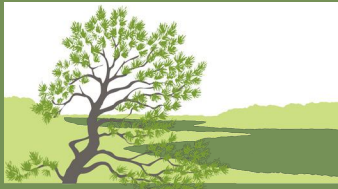


SPRING/SUMMER 2018



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On the cover: Henson's Cove, White's Lane Conservation Area. Photo © by Hardie Truesdale. Stephen O'Grady photo by Thomas Sull.

Dear OCT members and supporters,

Changing seasons bring a renewed focus on our mission to preserve natural lands in Orleans for the benefit of our community. I am confident that, as you enjoy reading this newsletter, you'll discover new ways your conservation trust is working hard to advance this mission.

This springtime brings positive change at the Trust, too. On behalf of all the trustees, I heartily welcome our new director, Stephen O'Grady, who is profiled on the facing page. Members may recall that Steve served as a summer intern back in 2013 and 2015. He brings his passion for the environment and preservation of open space to the challenge of leading OCT for years to come.

In the "Green Acres" department, you'll learn how generous landowners and contributors enabled the Trust to acquire another 1.7 acres on Braddock's Way, enlarging our White's Lane Conservation Area and its terrapin habitat. Over four generations, the Henson and Braddock families have driven the care and stewardship of their properties toward conservation. OCT is honored to continue its stewardship in perpetuity of these special lands, totaling about 14 acres and spanning woodlands to The River. Later in the issue, we update readers on the state of our local freshwater ponds and efforts on their behalf. Along with Mon Cochran's piece on land trusts and climate change, this story is a vivid reminder that protecting our waters starts with protecting land around them.

Another stalwart supporter of

conservation in Orleans is Helen Addison, proprietor of Addison Art Gallery, who threw a wonderful party for OCT in April.

We hope you were there to meet the artists and writers gathered; you can read about it on page 6.

As the birdsong swells and vernal pools, bogs, and marshes come to life with wood frogs, peepers, and polliwogs, I hope you all feel nature's rush of energy. It's a great time to get out and enjoy a hike, taking in the smells and sounds of spring before summer hits its hectic stride. Enjoy!



Kevin F. Galligan
President



Membership

Remember to Renew!

In just a few weeks, you should receive our letter asking you to renew your membership. Our membership year starts on July 1—renew by then to guarantee your right to vote at the **Annual Meeting on August 27** and other benefits of membership, including this publication. Most important, you support OCT's work to safeguard our town's open spaces, natural habitats, and community character, as well as Earth's climate.

Help Fill Our Toolshed



Keeping up with land management requires some heavy-duty tools, especially after a season of storms! Can you underwrite a new chainsaw or other equipment for OCT? Please contact Director Steve O'Grady for details at (508) 255-0183.

New Director for the Trust

Stephen O'Grady Rejoins OCT

Orleans Conservation Trust is delighted to welcome Stephen O'Grady as the organization's director, effective March 5, 2018. He will be the fourth person to head the Trust's staff since its founding.

Steve served as a summer intern in 2013 and 2015, so he comes to OCT with considerable prior knowledge of its mission, programs, and the properties it owns or manages. During his internship, he was instrumental in documenting information about various Trust lands, including photographing and mapping boundaries. He also conducted regular trail maintenance and removal of invasive species.

Says the new director, "I feel incredibly lucky to be taking on this leadership position with an organization I have admired and appreciated for many years. As a child, I spent my summers enjoying the natural beauty of Orleans. I learned at an early age the importance of respecting the environment and preserving natural spaces."

Now, he adds, "It feels like I've come full circle, working to protect and restore the community's valuable natural resources



for current and future generations."

Steve graduated from Colby College in Waterville, Maine, where he majored in environmental

science with a concentration in conservation biology. He was captain of the football team and treasurer of the environmental club. After graduation, he fished commercially for salmon in Kodiak and Ketchikan, Alaska, later working as head fishmonger and assistant manager at a Boston-based seafood company focused on supporting local fishermen and increasing seafood traceability and sustainability. In 2015, Steve interned in the coastal waterbird program at Mass Audubon in Wellfleet, monitoring nesting piping plovers and least terns. Since returning to the Cape last spring, he had been working as an oyster farmer for the Cape Cod Oyster Company. He currently lives in East Orleans.

