



Dear OCT Member,

Greetings, and we hope your holidays were joyous! The Trust is experimenting with new and improved ways to communicate with our members and supporters, including periodic updates via e-mail like this one. These will enable us to keep in touch with you more often than a semi-annual newsletter permits. Not to mention that we'll save resources—important for a land organization—and save money on printing, postage, and administration.

So we need to have e-mail contacts for as many of you as possible. Please take the opportunity to confirm/update [your e-mail address](#).

We want to assure you that OCT respects your privacy. We never share e-mail addresses, we send news only a couple of times a month (longer updates may be quarterly), and you can easily unsubscribe at any time.

The trustees believe it's especially important to be in touch with you at this time, given the pace of activity and change in the organization since our Annual Meeting in August. Here's a brief summary. (You'll find many more details in the Fall newsletter and Kris Ramsay's latest [Director's Report](#).)

Lands & Programs

Educational programs are flourishing. Since August we've presented programs at Orleans Yacht Club on tick safety, the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, and a lecture intriguingly titled "Piping Plovers Taste like Starlings"—all well attended and well received. Recent and upcoming events include programs about snowy owls and "coywolves" on the Cape.

Walks are proliferating. Recent walks to Mill Pond Valley, Pochet Island, Twining's Pond, and Kent's Point attracted many interested visitors. Four more walks are scheduled through early spring: to Hosea's Swamp, and the Peck Property, Woods Cove, and Paw Wah Conservation Areas ([details](#)).

Acquisitions are progressing. For example, in December we closed on the Braddock gift off Henson's Way, which is in close proximity to an existing 15 acres preserved by the Trust.

Land management and maintenance proceeds apace. On Namequoit Bog and White's Lane, as well as seasonal mowing on several other OCT properties.

Board of Trustees

At our Annual Meeting in August, we elected two new trustees, Meff Runyon and Diana Landau.

Since then, the Board of Trustees voted to elect a new slate of officers. They are:

Bob Prescott, President
Meff Runyon, Vice-President
Beth Minear, Treasurer
Judy Scanlon, Clerk

Subsequently, over a period of weeks, four serving trustees tendered their resignations. The Board of Trustees regrets the loss of these able and dedicated individuals, and is confident that all OCT members join us in expressing deep thanks to the departing trustees: Paul Blakeley, Lynn Bruneau, Jim Trainor, and Ad Vos. Each has made valuable contributions to the Trust in many areas over their years of service, and we look forward to their continued involvement as members. (We include in these thanks Peter Deeks, who had resigned from the board just prior to the Annual Meeting.)

While it is difficult to replace the specific abilities each trustee brings, the Trust is fortunate in being able to draw on its diverse and dedicated membership for new leaders. Because the challenges we face will require a governing team fully stocked with talents and energy, the Board has appointed three new trustees to serve out unfinished terms that expire in August 2015, after which the Nominating Committee will review and recommend on their candidacy, along with others. They are:

- Kevin Galligan – Kevin was one of the slate of three candidates originally put forth by the Nominating Committee for election by the members in 2014. An engineer by training, he also brings experience in energy consulting and finance, and currently serves on the Orleans Conservation Commission (a useful piece of synergy).
- Steve Koehler – Steve is recently retired from a career in finance, chiefly in the healthcare field, having served as a CFO in a NASDAQ-listed company. He has been an active volunteer for a historical society and Episcopal churches, and has a strong interest in natural history and botany.
- Mon Cochran – Mon is a retired professor of early childhood development at Cornell. His history with the Trust goes back to its origins; the Cochran family is the largest single land donor to the organization. We're happy to have Mon's experience, energy and fundraising talent again working for OCT.

With several seats still open, the Board is likely to make additional interim appointments as needed to fulfill its responsibilities effectively during the coming months, until the Nominating Committee recommends candidates for the next election cycle. We invite any members interested in serving as trustees to contact us: e-mail oct@orleansconservationtrust.org.

