FALL/WINTER 2026–27

ORLEANS CONSERVATION TRUST

Protecting Nature for Our Community

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# Partners for Orleans

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***On the cover:*** Aerial view of Orleans with the Town-owned Putnam Farm, center. Inset: Native bumblebee on goldenrod. Photos © Hardie Truesdale.

# from the executive director

**Dear members and supporters,**

Although OCT is a private nonprofit, one of our purposes is to "supplement local government and lessen its burden in providing open space and land for natural resource protection." This newsletter highlights our partnerships with the Town of Orleans to fulfill this purpose.

Those partnerships are institutional—for example, our close working relationship with the town's Open Space Committee—but they're also personal. I owe special thanks to Conservation Agent John Jannell and Director of Planning and Community Development George Meservey. Each has provided exemplary public service to our community for decades. They consistently act in the town's best interest, including knowing when and how to collaborate with businesses and with nonprofits like OCT. I've learned a ton by working with them.

In "A Beautiful Friendship" (page 4), you'll read about the many areas of collaboration between OCT and the town, including the new Comprehensive Plan, open space acquisitions, and improving public access to water. I'm also proud that, as OCT has added land stewardship staff, we've been able to support the town in caring for Kent's Point and other beloved community open spaces.

On page 6, catch up on OCT's latest land protection opportunities, including the Reuben's Pond Woodlands Expansion and the chance to protect an iconic viewshed on Pilgrim Lake. We hope the town will dedicate Community Preservation Funds to that project. We also report on an exciting prospect for creating a boardwalk trail through an Atlantic white cedar habitat, spanning town and OCT lands.



Educational programs that connect the community with OCT and town-protected lands are among the most gratifying things we do. Highlights of the past summer were a "bee safari" (page 9) and nature journaling (page 10). Be sure to save your spot for winter and spring walks now!

As our education programming has grown and land deals have become more costly, we'll continue to rely on our strong partnership with the town. And more than ever, we depend on the generosity of landowners like the Beals family (page 7) and supporters like you. Thank you for taking OCT to new heights and empowering us to meet the challenges of this moment. Every donation makes a difference.

Sincerely,

Stephen O'Grady

Stephen O'Grady
Executive Director

**The year-end giving season** is also a great time to think about estate planning. A legacy to OCT deepens your engagement with our land-saving mission and can serve your family and your estate in many ways. Joining the White Cedar Society is as simple as advising us that the Trust is a beneficiary of your estate. See page 13 for more information, and to begin a conversation, call Executive Director Stephen O'Grady at 508-255-0183.

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# The Trust in Brief



"Celebrate Our Waters" weekend (Orleans Pond Coalition) stopped by to say hello and learn about horseshoe crabs. And OCT was an event sponsor at the Outermost Market in the Park on October 9, the popular prelude to the Outermost music festival, where we shared a booth with Association to Preserve Cape Cod promoting the "Yes on Question 6" campaign. By the time our next tabling event rolls around next spring, copies of the revamped trail guide will be great motivation to stop by.

**Orleans Walking Trails Guide, 2.0**

We're thrilled to announce that OCT's hugely popular trail guide is getting a major makeover! This handy foldout publication was co-produced with the Town of Orleans in 2015; since then, both Trust and town have added, re-routed, or renamed trails. Not only will the new edition bring those up to date, but also we're adding information about beaches, parks, scenic points, and other open spaces; access to water for paddlers and swimmers; and icons that suggest suitable activities for each area. The new guide will fold out to a large map with entries for each trail. Detailed trail maps will be on the OCT and town websites and at trailhead kiosks—where you can find them now. The new guide will start populating card racks around town (and of course at OCT headquarters) early in 2027.

**We Take to the Tables**

OCT has had a presence at several regional gatherings in the past several months. Visitors to the Family Fun Tent during

**Comings and Goings**

The Trust is delighted to welcome new staff member **Jesson Beck** as our first Operations & Development Assistant. After a brief career in retail management and an enlistment in the Navy, Jesson made his way to Cape Cod, where he found a calling in preserving natural landscapes and coastlines. He joined us in June, after graduating from Cape Cod Community College with a degree in Business Administration. Jesson frequents the beaches and trails with his dog, Pavy, and in the winter he takes to the mountains to snowboard.

With much regret, we bid farewell in October to Communications & Programs Coordinator **Ashley Martin**, who is pursuing opportunities closer to her Upper Cape home. Ashley raised these key functions to a higher level of professionalism during her time with OCT. As of this writing, we are reviewing applications for the position.