"We're excited about the energy, lead-



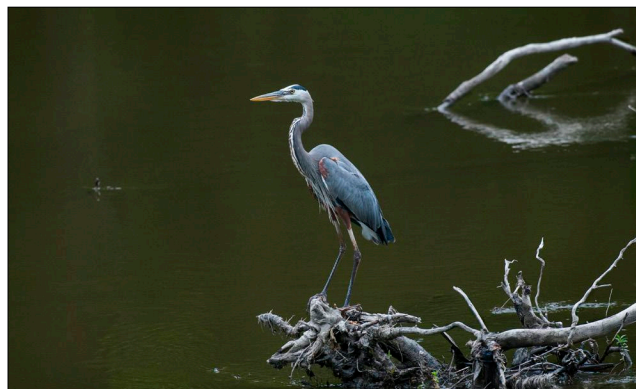
New OCT Director Stephen O'Grady carries an injured great blue heron off to WildCare. Photo by Andrew Bagnara. Below: Great blue heron. Photo by Hardie Truesdale.

ership, vision, and practical skills Stephen brings to the director's position, and we look forward to introducing him to our members," says board president Kevin Galligan.

OCT members and Orleans residents will have many chances to meet the Trust's new leader in the coming weeks and months. He'll be formally introduced at our Annual Meeting on August 27—but if you drop by the office at 203 South Orleans Road or attend any of our walks or lectures in the interim, you can shake Steve's hand and welcome him yourself.

Heron Rescue on Mill Pond Walk

You never know what might happen when you join one of OCT's walks on our lands (page 9). On the brisk morning of March 20, fourteen hardy hikers, led by former director Vince Ollivier and Director Steve O'Grady, were heading down the Mill Pond Valley Trail when they encountered an adult great blue heron blocking their path. Most unusually, the big bird didn't fly off and seemed disoriented. "When it became clear something was amiss, we managed to gently capture and wrap it in a jacket, and brought it right away to the WildCare facility in Eastham," says O'Grady. "Unfortunately, I learned a few days later that it didn't survive; most likely it was affected by parasites, since it wasn't injured."



However, the group's action may have spared the bird a more traumatic death by predation and removed a source of infection from the environment.

More Room to Roam at White's Lane

New Acreage and a New Trail for OCT's Riverfront Preserve

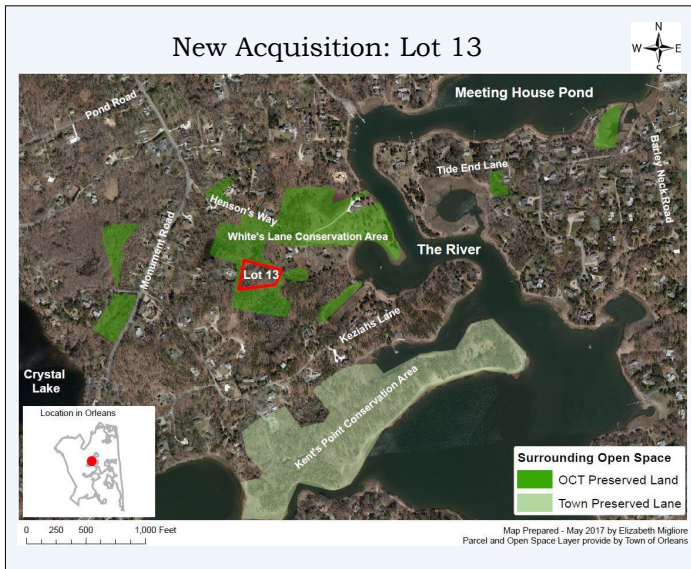
The more we learn about how best to protect our priceless waterways, the more we realize how important it is to protect land around them. This puts a special focus on OCT-owned lands adjacent to both salt and freshwater resources—a theme of this issue. Among many Trust properties with watery borders, our White's Lane Conservation Area occupies a special place along The River, that liquid artery running from Pleasant Bay into the heart of Orleans.

