

ORLEANS
CONSERVATION TRUST



Tribute to a Tree Man

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Completing the Necklace at Henson's Cove



Explore Namskaket Marsh on a new guided walk! **Walks & Talks**, pages 6–7

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On the cover: Henson's Cove Conservation Area from 4 Braddock's Way. Photo by Diana Landau. Inset: OCT intern Annika Harrington.

Remember to renew! Membership dues are more important to OCT than ever right now. They support our land-saving work and ensure that you, and all who live in Orleans, continue to benefit from it. Please help the Trust, yourself, and your neighbors by renewing your membership when you receive our spring mailing. And mark your calendar (provisionally) for the **OCT Annual Meeting on Monday, August 30!**

from the president

Dear OCT members and supporters,

Like many of you, I suspect, I've turned gratefully to reading in the past pandemic year—in search of balance and calm for our present situation. I've especially enjoyed revisiting works from my college philosophy courses, including those of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle. Coming back to these wise writings made me realize that they were onto something more than just the ordering of people in societies.

Aristotle, for one, saw how every element of nature is interconnected and has a purpose.

In spring, our senses reawaken to the natural world, and we notice these purposeful connections.

The honeybee or butterfly visiting a native shrub is on an important mission, like all pollinators: to aid plants in reproducing. Native plants in their habitats provide essential food and shelter for birds and other wildlife. That connection has been broken in many places, and we can help by planting more natives in our yards. This is the message of Doug Tallamy's important book *Nature's Best Hope*—the selection of OCT's inaugural book club group, in partnership with our local bookstore Sea Howl (page 9). Such partnerships help sustain our human ecosystem.

Like the pollinators, OCT is on a mission: to preserve land forever for the benefit of us all. As a member you know firsthand all the tangible and intangible ways conserved land contributes to our community's quality of life. Besides

preserving critical habitat for wildlife and providing recreation and refreshment for people, conserved land enhances property values, reduces the cost of public services, and helps safeguard the freshwater and marine systems on which our local economy depends.

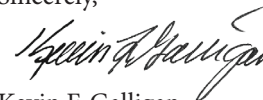
The property we're currently working to acquire on Henson's Cove (page 4) epitomizes all these invaluable services.

In OCT's recent history, and I hope you enjoy learning more about why. In this issue you'll also read about how some OCT trustees have been hard at work crafting revisions to our Declaration of Trust and bylaws (page 3), for members' approval at the Annual Meeting.

I surely hope to see you there in late August—perhaps in the virtual space again but just maybe in person, if all goes well.

On behalf of Executive Director Steve O'Grady and all the Trust staff and trustees, I thank you for your unfailing support. It's our connections with you that sustain us and our land-saving work.

Sincerely,



Kevin F. Galligan
President



"Nature makes nothing incomplete and nothing in vain."

—Aristotle, *Politics*

To my mind, the 3.75 acres at 4 Braddock's Way is the most critical purchase



Come Get Your Pollinator Plants! On Saturday, June 19, from 10:00 am to noon, OCT will host a plant sale at our headquarters at 203 South Orleans Road—mainly pollinator plants grown and generously provided by Lake Farm Gardens of Orleans. Proceeds benefit the Trust; the plants benefit our local ecosystems.

Housekeeping at the Trust

Governing Documents Get a Refresh

In 1970, the founders of the Orleans Conservation Trust adopted a “Declaration of Trust” (DOT) that set a course and served the organization well for decades. Since the DOT was last amended, in 2015, OCT has significantly expanded its operations and conservation holdings. Our growing need to work and communicate with our members virtually during the pandemic has also suggested some changes to our governing documents.



Over the past year, our Governance Committee has been working to update the DOT to reflect current best practices in nonprofit governance. Most of the

proposed revisions involve cleaning up language and fine-tuning procedures for conducting the Annual Meeting to be more efficient and engaging for OCT members. Importantly, the DOT will retain key provisions that set forth the powers of the members and trustees, how trustees are elected by the members, and the size of the board. As has always been the case, these amendments to the DOT will be subject to approval by the membership.

