



Director's Report
February 23, 2015
Kris Ramsay

Administrative

Director Search: On February 13, I informed Bob Prescott (President) that I would be stepping down from my position as Director of the organization during the first week of May to pursue a career in the private sector. It has been my pleasure to serve as an employee of the Trust for six years, growing from the Land Manager position to Administrator and most recently Director. The support I have received from the Board of Trustees, Members, and community at large has been inspirational and moving. In the coming months it is my goal to make my departure as easy a transition as possible for the organization, ensuring its continued growth as one of the leading land preservation groups on the Lower Cape.

This past week I drafted up a job posting for the Director position and updated the Trust's job application form. I hope the Board will review and approve both documents by February 27, allowing ample time for those interested to apply for the position and for the Board to review their qualifications.

Dorothy Rowe Boyle Internship: On February 16, I formally posted the Dorothy Rowe Boyle Internship position to Trust website. In the coming week(s) I'll further advertise this position through the newspapers, Constant Contact, and local colleges. The intern hired will work directly with staff to advance OCT's mission through a variety of land management and stewardship activities. He/she will be asked to assist with land management needs and requests, reporting directly to the OCT Director.

He/she can expect to be involved with property inspections and maintenance, long and short-term land management planning, land management grant research, property boundary investigating, educational outreach, and volunteer engagement. Responsibilities include: participating in OCT land management work days, assisting with property monitoring and reporting, assisting with volunteer engagement, and assisting with land acquisitions and other projects as needed. Those interested in learning more about or applying for the position can find details at: <http://orleansconservationtrust.org/internship-opportunity/>

Special Members Meeting & Declaration of Trust Revisions: On February 10, the Trust hosted a Special Members Meeting at 5:00 pm at the Orleans Council on Aging. The meeting started at 5:10 PM with about 40 members present. Bob Prescott welcomed the guests, introduced those Trustees present, and introduced members of the Governance Committee. Bob then handed me the microphone to dive into the body of the presentation. I discussed the background process to date, reviewed the proposed changes article by article, outlined the next steps to be taken, and answered questions from those in attendance. Following the meeting, small revisions were made to the amended Declaration of Trust, and a final copy of the document was posted to the Trust website: <http://orleansconservationtrust.org/lectures/>.

Following the meeting, the Trust also finalized the Member voting mailing list (made up of 950 Members) and absentee voting form (including online voting form). The Board is expected to approve the final amended Declaration of Trust at the full Board meeting on Monday, February 23.

Orleans Water Quality Advisory Panel: For all the meeting materials, go to <http://www.town.orleans.ma.us/water-quality-advisory-panel/pages/workshop-materials>. I plan to provide an update regarding the revised hybrid plan and financial model at the February 23 Board meeting.

Green Week/AmeriCorps Week: On February 9, I presented to the Elementary School Committee and requested its vote of support for the trail installation. The committee voted unanimously to support the installation of a trail system south of Boland Pond. On February 10, I presented the proposed trail design to the Conservation Commission on behalf of both the Nauset Regional School Committee and the Elementary School Committee. After a brief discussion, the commission voted unanimously to support the trail design and installation.

Town-wide Trail Guide: On February 12, John Jannell (Town Conservation Agent) and I met with MapWorks to review the updated trail guide design and make final suggestions and edits. MapWorks is committed to updating the guide within the coming weeks and having a final product ready for print by the end of March.

Hats: After researching a number of companies, I am recommending that we hire alplanet to embroider 150 OCT hats. They were recommended by both the Harwich and Brewster Conservation Trusts, and they went above and beyond to execute a very difficult embroidery design for our logo. Their prices for their hats are very competitive. Below is the design shown on two hats, one a faded dark blue and the other khaki. (Note: The darker hat shows the design actually sewn on; the khaki hat just has a proof overlaid.) The cost breakdown is:

- Cost per hat: \$8.95
- 150 hats: \$1,341 (my recommended order)
- 200 hats: \$1,788

I did not envision this being a fundraising effort, but rather a good way to market the Trust and to thank larger donors for their support. If we order 150 hats and sell them for \$15 each, we will make a profit of \$909.



AmeriCorps Individual Place Orientation Meeting: On February 26, Barnstable County AmeriCorps Cape Cod is holding an Individual Placement Request for Proposal (RFP) orientation and release meeting, in the Harbor View Conference Room located at the County Complex (3195 Main Street, Barnstable). Since the Trust wants to apply for an Individual Placement for the 2015-2016 program year, we are required to attend the meeting. The program's focus areas include Natural Resource Management, Disaster Preparedness and Response, Environmental Education, and Volunteer Engagement.

Compact Southeastern MA Convocation: On January 31, Trustees Karl Goldkamp and Kevin Galligan and I attended the Compact's Southeastern MA Land Trust Convocation. Despite heavy snows the morning of the conference, more than 100 land trust staff, trustees, and volunteers were in attendance. The seminar topics were *Best Practices for Managing Invasive Species*, *Strategic Planning for Your Organization and Board*, *Effective Use of Volunteers to Increase Capacity*, and *Leveraging the Conservation Land Tax Credit in Bargain Sale Negotiations*. Bob Prescott gave the plenary talk, *Sea Turtle Stranding Rescue Program*. All of the seminar presentations can be found at http://www.thecompact.net/SEMLT_Convocation_Presentations_31Jan2015.htm

MA Land Trust Conference: On March 21, the MA Land Trust Conference host its 25th MA Land Conservation Conference. This is a conference I have attended for six years, but due to the expected timing of the birth of my first child, I will not be able to attend this year. This annual, day-long training and networking event provides an opportunity for land trust board members and staff; parks administrators and advocates; colleagues from federal, state and local government agencies; students; and philanthropists to participate in a full day of workshops and discussions that focus on fostering healthy communities in MA through land conservation.