In our last issue, we described OCT's campaign to purchase a 1.7-acre lot adjacent to White's Lane. Acquiring "Lot 13" became our top priority when we learned that the property might be sold for residential development. We're thrilled to report now that the Trust succeeded in purchasing Lot 13 for \$350,000 this March. In connection with the purchase, we placed a conservation restriction (CR) on the property, ensuring that this land will remain in its natural state forever.

Orleans residents who live near the property contributed a large portion of the purchase funds. Other residents also made major contributions; in all, 54 residents made individual gifts in support of the purchase. The popular singer/songwriter/bluesman G. Love (aka Garrett Dutton), who lives part-time in Orleans and is a White's Lane neighbor, raised \$15,000

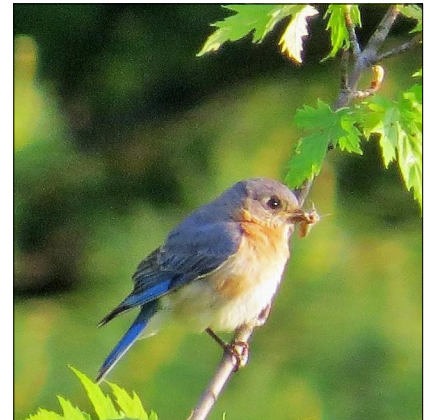
**CAPE
COD 5**
Foundation

New Acquisition: Lot 13



View toward The River from White's Lane Conservation Area. Photo by Hardie Truesdale.

for OCT with a benefit concert at the Orleans Academy Playhouse. These contributions were supplemented by grants totaling \$10,000 from the Cape Cod 5 Charitable Foundation Trust, a \$2,500 contribution from the Friends of Pleasant Bay, and gifts from private foundations. (See page 15 for a complete list of donors.)



Bluebirds are drawn to the open, grassy habitat and nesting boxes at White's Lane. Photo by Judith Davis.

The campaign to protect Lot 13 also benefited from an \$85,000 Conservation Partnership Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. OCT received the largest amount permitted under state law, reflecting the state's agreement that acquisition of Lot 13 was extremely important. The grant was announced by Governor Charlie Baker, who commented, "To protect the Commonwealth's land for future generations, it is vital that we support the great work local land trusts are doing to conserve land in their communities."

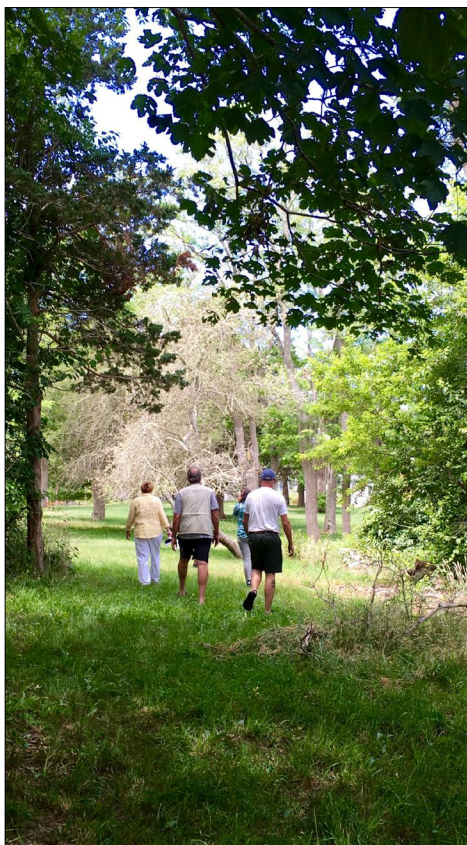
With this newly acquired land, OCT will be able to add another short trail in the White's Lane Conservation Area—most likely within the year. Unlike the others there, this new trail (currently envisioned as a minimally developed “primitive” path)

The Trust wants to acquire and protect more land for our community.

will meander through upland woods containing a mix of oaks, pitch pines, and other flora.

“Our White's Lane preserve is important in so many ways: to neighbors and residents and visitors who walk here, to boaters who enjoy this pristine shoreline along The River, to the woodland creatures living there and especially the nesting terrapins,” notes OCT president Kevin Galligan. “Not to mention its role in helping to sustain clean water flowing into Pleasant Bay.”