Unlike many organizations, the Trust has not had a separate set of bylaws to address details of how the board functions: how the trustees conduct meetings, elect officers, and govern our organization. So, in revising the DOT, the committee has also

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Above: OCT staff and volunteers install a new information kiosk outside the Trust office.



A new guided walk will traverse Skaket Beach to Namskaket Creek, the main artery of a rare, large salt marsh on the Orleans–Brewster border.
Photo by Hans Rilling

Completing the Necklace at Henson's Cove

A Rare Chance to Add Terrapin Habitat

"This one checks all the boxes," says OCT Executive Director Stephen O'Grady about the Trust's planned acquisition of nearly four acres on Henson's Cove in Orleans. "A wide range of habitats, home to rare species, a birdwatching destination, important for water protection and climate resilience—it's rare that a property meets so many high-priority criteria for conservation."

Over some 45 years, through gifts and purchases, OCT has acquired 11 undeveloped properties around the cove, on the west side of the River. Formerly known as the White's Lane Conservation Area, this preserve was recently renamed the Henson's Cove Conservation Area (HCCA). Its size, beautiful setting, and abundant conservation values make it a crown jewel among OCT's lands.

The 19-acre preserve already includes an ecologically important mix of sandplain grassland, saltwater shoreline, and fringing marsh, as well as freshwater wetlands. Now we have a chance to complete the HCCA by purchasing 4 Braddock's Way (see map). The new parcel will add 157 feet to OCT's saltwater frontage on the cove and another 545 feet



Above: The Henson's Cove Conservation Area from the property to be acquired at 4 Braddock's Way. © Hardie Truesdale. Below: Bob Prescott looks for the best spots to "plant" terrapin hatchlings in the restored habitat across the cove.

of frontage on the adjacent saltmarsh, as well as a substantial swath of pristine pitch pine-oak woodland.

Moreover, says O'Grady, "since the transition from saltmarsh to upland is gradual here, preserving the new parcel will allow for 'saltmarsh migration'—important in buffering the rising sea levels associated with a changing climate."

More Territory for Terrapins

The HCCA offers prime habitat for wildlife, including rare eastern box

turtles and American black ducks, which nest there (nesting areas have declined elsewhere). But it's best known as a home to *northern diamondback terrapins*, a state-listed threatened species. In 2009, OCT restored several acres on the north side of the cove to sandplain grassland, the terrapins' preferred habitat. Since then, volunteers and staff from OCT and Mass Audubon have devoted hundreds of hours to monitoring nesting terrapins there: protecting nests from predators, gathering data, collecting and releasing hatchlings.



The program has been a resounding success: between 2012 and 2020, the number of protected nests has increased every year, and the number of documented hatchlings has risen from 13 in 2012 to 162 in 2020. The Trust plans to restore the shoreline of 4 Braddock's Way to create more grassland nesting sites for the turtles and other birds and critters that prefer this habitat.

"The Henson's Cove preserve has meant so much to our efforts to sustain and grow the Cape's population of these terrapins," says Bob Prescott, director emeritus of Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary. "Parts of the new acreage are ideal for restoring to grassland to host more nests. This is the most significant opportunity to save the threatened diamondback terrapin in the ecosystem along the River from Meetinghouse Pond to Pleasant Bay."

A High Bar and a Short Window

The total estimated price tag for the project is \$900,000. The cost of the land is \$800,000, and we've budgeted \$100,000 to restore grassland, remove an aging boathouse from the property, and create a

"The HCCA is important in so many ways: to people who appreciate our natural spaces and to the marsh and woodland creatures that live there, like the nesting terrapins. Preserving this land also helps sustain the flow of clean water into Pleasant Bay."

— Vince Ollivier

stewardship fund. Because the seller stipulated a short pre-closing period, OCT must raise the funds by September 15, 2021. To date, we've been seeking grants from private foundations and historically large donors. Now we're reaching out to our entire OCT membership of 1,200-plus: the bedrock of our fundraising success and

4 Braddock's Way By the Numbers

Acres to be conserved: 3.74
Buildable lots: 1
Assessed value: \$1.07M
Total fundraising goal: \$900,000
Saltwater frontage in feet: 157
Total HCCA acreage: 23
Years spent assembling the HCCA: 45
Fundraising deadline:
September 15, 2021

the people who make all of OCT's work possible.