We also wish to acknowledge the enormous contributions to OCT by two trustees who stepped down this fall. **Charlie Carlson** was instrumental in negotiating and fundraising for many of OCT's land acquisitions over the last decade, along with lending his legal expertise on countless issues for the Trust. **Jim West** got the whole board engaged and invested in OCT's development activities; he also streamlined the trustee nominating process and recruited top talent to OCT's board. Charlie and Jim, you are greatly missed!




Visitors to OCT's table at the Pond Coalition's Family Fun Tent.



Jesson Beck checks in participants at the recent Putnam Farm walk.

# A Beautiful Friendship

## Trust and Town Partner for the Greater Good of Orleans

These days Orleans residents are hearing more from the town about ways to protect and enjoy our incredible natural environment. The newly adopted Orleans Comprehensive Plan highlights the need to preserve habitat and open space. Another framework is the new Coastal Stewardship Initiative. This exciting first step from the Community that CARES coalition aims to make Orleans the first "Ocean Friendly Community" in the nation.

Throughout this journey, town government has relied on citizens and local organizations. The Orleans Conservation Trust has been a proud pioneering partner in this work.

### Partners in Climate Resilience

"Safeguarding Orleans' rich natural ecosystems is essential to the Town's identity and long-term sustainability," declares the Comprehensive Plan. Getting down to specifics, it cites the need to "preserve, expand and manage open spaces to mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide crucial habitats and wildlife corridors, protect water quality, implement carbon sequestration practices, provide recreational and health activities for citizens and ensure resilient landscapes for future generations."

No surprise that these goals fully align with OCT's mission. The plan features a chapter on Natural Systems, with detailed sections on Wetland Resources, Wildlife and Plant Habitat, and Open Space.

Town officials sought input from OCT in developing the plan, incorporating comments from Executive Director Steve O'Grady and Director of Land Stewardship Tom Keras. "The town was great about putting in our notes," says O'Grady. "And much of the work fed off the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, which we also contributed to."




Above: The new barn at Putnam Farm.
Below: Aerial of Cedar Pond, © Hardie Truesdale.
Opposite: Floor detail at white cedar swamp.

### The Final Frontier

Always a challenge, acquiring and preserving open space has become even harder as prices rise and available land is lost to development. Collaboration between the town's Open Space Committee and OCT is helping. The two have worked together for decades to ensure that Orleans conserves as much open space as possible.

Says Lynn O'Connell, who chairs the committee, "Everything OCT does is for the benefit of the people of Orleans, and the same goes for Open Space." O'Grady attends committee meetings and meets with O'Connell monthly to compare notes on potential acquisition opportunities. "We discuss whether an opportunity is more appropriate for Open Space or for OCT," he says, "and then support each other to figure out how to protect the property."

Landowners considering a donation or sale of land need to understand the financial benefits, and O'Connell cites OCT's expertise in explaining those. O'Grady, in turn, appreciates the committee's support for securing Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for land purchases and ensuring that financing is available. The groups also collaborate to maximize state



grant opportunities and coordinate community outreach activities.

As O'Connell sums up the partnership: "I can't imagine doing this without OCT."

### Land Bridges

A great example of collaboration is OCT's recent acquisition of Cedar Pond Shore at 32 Locust Road, which protects a stretch of shoreline on one of our most vulnerable ponds. Cedar Pond has suffered from poor water quality for decades, but purchases by the town and OCT have kept more than 16 acres near the pond undeveloped, thus eliminating potential septic runoff. O'Grady, who worked closely with the town on the acquisition, describes the process. "Open Space raised awareness about this property, the Conservation Commission agreed to hold the conservation restriction, and both groups endorsed funding from the Community Preservation Committee. This important support enabled OCT to move forward with the purchase."

OCT also partners with the town's Conservation Department, led by Conservation Agent John Jannell. (See sidebar for more on town conservation entities.) Recently the department and OCT have worked on improving access to the beautiful Atlantic white cedar swamp that bridges the town's Christian Conservation Area, off Portanimicut Road, and neighboring OCT land. OCT's Tom Keras and Jannell applied for and received a state grant to study and plan a possible boardwalk over the swamp. Cedar swamps are an increasingly rare and treasured habitat on Cape Cod, and this project may give walkers the chance to enjoy one of Orleans' own!