We're not resting on our laurels: OCT hopes to follow up the purchase of Lot 13



OCT trustees explore Lot 13 early in the acquisition process.

by acquiring additional land bordering this Conservation Area. Says Charlie Carlson, who spearheaded the Trust's effort, “This preserve is arguably the jewel in OCT's crown of protected properties in Orleans, so the more land we can secure here, the better it will be for all its constituencies.”

WANTED More Land in Orleans

Orleans Conservation Trust wants to acquire and protect more land for our community. It doesn't have to be a large parcel—the Trust has acquired many properties as small as one acre for conservation. Usually the land is undeveloped, though we can consider acquiring improved properties.

The Trust is prepared to acquire either full ownership of a parcel or a “conservation restriction” (CR) on the land. A CR leaves title to the property in the hands of the current owner but prevents future development.

Options for transferring land to OCT for conservation include:

- Donation of land or a CR
- Bequest of land (or a CR) to OCT after its owner passes
- Purchase of a property (or a CR) by the Trust, with financial support from neighbors

All these opportunities come with tax benefits. Please contact OCT Director Stephen O'Grady at (508) 255-0183 for more details and to discuss potential properties for conservation.

Help “Plant” the Terrapins!

What's cuter than a baby Northern diamondback terrapin? Not much! Last year, the terrapin nests protected at White's Lane Conservation Area produced a record 136 healthy hatchlings. After being collected and cared for at Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary until they're a few weeks old, these babies are returned to the terrapin gardens at White's Lane. Volunteers are

invited to help us safely “plant” this year's crop of hatchlings to give them the best chance of survival—a rare opportunity to do important hands-on conservation work with a Massachusetts threatened species. Mark your calendar for Saturday, September 8, 10:30 am to 12:00 pm, and contact stephen.ograde@orleansconservationtrust.org if you're interested in taking part.



Arts for the Earth

Addison Gallery Celebrates Earth Day by Supporting OCT

The Cape Cod arts community has a long tradition of celebrating and interpreting the natural beauty that surrounds us. This connection was highlighted on the sparkling Saturday of April 21, when Addison Art Gallery welcomed the public to a lively event at its downtown home on South Orleans Road—to observe Earth Day, welcome springtime, and benefit the work of Orleans Conservation Trust.

Attendees had the chance to watch two of the gallery's leading artists demonstrate their methods—Maryalice Eizenberg painting in oils and Amy Sanders working in pastel. Both happily answered questions about their techniques and inspirations. The nationally recognized gallery, which occupies a charming Cape house overlooking Town Cove, is home to some of the Cape's most sought-after artists, and offers the public and collectors many opportunities to meet them. The gallery donated ten percent of the proceeds from all artworks sold during the event to the Trust.



Addison Art Gallery

"The gallery is a place where people come to celebrate, learn, meet artists, and make friends. Today was a perfect example."

—Helen Addison

The literary arts were well represented, too, by authors Robert Finch and Peter Trull. Distinguished writing about the natural world is another Cape tradition, and both Finch and Trull are masters in this field. Well-known for his weekly radio commentaries on WCAI-FM, Finch has authored several award-winning books of essays, including his opus *The Outer Beach*, published



Authors Robert Finch and Peter Trull chat with OCT Director Stephen O'Grady and board president Kevin Galligan at the event

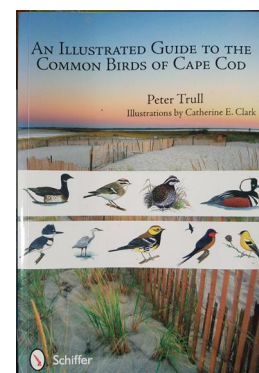
this year. Trull's works explore wildlife science and bring readers close to the Cape's wildlife, especially birds; his most recent book is *The Life of Terns: Birds of Paradox*. Both authors mingled with visitors and signed copies of their books—as well as donating books to OCT's raffle held at the event.