U.S. Congressman James P. McGovern will be the keynote speaker at the conference; another speaker is MA Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Matthew Beaton. The workshop tracks this year will be:

- Conserving Our Common Wealth & Emerging Issues
- Land Management & Stewardship
- Land Protection Tools & Techniques
- Legal, Tax & Compliance Matters
- Organizational Management & Fundraising
- Urban Conservation & Greening

MA 3ABC Form: This past month we submitted Property Tax Exemption Form 3-ABC (due March 1, 2015) for all Massachusetts tax-exempt organizations that hold real or personal property. As required, the form was filed with the Town Assessor's office, and included the organization's most recently filed Attorney General Form PC (which also includes the IRS 990 and audited financial statements).

Land Acquisition

Walton Potential CR: On January 23, we received feedback on the CR from the state. Since that time we have been editing the document based on the state's suggestions. Mr. Walton is currently having his attorneys review the document, and in the coming month I will ask the Land Acquisition/Land Management Committee to review the draft.

High-Priority Land Owners Mailing: In 2013, OCT's Land Acquisition Committee discussed and strategically identified land in Orleans that was of the highest priority for preservation. Some of the criteria for identifying these lands were acreage, location, connectivity to other preserved lands, and known rare or endangered species. The committee created a scoring sheet and used these criteria to evaluate each parcel in Town, rather than basing the parcel's importance on opinion alone. We wrote to those property owners and subsequently two developable lots were donated to OCT. This past month I reexamined the evaluation criteria and confirmed that many of the lands identified as high-priority in 2013 are still of the highest priority to protect from looming development. With this in mind I sent a personalized letter to those land owners, including information pertaining to the new federal and state tax deductions.

Land Management

Dog Leash Policy: At present the Trust does not have a policy stipulating whether or not dogs are allowed on Trust property, and if so, whether they need to be leashed. Until now, dogs with their owners have been allowed to enjoy Trust lands (more specifically those with managed trails), and we have asked that dog owners have "voice control" of their dog. I am recommending that the Trust discuss this matter at the February 23 Board meeting. If a policy is put in place by March 1, 2015, it could be included in our Town-wide trail guide.

Vernal Pool Program: On February 2, Karl Goldkamp, Frank Deleo, Kevin Galligan, and Vince Ollivier (former OCT Trustee and consultant) met to discuss state-certified and uncertified vernal pools found in Orleans. Since that time we have gathered copies of the certified vernal pool certificates associated with Trust and Town lands, developed an Excel sheet identifying the remaining uncertified vernal pools in Town, and started to conduct site visits to familiarize ourselves with both the certified and uncertified pools. We hope to better understand the condition of the existing certified vernal pools, document vernal pool species within the state-recognized potential vernal pools, and conduct a handful of on-site educational programs for members and volunteers interested in learning more about vernal pool species.

Communications/Marketing

Newsletter: Since early January I have met twice with Diana Landau (chair of Marketing and Communication Committee) to discuss and refine the general layout and content of the spring 2015 newsletter. Since then we have identified a number of individuals committed to writing stories for this issue, and I have started to lay out the educational programs for the coming year. We hope to have the newsletter completed and mailed out by the end of April.

Finance and Investment

Recent Meeting: On February 20, the Finance and Investment Committee plans to meet; its agenda is:

- Review the investment policy and investment procedure documents for any recommended additions/deletions/changes;
- Discuss a potential audit policy;
- Clarify how we should manage excess cash owned by the operating fund and currently held in the checking account, and
- Review Q4 investment balances.

Following this meeting, the committee will report back to the full Board on February 23.

Educational Meetings/ Programs

Recent Walks: On February 5 at 10:00 am, Frank DeLeo and I planned to co-lead a walk at the Marion Hadley and Samuel Watson Peck Conservation Area (off Arey's Lane). The walk needed to be cancelled due to poor weather conditions and no parking.

Recent Lecture: On Thursday, February 5, longtime Orleans resident and amateur historian Bonnie Snow discussed the history of the lands now conserved on Town Cove, including Sea Call Farm, Meadow on the Cove, and the Windmill. For the full recap click [HERE](#).

Upcoming Lecture: On Monday, March 2, from 7:00 – 8:00 pm at the Orleans Yacht Club (39 Cove Road), Dr. Jonathan Way will give a presentation titled *Coywolves on Cape Cod*. Dr. Way, a Cape Cod native, has spent the better part of his professional life researching coyotes in suburban and urban settings of eastern MA. Dr. Way will present the history and findings of his research on the coywolf here on Cape Cod and Eastern MA, his plans to continue those studies, and the difficulties he has encountered in obtaining state permits for further research. He will also describe his study of wolves in Yellowstone National Park and the similarities he found between the behavior of those Yellowstone wolves and that of coywolves here in MA.