### Happy Trails

Highlighting the open space and trails available to residents and visitors has long been a priority for both OCT and the town. The brochure *Orleans Walking Trails*, which they co-published back in 2015, has been a popular item in card racks around town, but some information is by now outdated. Thanks to a Yes vote at this year's spring town meeting, the CPC granted funds to update the guide. Kristyna Smith, office manager at the Conservation Department, has enjoyed working with OCT's team on this "fun project," she says. "I've gotten OCT's perspective on town properties and learned more about OCT's properties." Due out early in 2027, the new edition will be an invaluable resource for anyone looking to get outdoors and enjoy the beautiful lands preserved and made accessible by OCT and the town.

### A Community that CARES

A promising new framework for cooperating on environmental and nature-based activities is "the Community that CARES." As described on the town's website, this is "a coalition of Town government, nonprofit partners, business organizations, and residents, formed to coordinate environmental action." Its first project is the Orleans Coastal Stewardship Initiative, which seeks to protect local water resources, expand sustainable business practices, and secure recognition as the East Coast's first Ocean Friendly Community.

OCT volunteers have been participating since the effort's inception, mainly on the Education and Outreach team, which focuses on "increasing awareness and promoting practical, everyday environmental stewardship." OCT's At Home with Nature initiative has been in the forefront of such work, and we look forward to sharing knowledge about using native plants and promoting pollinators in home landscapes. OCT's Land Stewardship team also hopes to share good land stewardship practices with town staff and homeowners.

### Conservation, Public and Private

As we hope this story shows, it takes work in both public and private sectors to keep Orleans beautiful and environmentally healthy. Because the names are similar, some confuse the Orleans Conservation *Trust* (that's us: a privately funded nonprofit membership organization) and the Orleans Conservation *Commission*.

The Conservation Commission is a regulatory body made up of dedicated volunteers supported by the staff of the town's Conservation Department. It is responsible for administering the state Wetlands Protection Act and the Orleans Wetlands Bylaw, and for managing town-owned conservation properties.

The Trust works with town staff and volunteers on activities such as maintaining trails and cleaning up after storms—see Managing Our Lands, page 8. The websites of OCT and the Town of Orleans offer a wealth of information, including lists of town-owned conservation areas and OCT-owned properties.

# Protecting Places That Connect Us

Conservation is more than protecting individual parcels of land. It's about safeguarding the connections between woodlands, ponds, wildlife, people, and the natural landscapes that define Orleans. OCT has three exciting opportunities to advance that mission.

### Growing the Reuben's Pond Woodlands

OCT has until June 15, 2027, to raise $525,000 to protect 1.14 acres at 170 Brick Hill Road. Offered by longtime OCT friends Marnie Campbell and Alexandra Campbell Eldar at a significant discount from its appraised value, this wooded parcel would augment the nearly 35 acres of protected land that make up the Ice House & Reuben's Ponds Conservation Area.

For regular visitors, the property's importance is easy to appreciate: it borders one of OCT's most popular trails, and a home built there could tarnish the peaceful woodland walk. The mature forest is important habitat, providing a buffer for amphibians that breed in nearby vernal pools.

There is a water-quality benefit, too. The buildable lot sits uphill from Reuben's Pond, in an area not scheduled for sewering. Groundwater flows toward Town Cove, an impaired water body. Protecting the land now would prevent additional development, helping safeguard these waters and the creatures that depend on them.



Reuben's Pond Woodlands expansion project.

### A Landmark View on Pilgrim Lake

Although it's the largest freshwater lake in Orleans, Pilgrim Lake is mostly out of sight for residents. One notable exception is a view from the crest of a hill on Monument Road near Route 28, framed by two historic homes. The lot that affords passersby this lovely viewshed came on the market in June. OCT supporters inquired whether the Trust would get involved, dialogue ensued with the town's Open Space Committee, and OCT got the property under agreement in October.

The value of this landscape goes far beyond the view. Conserving the property would help protect water quality in both Pilgrim Lake and Pleasant Bay while preserving natural habitat in a sensitive watershed.

OCT plans to seek funding from the Community Preservation Committee; Orleans voters should have a chance to support that funding at the May 2027 Town Meeting. Significant private fundraising will also be needed to meet the $510,000 purchase price by a June 2027 deadline.


Pilgrim Lake view from lot on Monument Road.