Nor was music overlooked: the warm and winning singer-guitarist Sarah Burrill played several sets during the reception, as guests enjoyed beverages and hors d'oeuvres provided by the Trust. Burrill, who is based in Orleans, has won acclaim for her recordings and live shows, and has opened for many noted folk-rock artists.



Singer-songwriter Sarah Burrill

Photographer Hardie Truesdale is another nationally known artist who has grown local roots. Documenting nature in the tradition of Ansel Adams, he has contributed to National Geographic, the Sierra Club and Audubon calendars, and has published several books. Since moving to Orleans a few years ago, he has photographed extensively on OCT conservation lands and generously allowed OCT to reproduce his images in our publications. For this event, he donated one of his meticulously printed and framed photographs, depicting the Twinings Pond Conservation Area, to be raffled. The raffle prize also included signed books from Finch, Trull, and Mike O'Connor of



Cover of *The Illustrated Guide to the Common Birds of Cape Cod*, by Peter Trull



Left: *Sylvan Twilight*, oil painting by Maryalice Eizenberg. Courtesy of the artist and Addison Art Gallery.
Below: *Afternoon Curl*, pastel by Amy Sanders. Courtesy of the artist and Addison Art Gallery.



Maryalice Eizenberg at work.
Photo by Rick O'Connor.



Amy Sanders works in pastel.
Photo by Rick O'Connor.



Attendees enjoy fine art, music, and good company in the front room of Addison Art Gallery.

the Birdwatcher's General Store, a \$50 gift certificate from Lake Farm Gardens, and a \$100 gift certificate from Addison Art Gallery.

Earlier in the day, OCT staff and trustees welcomed visitors to a tent set up on the gallery's lawn—a highly visible spot

for weekend travelers on Route 28. Those who stopped by learned about the Trust's programs, signed up to volunteer or join on hikes, and picked up literature.

"The Trust thanks Helen Addison and all the artists who contributed their time and talents to make this such a welcoming

and joyous celebration," said Stephanie Gaskill, who chairs OCT's Fundraising Committee. "Most of all we thank everyone who came out to share the fun and show their support for the arts and for our efforts to preserve the natural beauty of Orleans."

Fall 2018 Speakers

Join us at the Orleans Yacht Club for the latest in our series of **entertaining and informative** talks by **local and regional experts**. Time, **6:30–7:30 pm**.

Admission **free** (cash bar); doors open 30 minutes before the start time.



Going with the Flow: Rivers and Global Climate Change

R. Max Holmes

Deputy Director & Senior Scientist, Woods Hole Research Center

Max studies rivers around the world, investigating how their chemistry and discharge provide clues about changes taking place in their watersheds. Using examples from the Amazon to the Yukon, Max will describe the challenges of conducting field research on rivers in remote parts of the world, and highlight exciting discoveries. He'll also discuss work being done locally by the new Cape Cod Rivers Observatory, an initiative of the Woods Hole Research Center and partners.

Tuesday, September 11, 2018



Ecological Garden Design

Theresa Sprague

Proprietor & Designer, Blue Flax Design

As development of the Cape continues, the need to lighten our impact on local ecosystems grows. Theresa will share her extensive experience in ecological design, creating landscaped habitats that thoughtfully balance the needs of people and wildlife. She'll describe how all of us can transform how we think about our yards so we can coexist in harmony with our furred and feathered neighbors.

Tuesday, October 9, 2018



Protecting Our Own: Cape Cod's Small-Scale Fisheries

Seth Rolbein

Director, Cape Cod Fisheries Trust

Small-scale fishermen on Cape Cod have their work cut out for them. The Cape Cod Fisheries Trust exists to relieve their financial burdens and ensure that local fisheries continue to be economically sustainable. Seth will talk about his experience heading this branch of the Cape Cod Fishermen's Alliance and discuss our communities' role in supporting this historically and culturally significant industry.