We are more than halfway there! As of late April, we've already raised \$480,000. Foundations have played an important role, as have two donors who pledged \$200,000 as a matching challenge. Much of that matching pledge is yet to be used.

This project—decades in the making—is a "can't miss" opportunity, as the Trust sees it. "It's remarkable to see an ethic of land conservation passed on through three generations of families," says Vince Ollivier, former OCT trustee and officer, who worked with some of the families that gifted land to the Henson's Cove preserve. "I believe the forebears of the present-day Henson-Braddocks, Wildts, and Whites would be pleased to know that this last parcel on the cove will become part of their legacy."

Please help OCT preserve this keystone property! Checks may be sent to the Orleans Conservation Trust at 203 South Orleans Road, Orleans, MA 02653. You can also donate online at orleansconservationtrust.org/give-to-oct. Either way, please specify that the funds are for the 4 Braddock's Way purchase. Thank you for your support!



View across the cove from 4 Braddock's Way in early May. © Hardie Truesdale

Summer/Fall 2021 Speakers

Join us for the latest in our series of **entertaining and informative** talks by **local and regional experts**. Admission **free**.

Watch our website for news about whether programs will be in person or online, and dates/times where not published.



The Lowdown on Terrapins

Bob Prescott

Director Emeritus, Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

Bob will illuminate the natural history of our only saltmarsh turtle as only he can. Attendees will learn where terrapins are found around the Cape, what role they play in the ecosystem, and how terrapin recovery efforts in Wellfleet and Orleans are going. Plus, learn about spectacular new findings on terrapin brumation (winter torpor).

Monday, August 30

Immediately following the OCT Annual Meeting



The Secret Lives of Wild Bees

Nicholas Dorian

Ecologist, educator, naturalist

More than 4,000 species of bees inhabit North America, and most of them don't live in hives or make honey. Bee expert Nick Dorian will discuss the natural history and conservation of wild bees: their varied lifestyles, their habitat needs, and their intricate relationships with flowering plants and with other insects. You'll come away with a newfound appreciation for the secret lives of these charismatic pollinators, and knowledge about how to identify and support bees in your own backyard.

Thursday, September 23

6:00 pm, via Zoom



Vernal Ponds and the Wildlife They Support

Robert Cook

Retired wildlife ecologist, National Park Service

Vernal ponds nurture many species of native plants and wildlife—some of them especially adapted to the ponds' unique conditions. Some amphibians even undertake annual migrations based on the ephemeral nature of these wetlands. Bob Cook's 40 years of experience monitoring vernal pond amphibians at Cape Cod National Seashore will inform his presentation, which will include an update on the health and status of vernal pond critters in the Seashore.

October date TBA



Restoration Agriculture: Growing Food and Helping the Earth

Rand Burkert and Gretel Norgoet

Organic farmers and agriculture advocates

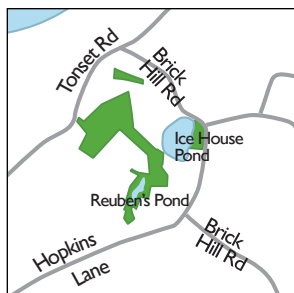
Two of the Cape's most knowledgeable and committed agricultural educators, Rand and Gretel will discuss how agriculture, managed properly, can improve environmental conditions and human health. You'll learn how to get started practicing restoration agriculture, growing your own food while also providing for wildlife and reducing your environmental footprint.

November date TBA

Summer/Fall 2021 Walks

Get to know the **open spaces** of Orleans on our **popular guided walks**. They're **free, fun**, and appropriate for **all ages**.

Space is restricted; advance registration required. Call OCT or register on our website.



Ice House & Reuben's Ponds Conservation Area

1.5-mile walk around two freshwater ponds and through a wildlife stronghold in the Tonset neighborhood.