Committees

The trustees are examining our current committee structure; existing committees have been expanded or merged, and new ones formed. We are seeking participation by more members in committee work; it's a great way to get familiar with OCT and really make an impact.

Declaration of Trust Revision (and other governance)

An expanded Governance Committee met three times since early October and made excellent progress revising several articles of the DOT, incorporating member feedback gathered over the summer. The committee established a timeline for moving forward (see [November 2014 Director's Report](#) for details). Key dates include:

- **February 19, 2015** Special members meeting to discuss Board-approved DOT revision (content provided to members in advance)
- **March 1, 2015** Ballot mailed for member vote on revised DOT

Since the revised DOT will be a very long document we cannot mail it to members, but we'll gladly e-mail the full text if we have [your e-mail address](#).

Election of trustees in the last cycle was opened to online voting, resulting in record participation and a hard-to-achieve quorum. The work of the Nominating Committee was exemplary and a model for the future. Nominations and elections were among the governance issues that attracted the most comments at our special meetings, and the recent improvements will be incorporated into the revised DOT and Policies & Procedures documents.

Fundraising, Finances & Strategic Planning

In 2013, departing trustee Ad Vos made a gift of \$100,000 to establish an endowment for the Trust. In September, he requested the return of this gift. Ad and the Board of Trustees are working through their respective attorneys to best comply with this request, which will result in the donation going to another nonprofit organization.

While the Trust is not dependent on funding from an endowment, the trustees recognize that the organization should work toward rebuilding such a fund. This will be a priority of ongoing strategic planning efforts, along with stepped-up fundraising activity in general.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the 250-plus members who responded generously to our **annual year-end appeal**, the largest source of our operating funds each year. We hope all of you will continue to support the Trust as generously as you can, so that our land resources, programs, and community outreach can continue to grow.

Former trustee Peter Deeks will continue working with the Trust's investments.

OCT's 2014 budget-to-actual performance remains on track very much as projected at the Annual Meeting. Despite some higher than expected expenses, income from dues and gifts at the end of October was over what had been budgeted for the entire year. Trustees are working with staff to review and approve the 2015 budget during the first half of January.

Outreach & Impact

Both Director Kris Ramsay and several trustees have attended meetings of the **Orleans Water Quality Advisory Panel**. The Board has appointed Kris as the Trust's liaison to these meetings, ensuring that the Trust is represented and that all trustees will be informed about the discussions taking place and proposals moving forward.

The Trust is working with the Town on the project to restore Boland Pond, and to develop a Town-wide trail guide including OCT lands.

The Orleans Historical Society, at its annual meeting, honored our talented and tireless director Kris Ramsay with its ***award for Environmental Preservation***.

Our ongoing work with youth volunteers, interns, and AmeriCorps benefits OCT lands directly as well as providing experience and direction for young folks.

Through our involvement with The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts Inc., we supported the recent increase in the ***Commonwealth Conservation Land Tax Credit*** from \$50,000 to \$75,000—a credit now available to anyone who chooses to donate or place a conservation restriction over all or a portion of their land. Contact Kris Ramsay for more information, 508-255-0183.

Website & Newsletter

We trust you received your copy of our Fall newsletter. We encourage you to make time to read and enjoy all the news of OCT's recent and planned activities, plus a feature by longtime member Bobbie Thomsen about her family's conservation legacy in East Orleans.

Kris Ramsay's informative monthly [Director's Reports](#) can now be found on the website. There you'll also find maps of all the walking trails in Town, a full list of the land preserved by the Trust, upcoming educational programs, and creative ways to financially support the Trust.

We want your feedback!

The Director and Board of Trustees always welcome input from our members — especially if you're interested in volunteering on a committee, for land stewardship work, or for fundraising. You're invited to send an e-mail to oct@orleansconservationtrust.org or letters to: Orleans Conservation Trust, P.O. Box 1078, East Orleans, MA 02643.

As always, deepest thanks for your engagement and support!

The Board of Trustees