### A Boardwalk Through a Cedar Swamp

There's more good news on the trails front. OCT has been awarded a MassTrails grant to fund the design and permitting of a boardwalk through a beautiful Atlantic white cedar swamp owned by the Town of Orleans and managed by the Conservation Commission. It's part of the Christian Area preserve, adjacent to OCT land on Namequoit Road.

White cedar swamps are distinctive, enchanting habitats but challenging to explore because they are both fragile and wet! A carefully designed boardwalk would enable visitors to experience and learn about this globally rare environment while protecting the sensitive, soggy ground beneath their feet.

Together, these initiatives reflect OCT's approach to conservation: protect land before we lose it; preserve places that sustain wildlife, water quality, and community character; and create opportunities for people to experience Orleans' remarkable natural landscapes.

# Owners Steward a Historic Site

## Conservation Restriction Protects Land Around the Captain Linnell House



Joseph and Linda Beals live in and on a piece of Orleans history: the storied Captain Linnell House on Skaket Beach Road. Around 1860, the famed clipper ship skipper Captain Ebenezer (Eben) Linnell commissioned his father-in-law, Edmund Crosby, to build an addition to the Cape Cod cottage he'd built for his bride, Rebecca Crosby, in 1835. The expanded home, resembling a French-style villa, was meant to duplicate a house seen by the well-traveled captain in Marseilles. A similarly styled renovation was built in the 1890s over the original footprint, creating the two-story home we see today.

Starting in the 1950s, generations of Cape Codders and visitors knew and loved the house as a special restaurant and event venue. The Bealses purchased the property in 2020 and returned it to a private home. They consider themselves its stewards and are carefully restoring and sustaining the life of the house and the land around it for future generations.

*"The pressure to develop land is strong, and we wanted to preclude a later generation from making a different choice."*

—Joseph and Linda Beals

Joseph's own history with Orleans and his ties to the neighborhood go back to childhood visits with his grandparents starting in 1952. Their Rock Harbor home, parts of it dating to 1770, probably sparked his interest in antique houses. That home was inherited by Joseph's father and is now owned by his younger brother, Dexter. Citing its connection to the past as a farm and its value as natural habitat, they aimed to preserve not just the house but the setting, which they find "magical."

Looking for a "simple thing we can do to protect the surroundings against development," the couple met with OCT Executive Director Steve O'Grady to discuss placing a conservation restriction (CR) on the land. O'Grady showed Joseph and Linda how putting the Linnell land in a CR could fulfill their goal.

The process called for patience and persistence, Joseph says. To unlink the land from the house, a new survey was done to partition off a buildable lot, then the title was amended with Barnstable County. Approval of the CR was needed from the Commonwealth and the Orleans Select Board. Joseph and Linda appreciate the support they received throughout the process from OCT, which legally holds the CR and protects the property.




### How a CR Works

Conservation restrictions (sometimes called easements) permanently restrict certain uses and activities—such as development—that may take place on all or a part of a property, thereby protecting the land's conservation values. A CR agreement is tailored to a landowner's property and interests, and to the policies and purposes of OCT as the CR holder. Land Stewardship staff work with all owners of CRs, reviewing properties annually to ensure that the owner and abutters are observing the conditions of the CR. If you're interested in learning more about the process and potential tax benefits of such a donation, you can find information on OCT's website. Or call the Trust at 508-255-0183.

# "Do What's Best for the Land"

That's the guiding theme for the Trust's Land Stewardship team. Beyond the massive amount of work it takes to nourish our lands and keep them accessible, this commitment extends to partnering with the Town of Orleans. OCT and the town share the same goal—to protect local lands and waterways—and our synergy benefits all who live and visit here.

Land Stewardship staff work with Town Hall on projects such as jointly submitting grant applications for state money, maintaining trails on conservation properties, and monitoring conservation restrictions. Town entities we partner with include the Conservation Commission and Conservation Department; the Community Preservation, Open Space, and Marine and Fresh Water Quality Committees; and the Select Board. Here are some examples of how we've cared for lands together.

**Volunteering Across Borders**

We can always count on OCT's volunteer community to come out and help us manage invasive species, maintain trails, do restoration work, and more. OCT staff pays it forward by pitching in when town staff need help. For the past three years, our team has joined the Kent's Point workday: town and OCT staff and volunteers remove dangerous trees, clear brush from trails, manage invasives, and trim vegetation around viewpoints at this well-loved town-owned preserve. Over the past year of blizzards and nor'easters, our team coordinated response and helped remove trees on the town's Christian and John Kenrick Woods properties and clear trails at Kent's Point.