Meet at 245 Tonset Road, Orleans

Wednesday, June 16
9:00–10:30 am



Putnam Farm Conservation Area

Take a short walk through old field habitat, and learn about Putnam Farm's agricultural history and the exciting movement to bring this land back into use as farmland. (See Talks, "Restoration Agriculture")

Meet at Putnam Farm, accessed by dirt drive next to County Courthouse on Rock Harbor Road

Thursday, July 22
10:00–11:30 am

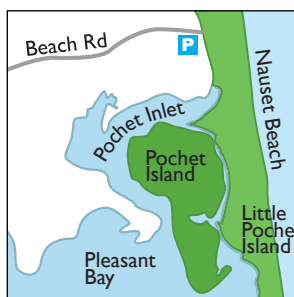


Kayak to Little Sipson Island

Paddle a total of about 3 miles to and from Little Sipson Island Conservation Area, and get a glimpse of the newly preserved big Sipson Island. Trip co-led by Mass Audubon staff. Event is for experienced paddlers only. Please bring your own watercraft; a few loaners available.

Meet at the Route 28 Town Landing, South Orleans, just north of the Orleans/Brewster border

August, date TBD
9:00–11:30 am



Hike to Pochet Island

OCT leads this walk as part of Orleans Pond Coalition's Celebrate Our Waters weekend. Walk about 5 miles, including strenuous portions over soft sand, to this hidden gem.

Meet at Nauset Beach, the southern ORV trailhead

Sunday, September 19
9:00 am–1:00 pm

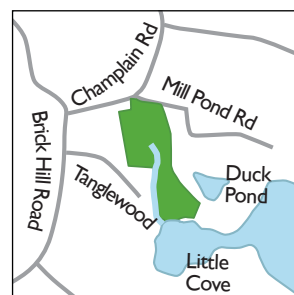


Beach Walk to Namskaket Creek

Walk about 1.5 miles (round trip) through soft sand on Skaket Beach to a saltmarsh habitat of 200+ acres, including the single largest land donation to OCT.

Meet at the south end of the Skaket Beach parking lot

Thursday, October 21
1:30–3:00 pm



Mill Pond Valley Conservation Area

Walk about 1 mile through this hydrologically important preserve; see a kettle pond, a vernal pool, and Stumpy's Cove, and recent trail improvements (page 10).

Meet at 13 Champlain Road

Wednesday, November 10
9:30–11:00 am

Experience Namskaket Creek



A first-time walk for OCT! Learn about the ecological and historical importance of this sprawling salt marsh that straddles Orleans and Brewster and the multitown effort to establish the Cape Cod Sea Path. What does the future hold for the Cape's precious saltmarsh ecosystems?

Planting Trees and Hope

by Elizabeth Walker

Dan Connolly understands our attachment to trees, nature's most ancient and revered plants. He believes that trees give us a sense of place. They also give oxygen, store carbon, stabilize the soil, provide shade, and do so much more to protect and sustain life. Trees need protection as well. As Orleans's now-retired tree warden, Dan shouldered that awesome responsibility for more than two decades.

"Dan has been a tremendous resource for the Orleans Conservation Trust," said OCT Executive Director Stephen O'Grady. "He advocated for the AmeriCorps Cape Cod program and shared the work of overseeing and mentoring ACC service members for years, teaching them how to manage hazardous trees, invasive species, and chainsaw safety. All of that was invaluable to OCT."

Under Dan's careful watch, rare and venerable specimens of American elms and chestnut trees in Orleans have stayed healthy. Invasive species have been thwarted from encroaching on ponds, and the town's 10,000-plus roadside trees have been inventoried. He would be the first to say he didn't accomplish all this—and more—alone. He forged enduring partnerships with colleagues in other Cape towns and with environmental groups such as OCT.

"I had the chance to partner with Dan on various town projects during my time as the Trust's director," recalled Kris Ramsay. "He's a tremendous leader, mentor, and educator—generous with his time and knowledge with me, AmeriCorps, and hundreds of students from the Orleans schools."

A self-described "wash-ashore," Dan grew up in Melrose. Always enthralled with



trees, he enrolled in the Essex Agricultural School to learn how to climb them safely and became a certified Massachusetts arborist after passing one of the nation's most rigorous state arborist exams. In 1997, he took a job at a summer camp for boys and girls in Brewster. For three years, he and his family enjoyed a nearly 360-degree water view from the rustic house that came with the job. He described the location as "paradise."

