



NEWS FROM

ORLEANS CONSERVATION TRUST

Protecting Nature for Our Community

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORLEANS CONSERVATION TRUST LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT WOODLAND ALONGSIDE BELOVED REUBEN'S POND TRAIL

Orleans, MA / September 23, 2026 – Orleans, MA – The Orleans Conservation Trust (OCT) is launching a campaign to permanently protect 1.14 acres of mature pine-oak woodland at 170 Brick Hill Road, a parcel that would expand the 35-acre Ice House & Reuben's Ponds Conservation Area.

Located alongside one of OCT's most popular trails, the property is an important piece of the larger conservation landscape. Protecting it would preserve wildlife habitat, help protect water quality, and prevent future development from changing the character of the trail that runs alongside the Reuben's Pond trail loop.

"This is one of those properties where protecting a relatively small piece of land can have an impact well beyond its boundaries," says Stephen O'Grady, Executive Director of Orleans Conservation Trust. "It connects to a much larger area of protected land, provides important habitat, and helps protect Reuben's Pond and Town Cove. We're grateful to the landowners for making this opportunity possible and are asking the community to help us see it through."

The mature pine-oak woodland provides cover, food, and water sources for migrating birds, making the Ice House & Reuben's Ponds Conservation Area a favorite spot for birders. The state has also identified the area as important habitat for vernal pool wildlife. Amphibians such as spotted salamanders that breed in nearby vernal pools need protected upland habitat surrounding those pools in order to survive and thrive.

Protecting the parcel would preserve the experience of OCT's existing trail. Without conservation, development of the lot could mean clearing the woodland and a future home rising above the trail between the ponds. Conservation would instead keep this stretch of woodland intact and preserve another potential access point to the trail system from Brick Hill Road.

The property owners, Marnie Campbell and Alexandra Campbell Eldar, have a long relationship with OCT and have offered the land at a significant discount from its appraised value to make conservation possible.

"I grew up playing in the woods behind our home and all along the conservation paths. This is where I would find forest friends including garter snakes, yellow spotted salamanders, red backed

salamanders, toads, bull frogs, snapping turtles and painted turtles, just to name a few. One spring, my mother had the incredible experience of seeing a deer come out of the woods followed by an animated fawn who then began nursing. Nature is very important to me and my mother, and we are thrilled to be working with the OCT to preserve this property,” said Alexandra.

OCT must **raise \$525,000 by June 15, 2027**, to secure the property. A pending application to a state grant program could provide \$250,000, and OCT expects that decision before the end of the year. The Trust has just begun fundraising from neighbors, trail users, and OCT supporters.

"This is our backyard," says Tom Cahalan, who with his wife, Giselle, lives in the neighborhood and has been helping to organize neighbors in support of OCT's purchase. "Protecting this land today is the only way to ensure the Ice House and Rueben's Ponds remain clean, wild, and part of daily life for everyone who calls this neighborhood and town home."

Donations to support the Reuben's Pond Woodland Expansion will be accepted through June 15, 2027. To learn more or contribute, visit <https://OrleansConservationTrust.org/>.

Orleans Conservation Trust is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 1970. Over its 55-year history, the Trust has preserved over 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 salt marshes, 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.]



[A view of

Reuben's Pond. Photo by Hardie Truesdale.]

Land Protection Opportunity: Reuben's Pond Woodlands Expansion



[The location of the Brick Hill parcel within Orleans. Parcel layer and imagery provided by the Town of Orleans.]