At Putnam Farm Conservation Area, OCT has lent a hand with invasive plant removal—critical to maintaining the newly restored wetland corridor at the center of this important town property. In the arena of civic participation, Land Stewardship Director Tom Keras attends meetings of the town's Indigenous Ad Hoc Committee.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring conservation properties goes beyond checking trail status and managing vegetation. OCT's team maintains bird boxes at Putnam Farm and at the Orleans Elementary and Middle Schools, and takes part in the town's box turtle tagging program at Putnam Farm.

Both OCT and the town hold conservation restrictions (CRs) for properties owned by the other. (See sidebar on page 7.) Under Massachusetts law, any real property interest acquired using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds must be bound by a a CR or similar agreement. A CR is also needed when applying for state funding or conservation tax credits. Also by law, the CR holder and the property owner must be separate entities—that's why OCT holds the CR for several town conservation properties. This entails a yearly inspection to ensure that the accompanying protections are being upheld.

Land Stewardship staff also monitor the interface of OCT-protected lands and neighboring private properties, to ensure that activities on OCT properties do not encroach on private property or vice versa.

**Jointly Planning New Projects**

Taking on new projects in conjunction with the town is especially rewarding. Some exciting efforts recently finished or currently underway are: public access improvements at the newly protected Cedar Pond Shore Conservation Area; a town archaeological survey investigating Indigenous sites; and a Wampanoag wetu at Orleans Middle School, for which OCT provided financial and construction support. OCT is fortunate to have strong support from the town, and our work for the town is met with equal gratitude. All of us Orleans citizens are the beneficiaries.



Volunteers help re-route Mill Pond Valley trail.



Black-capped chickadee eggs in a Putnam Farm birdbox



OCT volunteers at Henson's Cove Conservation Area

# A Bee Safari at Putnam Farm

**By Gary Bowden**



Have you ever caught a bee with a gun? Sounds absurd, but fifteen OCT members did just that on a bright day in June. A program designed to teach participants about native bees of Cape Cod took place at the OCT office and Putnam Farm—part of our At Home with Nature and Biodiversity Seekers education programming.

Nick Dorian, PhD, an ecologist and "beesearcher," introduced the group to the basics of bee identification before we headed into the field. Wielding battery-operated "guns"—really more like bug vacuums—we felt like kids as we gently collected bees, safely observed them, and tried to determine their classification.

Our hunt began on several non-native plants where insect activity was minimal, with only a few non-native honeybees. But we soon moved on to an area that had been planted with native species recommended by consultants from the Xerces Society. Within minutes, we had identified bumblebees native to Cape Cod; by the end of the 90-minute session, we had found the five most common bumblebees and nine other types of bees. Using the iNaturalist app, we uploaded these observations, thus contributing to ongoing citizen science efforts to document the bees found at Putnam.

This work is important because native bumblebees are among the best pollinators of flowers and vegetables, for home gardeners and for the farmers at Putnam—yet more than 25 percent of once-common bumblebees are no longer found in Massachusetts. The decline in bee species, and pollinators generally, is due mainly to loss of foraging and reproduction habitat, pesticide use, and climate change. As bumblebees are ground nesters, Nick explained, we need to leave open ground in our landscapes for them to reproduce and overwinter. On Cape Cod, we can typically find six types of bumblebees; when you see which bees depends on the time of the year, their life cycle, and what plants are blooming. To fit the seasonal patterns of their life cycle, we need a range of native plants that bloom from May to October.

Citizen scientists contribute significantly to conservation efforts by gathering data on bumblebee occurrence, seasonal timing, and ecological interactions. The OCT Biodiversity Seekers are working to identify insects, plants, birds, and wildlife on OCT properties, but you can go on a "bee safari" in your own yard. Take time to look closely at blooming native plants and note the variety of bees you find. You may find that no bees visit some of your plants—indicating that they lack pollen or nectar sought by bees and other pollinators. Repeat through the seasons to note the different sizes and variety of bees that visit your home landscape. You can submit your observations to iNaturalist.org as a Cape Cod citizen scientist.

*Learn more at watchingbees.com and at Nick's Instagram account @beesearcher. The At Home with Nature page on OCT's website contains links to the Xerces Society and other organizations with good information.*





# Making Community Around Nature


Participants in the nature journaling walk.


