



NEWS FROM

ORLEANS CONSERVATION TRUST

Protecting Nature for Our Community

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORLEANS CONSERVATION TRUST RECEIVES \$260,000 GRANT FROM MASSACHUSETTS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM FOR CEDAR POND SHORE LAND PROTECTION PROJECT

Orleans, MA / October 29, 2025 – Orleans, MA – The Orleans Conservation Trust (OCT) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a \$260,000 grant from the Massachusetts Conservation Partnership Grant Program to support OCT's acquisition of 3.78 acres of land along Cedar Pond under its Cedar Pond Shore Land Protection Project. This funding represents significant progress toward OCT's \$585,000 fundraising goal to purchase and protect the ecologically important pond shoreline and surrounding habitats, while establishing formal public access to Cedar Pond for the first time.

The shorefront parcel features mature oaks, tupelo stands, and 620 feet of freshwater shoreline, providing roosting sites for egrets and other wading birds. Cedar Pond is home to a historic herring run, which has shown signs of recovery in recent years. The grant, combined with other land acquisition funds, will allow OCT to safeguard critical pond shore habitat, benefiting both Cedar Pond and the Rock Harbor Creek system downstream.

A key benefit of the project is its connection to other protected lands. The Cedar Pond Shore Land Protection Project expands a vital ecological corridor linking the pond to 12 acres of adjacent protected land, including an Atlantic White Cedar-Red Maple swamp system to the west. Over the past decade, OCT and the Town of Orleans have worked with multiple landowners to protect this network of wetlands.

"The Town narrowly missed acquiring the property last year," said Lynn O'Connell, Chair of the Town of Orleans Open Space Committee. "We are so grateful to the owners for their patience and willingness to work with the town and with OCT to protect this land as open space."

"We're especially excited about this space's proximity to downtown Orleans, the Cape Cod Rail Trail, and nearby affordable housing," said OCT Executive Director Steve O'Grady. "It's an ideal location to improve equitable access to nature and recreation. Cedar Pond is the fourth-largest pond in Orleans, yet it has no official public access points. Through this acquisition, we hope to establish responsible public access so that everyone can enjoy the area."

The award to OCT was among sixteen Conservation Partnership grants awarded in this round by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, part of more than \$12

million in grants for land protection and outdoor access projects. On Cape Cod, five land trusts – Barnstable Land Trust, Harwich Conservation Trust, Orenda Wildlife Land Trust, Truro Conservation Trust, and Orleans Conservation Trust – received funding through this program. The State also announced PARC (Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities) and LAND (Local Acquisition for Natural Diversity) awards to support open space and recreation projects statewide, including for projects in Dennis and Yarmouth.

“A heartfelt thank you to Secretary Tepper and the Healey-Driscoll Administration for supporting community projects across Massachusetts,” said OCT Board of Trustees President Mary Griffin. “This award makes a meaningful difference for the community of Orleans and everyone who enjoys our local open spaces.”

While this award marks significant progress toward protecting the land along Cedar Pond, OCT hopes the Town of Orleans will join as a partner in the project through Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding. OCT is also conducting private fundraising for the project, and donations can be made at <https://orleansconservationtrust.org/>.

In October 2023, OCT received a \$175,000 Conservation Partnership Grant for the purchase of 4.5 acres on Eli Rogers Road in South Orleans, strengthening a wildlife corridor that links preserved land in Brewster with the 500-acre protected Orleans Watershed. The Town contributed \$200,000 in CPA funding to that project.

Learn more about Orleans Conservation Trust here: <https://orleansconservationtrust.org/>.

Orleans Conservation Trust is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 1970. Over its 50-year history, the Trust has preserved 700 acres in Orleans. Among the most active land trusts on Cape Cod, OCT stewards a range of ecosystems, from freshwater ponds and wetlands to saltmarshes, wooded upland, and coastal grasslands, managing its lands to protect and enhance wildlife habitat, restore native ecosystems, and provide public recreation and education through a network of trails and informational signage. OCT also educates residents and visitors about important natural values and environmental issues in Orleans and around Cape Cod via grants to Orleans schools, guided walks, free lectures, its website, newsletter, and other communications.

[All photos cleared for use.]



[Preservation of the 3.78 acres located on Locust Road (outlined in red) will provide critical pond shoreline protection. Parcel layer and imagery provided by the Town of Orleans.]



[Cedar Pond from above, with Town Cove visible in the background. The oak trees and tupelo stands along the pond shoreline provide roosting sites for egrets and other wading birds. Photo by Hardie Truesdale.]



[View of Cedar Pond from Cedar Pond Road. Orleans Conservation Trust hopes to establish official public access points to the pond in the future. Photo by Ashley Martin.]