"Tree work allows you to look into the past and peek into the future."

Dan began partnering with OCT in the first year AmeriCorps came to town. "Those young people worked so hard, I knew I had to get involved," he said. "I loved mentoring the volunteers who came to learn and serve. Every year for ten years, I enlisted the help of an AmeriCorps intern to complete the tree inventory. The Town and OCT each had interns, and we'd work together—for example, clearing invasive species from Uncle Harvey's and Boland Ponds. AmeriCorps, OCT, and the Town

Dan Connolly outlines the day's work to AmeriCorps Cape Cod members during his time as Orleans Tree Warden.

share the same goals, so it was an easy collaboration."

Dan's extraordinary leadership, dedication, and commitment to his profession were recognized in 2008 by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation with the Outstanding Citizen Forester Award, and again in 2009 when he was named Tree Warden of the Year. He saw the awards as validation of the work he was doing. "I want people to know how precarious trees are," Dan said.

"It takes all of us to protect and encourage the fragile environment on the Cape.

"There's nothing more rewarding in arboriculture than planting trees. There's so much hope. You feel you're really contributing when you're planting. Tree work allows you to look into the past and peek into the future."

Freelance writer **Elizabeth Walker** serves on OCT's Communications Committee.

Partners for Earth Day

Cape Cod has a well-earned reputation for nonprofits and local businesses working together in support of the land and water that sustain our communities. This April, OCT benefited from partnering with community-minded Orleans establishments on two events.

For the third time, gallery owner Helen Addison welcomed the public to “Arts for the Earth.” On the sunny Saturday of April 24, visitors (masked and socially distanced) dropped by the Addison Gallery to observe



artists Maryalice Eizenberg and Amy Sanders demonstrate in oil painting and pastels, and hear turtle expert Barbara Brennessel

discuss her research on the threatened northern diamondback terrapin. OCT staff and trustees were on hand to pass out trail guides and answer questions—especially about our project to acquire more land and create new terrapin habitat at Henson’s Cove (see page 4). Gallery proceeds from the week were generously shared with the Trust. As Addison noted, “What better way to celebrate Earth Day than to share with those who care for our environment?”

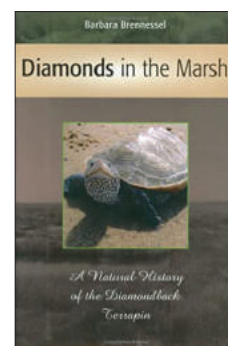
And on Earth Day proper, April 22, OCT joined Sea Howl Bookshop to host a virtual discussion of naturalist Douglas Tallamy’s landmark book, *Nature’s Best Hope*: an urgent call to preserve biodiversity as habitat shrinks from development and climate change. “All plants are not created equal in their



“What better way to celebrate Earth Day than to share with those who care for our environment?”

— Helen Addison

ability to support wildlife,” Tallamy notes, describing how home gardeners can do their part by planting even a few native plants, which attract and sustain wildlife by providing food they naturally eat. In the discussion, Sea Howl’s Kazmira and Jonathan Nedeau carried Tallamy’s



Clockwise from top: Steve O’Grady and OCT’s display at Addison Gallery; map shows the Henson’s Cove preserve. A new edition of Barbara Brennessel’s book on terrapins will be out this fall. Tallamy’s *Nature’s Best Hope*. Jonathan and Kazmira Nedeau in their store. Artist Maryalice Eizenberg demonstrates.

message to Cape Cod gardeners: What you plant matters to the survival of wildlife. Are we ready to adjust our gardens to be environmentally useful as well as beautiful?

The partnership brought an important book to a new audience and offered a strategy to aid Cape Cod’s wildlife. OCT President Kevin Galligan, who helped moderate the event, thanked the booksellers for joining OCT in this first-time collaboration. “We welcome and support this independent, community-oriented bookshop in our downtown and wish Sea Howl every success.”

Improving Trails, Enhancing Habitat

by Alex Bates

During the past pandemic year, as so many people found refreshment outdoors, our trails have been more popular than ever. It was fortunate timing that we were already at work improving walkers' experience on the OCT trails, and we're excited to report on recent progress.