Babies in Backpacks began this fall and will continue in 2027.


Touring growers' plots at Putnam Farm.

**School Programs Expand**

In a first this summer, OCT partnered with Orleans After School Activities Program (OASAP) on three outdoor events for Orleans Elementary School students aged K-12. On a trip to the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, the children engaged with interactive exhibits indoors, including the Butterfly House, and walked out to Wing Island. Birder and naturalist Christine Bates (who attended OES) led a walk around Boland Pond, using the path and outdoor classrooms created and maintained by OCT to teach about local wildlife. Finally, our friends at Wild Care joined us at OES, bringing along box turtle Garv and snapping turtle Snaps, who delighted the children by just being themselves. We hope to continue to partner with OASAP!

**Nature Journaling**



Some of us enjoy a brisk power walk, but we also like to slow down and get a new perspective on familiar trails. In September, a small group went on a nature journaling walk at Woods Cove led by naturalist, writer, and artist Mary Richmond. Notebooks and pencils in hand, walkers leisurely observed and sketched the landscape around them, noticing birds, sea grasses, sandy shores, and the textures of tree bark, tuning into our senses of sound and touch. Mary counseled us to be still and notice what we don't always see—fallen logs are full of life; rock walls evoke history—and reminded us that we don't need to quickly identify everything we encounter. A simple sketch can start us on a path of inquiry and learning.

**Putnam Farm, in Words and on Foot**

Over the past decade, town-owned Putnam Farm has been transformed, today hosting twenty large-scale farm plots with irrigation, a barn to support the growers, a restored wetland ecosystem, and a walking trail. OCT's most recent "talk and walk" began at Snow Library, where panelists John Jannell and Drusy Henson of the Conservation Commission, Krystle McMorrow of Sundogs Ecological Landscapes, and OCT trustee Gary Bowden introduced attendees to the history of the farm and adjacent Boat Meadow saltmarsh estuary—where in the early 1800s a canal linked Cape Cod Bay to the Atlantic. On a bright and breezy October morning two weeks later, a group of members walked walked the land, saw the beautiful results of the wetland restoration, and learned about the farm's evolution from experts including Bowden, Henson, and Putnam guru Rick Francolini.

**Little People in the Woods**

Our preschool program of outings with families and tykes has been so popular that we've added another set for even younger children. Both Babies in Backpacks and Preschool Exploration will be led by the talented and beloved nature teacher Andrea Higgins, a Kripalu Mindful Outdoor Guide. Preschool Exploration brings young explorers aged 2–5 and their grown-ups on a playful walk that encourages children to slow down, get curious, and discover the natural world through their senses. Babies in Backpacks is a gentle, hour-long walk where caregivers and little ones in a carrier or sling can experience nature's sights, sounds, and seasonal changes. Both programs offer caregivers a way to spend time outdoors with their charges through gentle mindfulness practices, while connecting with other families. (See page 11.)

# Winter/Spring 2026–27 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 limited; advance registration required. Register online at our website.* Walks take place on OCT properties or Town of Orleans trails, those marked with [T] symbol.

## Ice House/Reuben's Ponds

*1.5-mile walk around two freshwater ponds and through pitch pine–oak woodland on OCT's longest uninterrupted trail. On our annual waterfowl census walk, look for waterfowl on the ponds and signs of wildlife along the way. Bring binoculars if you have them.*

**Saturday, December 5**
**10:00–11:30 am**



### Family Fun Outings

Join us for Babies in Backpacks (our newest Children & Families program) and Preschool Exploration with Andrea Higgins. Spaces fill quickly, so reserve yours early at our Children & Families Activities webpage, where you can find more about family-friendly activities on OCT trails and sign up for the monthly Children & Families e-newsletter.





