they call "sudden wetland dieback." Salt marsh plants turn brown, wither and die, leaving denuded areas of peat. Without plants, the salt cordgrass, marsh hay, and sea pickles to anchor the marsh and help build its elevation, the marsh bed is susceptible to slumping and eroding, even giving the appearance of "Swiss cheese."

Sudden dieback was first noticed in Georgia, Florida and Louisiana 10 years ago. In the past five years it has appeared in New England. Dr. Stephen Smith, plant ecologist at the Cape Cod National Seashore, has studied the issue on the Cape. "Dieback is less extensive but more rapid in New England. And Wellfleet seems to be the hot spot right now," he says. Dieback spots have appeared in both Cape Cod Bay and Nantucket Sound marshes, including Quivett and Namskaket Marshes in Brewster. Speculation by wetland scientists on causes of

the dieback range from natural (drought, wrack, geese, ice, pathogens and fungus) to human-induced (enhanced sea level rise, eutrophication), but no consensus has emerged. "Each suggestion seems to be contradicted by our experience in the field," Dr. Smith says. The rapidity and extent of this recent phenomenon has botanists perplexed and worried. "Our best guess is that there is some physiological stress to the plants being complicated by predators and/or genetics," says Dr. Smith.

There is no known cure for the problem as yet and scientists are still very much in the data-gathering stage. But research in New England will probably be cutting edge for the issue. So be on the lookout for "weird eroded marshes" coming to a scenic view near you and direct us to exactly where you spot it. And never, never take nature's beauty for granted.

For more info: [wetlands.neers.org](http://wetlands.neers.org).



*A very healthy section of Quivett Marsh, for now...*

## Conserve land, money too

Do you have land you feel ought to remain open space forever? Now is the time! A new federal law offers very significant income tax savings to owners who put a conservation restriction (CR) on their land. A CR is a recorded agreement, usually with a land trust, that leaves the land in your ownership, but generally prohibits further development. It goes without saying that the Brewster Conservation Trust is ready and willing to help you realize your conservation goal and save money too.

Congress and the President enacted the new law in August. As in the past, it allows the donor of an easement to deduct the value of the donation from his or her adjusted gross income for a period of years. But the terms have changed. Formerly, the taxpayer could knock 30 percent off adjusted gross income for up to six years or until the value of the donation was fully deducted. Now, the taxpayer can reduce his or her income by 50 percent for up to 16 years, or until the value of the donation is fully deducted.

**"WHO** can save land? **YOU** can. Talk to BCT about the new tax law."



But you have to act promptly. The donation must be made in 2006 or 2007. The value of the donation is established by an appraisal. A conservation restriction in Brewster is typically valued at much less than half of the full value of the property. A conservation restriction is often donated outright to the land trust. But it can be sold as well – if it is sold at less than full market value, the difference between the sale price and the full value is the value of the donation.

For example, if a taxpayer with reported income of \$80,000 donated a CR valued at \$600,000, he could report a taxable income of \$40,000 for 16 years. So get the benefits of this unusually generous tax offer while they last. We can do most of the paperwork for you. Talk to Peter Johnson, president of the Brewster Conservation Trust, at 508-896-3207, or The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, at 508-362-2565. Hurry to make this law work for you.

## Tributes

The Trust is grateful for gifts received since last spring in memory of, and in honor of, the following persons:

### In memory of

Clarence Althouse

*by Ellen F. Althouse*

Idalia M. Banash

*by Lee A. Banash*

Jo Ann Bennett

*by Betsy McCullough*

James D. Cline

*by Jackie Buckley*

George E. Cullen

*by Catherine E. Cullen*

Helen M. Doern

*by Ed and Karen Daly*

Eddy sisters

*by Louisa Snowman*

Betty L. Eldredge

*by Daniel N. Eldredge*

Edythe Gris

*by Boots Hickok*

Sally Higler

*by Elizabeth J. Hodge*

Leslie E. Iorio

*by Joseph J. Iorio Jr.*

Daniel A. Leone Jr.

*by Dorothy D. Leone*

James McGinnis

*by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Boye*

Karl Oberteuffer

*by Kathy and John Oberteuffer*

Geraldine Pereira

*by Joseph Pereira*

George and Marion Schloemer

*by Clare Neuman*

### In honor of

Steve and Maryanne Matty anniversary

*by Nancy Matty*

### **DID YOU KNOW.....?**

*During the Cape Cod Land Bank Era (1999-2005), the Town of Brewster acquired 102 new acres of preserved open space at a net cost to Town taxpayers of less than \$45,000 per acre. The Brewster Conservation Trust provided assistance in the form of negotiations, state grantwriting, and drafting and holding conservation restrictions for the Town's purchases.*



## BREWSTER CONSERVATION TRUST

P. O. Box 268  
Brewster, Massachusetts 02631

### BCT Trustees (2006-7)

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### ***To all Brewster residents,***

Have you heard the real estate market is faltering? Alas, the Brewster Conservation Trust has not noticed; as we continue to pursue the Priority Ponds Project the need for funds is always pressing. The goal of the Priority Ponds Project is to protect what past president Beth Finch once called the town's "sapphire necklace." Our numerous ponds, as you know, are more than a wonderful sight; they nurture plant, animal and fish wildlife, provide recreation

for us and feed our water supply besides shaping the vistas we treasure. To preserve the quality of this precious resource, it is necessary to protect the pond shores and keep polluting activities at bay. While we seek and do receive donations of land or conservation restrictions on the ponds, money is often necessary to acquire key parcels. For such purchases, we depend on you. Please read the enclosed letter and respond as generously as you can.



*We hope you have enjoyed our switch from one-color newsletters to our present four-color version. It costs us more money to print, of course, but we think it is money well spent if we can convey to our readers just how beautiful our part of Cape Cod is in every season. Only in color would you be able to believe the vibrancy of this magnificent stand of winterberry on a bright autumn day. Enjoy!*