To make our trails, especially the more complex trail systems, easier to navigate, we've introduced color-coded trail markers, each color corresponding to a different stretch of trail. Accompanying the markers are updated trail maps, which you can view and/or print on the webpage orleansconservationtrust.org/areas-with-trails. Or, when you're at a trailhead kiosk, you can snap a picture of the map. At one trail system that was notoriously difficult to navigate—the Ice House and Reuben's Pond trail—we recently installed directional maps at seven intersections to help with wayfinding.

This spring, we replaced an aging kiosk at the OCT property on Old Duck Hole Road. Other kiosks will be placed on properties OCT is in the process of acquiring. At a larger kiosk just installed at the OCT office, we will highlight our properties and trails throughout Orleans (see page 3).

Among other improvements planned for 2021: in late spring or early summer, we'll replace aging footbridges along the Mill Pond Valley and Reuben's Pond Trails. On the Meadow Bog Trail in South Orleans, we will install dug-in timber steps on a steep



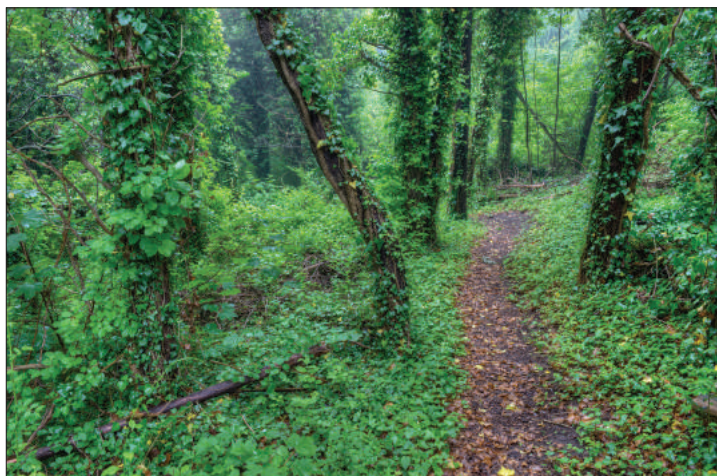
Clearing out Norway and sycamore maples at Mill Pond Valley; note the dedication plaque to donor Orin Tovrov. AmeriCorps's Kaitlyn Henderson, who started with OCT in October, with one of our new trail maps at the Ice House & Reuben's Pond Trail.



section near Sarah's Pond. Historically, this area was excavated to irrigate a cranberry bog using water from the pond—hence the steep grade. The cranberry bog has since naturalized and transitioned into a salt marsh. The steps will help people maintain their footing and make the walk easier on aging knees!

Still in the planning stage: interpretive signage along some trails to educate users about what they're seeing. A first step will be to install botanical identification tags that showcase native tree and shrub species.

Habitat management projects are ongoing, as you may have observed while walking the trails. Most noticeably, at our Mill Pond Valley trailhead, volunteers and AmeriCorps Cape Cod



Invasive ivy was rampant in Mill Pond Valley, as this ten-year-old photo shows, compromising many trees. © Hardie Truesdale

continued on page 11

Housekeeping at the Trust

continued from page 3

created a set of modern bylaws, where such functions are more properly and usually covered.

After the full board approves the revisions, we'll have one or more informational meetings for members to explain the changes and answer questions. The amended DOT and new bylaws will be presented for member approval at the Annual Meeting.

OCT Life in Pandemic Year 2

The 2021 Annual Meeting is provisionally scheduled for Monday, August 30—with a chance that we'll be able to gather in person. We'll base that decision on current guidance and local conditions as of late summer. Any updates will appear on the Trust's website, and we'll confirm plans by email.

We recently took delivery of several more of the handsome kiosks that mark our major lands and trails. Since we can still host only occasional visitors in our office, we've installed an information kiosk just outside, with interpretive material in the works. Trails guides are also available outside. Stop by for a look!

Our staff continue to work hard planning and leading guided walks on OCT and Town lands. For now, masks are still required and attendance is limited; to welcome as many folks as possible, we often split into two groups, each with a leader.