## Grassy Knoll

*Walk about 1.5 miles through an early-successional habitat and along the shores of Nauset Harbor. Learn how different stages of habitat support wildlife and how OCT works to protect and manage these special landscapes.*

**Thursday, January 14**
**11:00 am–12:30 pm**



## Peck Conservation Area [T]

*Explore this small conservation area and learn about the land's history, including its significance to the Praying Indians of Potanumicut. The trail slopes toward Arey's River, offering a glimpse of the coastal landscape.*

**Wednesday, February 17**
**1:00–2:30 pm**

## Three Ponds

*A two-hour walk around Meadow Bog, Sarah's, and Twinings Ponds through more than 80 acres of OCT-protected land. This walk highlights the connections between upland forests, freshwater ponds, and the surrounding watershed.*

**Tuesday, March 23**
**9:00–11:00 am**



## Beach Walk to Namskaket [T]

*Walk about 1.5 miles round trip through the soft sand of Skaket Beach to Namskaket Creek and its expansive salt marsh. Discover the ecological importance of this coastal habitat and OCT's role in protecting the land around it.*

**Friday, April 23**
**1:00–2:30 pm**

## Henson's Cove

*Explore this beautiful OCT preserve along the River, where open meadow, woodland, and salt-marsh habitats meet. Learn about OCT's restoration work and efforts to protect nesting habitat for the threatened Northern diamondback terrapin.*

**Thursday, May 6**
**11:00 am–12:00 pm**

### Our "Talks" Schedule Is Online!

Speakers, dates, and locations will be announced in advance on our website and in our regular emails to members. If you're not already subscribed, be sure to sign up for updates.

# Gifts and Donations Membership Year 2025

**From January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025,** Orleans Conservation Trust received donations to support the Trust's most pressing needs and others restricted to a specific purpose, including land acquisition, land stewardship, or educational programs. The Trust also received special gifts made in honor or in memory of someone designated by the donor.

Every gift, in whatever amount and for whatever purpose, demonstrates your commitment to conserving land and plays a vital role in helping OCT fulfill its mission: to protect and restore natural lands—for people and wildlife, the health of our waters, and the character of our community.

## 2025 Donations

*People who have made donations to OCT, in any amount, for at least five consecutive years, are designated as Red Oak Donors with an acorn symbol after their names*

### Benefactors

#### $10,000 and Above

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EST. 2020
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We remember with gratitude the following White Cedar Society members, who recently passed:

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**Lisa Mantone** has spent her career as a senior fundraising executive. In 2021, she launched her fundraising consulting practice, LA Mantone Consulting. Clients have included Aperture, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, JAZZ HOUSE KiDS, Manhattan School of Music, Sag Harbor Cinema, and WBGO Public Media. She has also held senior development roles at the Museum of Modern Art, New York Philharmonic, and Columbia University. She holds bachelors and masters degrees in communications from William Paterson University. Lisa and her husband, Tom, love to spend time at their home in Orleans.

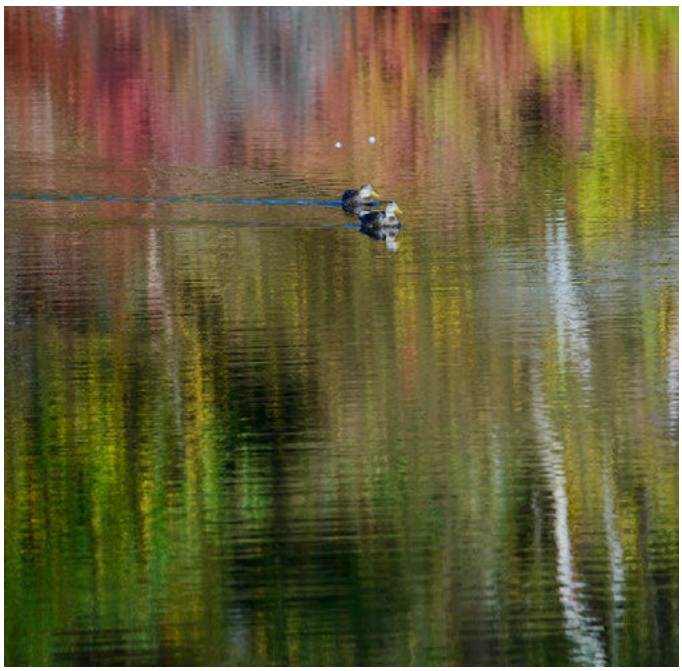


**Fran Schofield b**rings a multidisciplinary perspective to land conservation, with experience in environmental planning, historic preservation, real estate, and nonprofit leadership. She earned a BA from Mount Holyoke College and pursued graduate studies in Landscape Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. Her professional experience includes positions with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Coastal Zone Management and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development. For more than two decades, Fran has been a Cape Cod real estate advisor and practicing REALTOR®. She also serves on the boards of Friends of Pleasant Bay and the Community Development Partnership. Fran received the 2024 Massachusetts Commonwealth Heroine Award for community service.

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