We're adding a new walk along Skaket Beach to explore the Namskaket Creek saltmarsh. See the listings on page 7 and sign up for your favorites. And we have a sterling lineup of speakers for the summer and fall (page 6). At least one talk will be via Zoom, but it's likely these events will

go in-person later on. Recordings of our spring talks are available on the website.

Meet Our Summer Intern

We're pleased to welcome Annika Harrington as our intern for summer 2021. Annika, a sophomore at Williams Col-



lege majoring in history and environmental studies, plays flute in the Berkshire Symphony and ultimate Frisbee

on the Williams team. Having spent many summers enjoying natural areas in Orleans and throughout the Cape, she is "excited to work to conserve these beautiful and biodiverse lands. I also look forward to researching the history of the land and learning more about how it was used in the past."

Improving Trails, Enhancing Habitat

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members helped us remove invasive plants and storm debris. Most of the fallen trees were eastern red cedars compromised by English ivy, an invasive vine that's rampant on the property. Earlier this spring, large Norway and sycamore maples—species native to Europe and western Asia—were selectively removed. The large, dense canopies of these invasive maples shade out understory plants and inhibit the establishment and growth of native trees. Removing them will give natives, including eastern red cedars and several nut trees, a fighting chance to grow and fill in the canopy.



An AmeriCorps Cape Cod volunteer chainsaws a fallen cedar, its top covered in ivy.

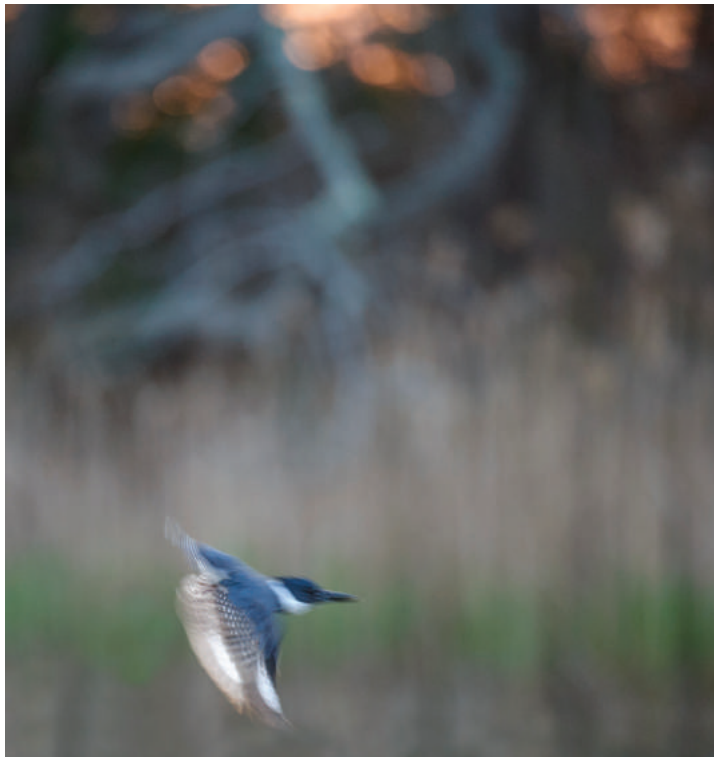
Canine Courtesy

Many of us enjoy a walk in the woods with our four-footed companions. Dogs are allowed on OCT trails *except at Henson's Cove* (page 4), but it's vital to keep them on leash and clean up after them—especially on conservation land. Dogs may chase or harass wildlife, and studies show that their scent can change wildlife behavior. By keeping dogs leashed, you'll ensure that OCT's lands continue to harbor wildlife, and that everyone can safely enjoy the trails.

Orleans Conservation Trust

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Will you be remembered for your love of the land?

Join the
WHITE CEDAR SOCIETY
Orleans Conservation Trust

Your generosity will protect land and water
for generations to come.

In its 50th year, OCT has established the **White Cedar Society** to recognize, honor, and grow our relationship with those who wish to show their love of the land through a bequest. Please let us welcome you as a member. We'll help you explore how a legacy to the Trust can serve your goals — for your estate and for conservation. For details, call Executive Director Stephen O'Grady.

508-255-0183
orleansconservationtrust.org