Tuesday, November 13, 2018

Is there someone you'd like to hear as an OCT speaker?
An interesting topic you'd like to learn about? Let us know!
Send your idea to oct@orleansconservationtrust.org

Summer/Fall 2018 Walks

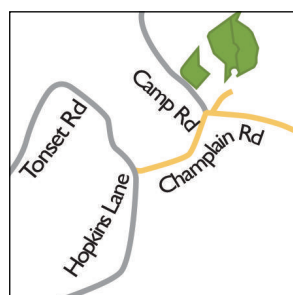
Get to know the **open spaces** of Orleans on our **popular guided walks**. They're **free, fun**, and appropriate for **all ages**.



White's Lane Conservation Area

Short walk through open meadows along The River; up-close look at the Bob Prescott Turtle Gardens. Led by Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Director Bob Prescott. Meet at 33 White's Lane.

Friday, June 1
9:00–10:00 am



Grassy Knoll Conservation Area

1.5-mile walk through an early succession habitat, then along the shore of Nauset Harbor. Meet at 60 Champlain Road.

Saturday, September 8
10:00–11:30 am



Kent's Point Conservation Area

Beautiful walk along nearly a mile of shoreline with outstanding Pleasant Bay views. Meet at the town parking lot, end of Frost Fish Lane.

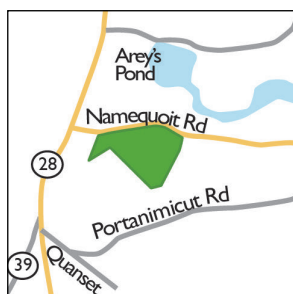
Thursday, July 19
9:00–10:30 am



Hike to Pochet Island

Part of Orleans Pond Coalition's "Celebrate Our Waters" Weekend. Walk about 5 miles, including strenuous portions over soft sand, to this hidden gem. This year we'll get a up-close look of how winter storms reshaped the dunes. Meet at Nauset Beach, southern ORV trailhead.

Sunday, September 23
9:00 am–1:00 pm



Kenrick Woods Conservation Area

Walk about 1 mile through large stands of white pine and see specimens of the very rare American chestnut. Meet at 35 Namequoit Road.

Tuesday, October 16
10:00–11:30 am



Kayak to Little Sipson's Island

Paddle about 3 miles to and from Little Sipson's Island Conservation Area—one of our most popular outings, led by Mass Audubon staff. Pack water and snacks or a small lunch. **Advance registration required.** Meet at the Rt. 28 Town Landing, just north of the Orleans/Harwich border.

Monday, August 27
9:00–11:30 am



Photo © Hardie Truesdale

More About Little Sipson's Trip

Little Sipson's Island was OCT's very first land purchase, made possible when a 1991 October gale swept away the island's only dwelling. The \$150,000 price was a modest investment in a priceless Pleasant Bay resource. Note: Our takeoff point this year offers more parking but requires a longer paddle.

Please bring your own watercraft; a few loaners available.

Preview walks and find trail maps on our website, orleansconservationtrust.org

Progress on Ponds

Projects Aim to Improve Freshwater Resources around Town

There are about a thousand freshwater ponds on Cape Cod and sixty in Orleans alone: precious resources that provide recreation and scenic beauty for people, and vital habitat for fish and wildlife species. Today, the water quality in all of them is impaired to varying degrees—a matter of great concern to residents and especially to the public and private groups whose mission is conserving our natural resources. As a landowner with properties abutting several local ponds, Orleans Conservation Trust is among these key stakeholders; others include the Orleans Conservation Commission, the Town of Orleans Marine and Fresh Water Quality Committee, and the Orleans Pond Coalition.

Several recent developments offer signs of hope and food for thought to all concerned about our ponds. Here's a brief report.

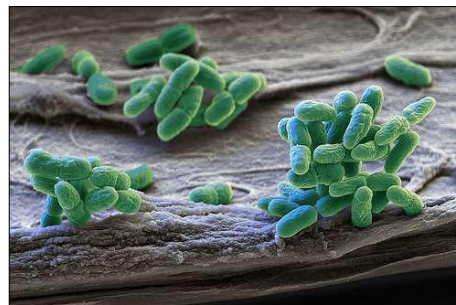
Uncle Harvey's Pond

As reported in OCT's newsletter last year, this 7.5-acre pond off Pochet Road has suffered a series of cyanobacteria outbreaks, more frequent in recent years. These organisms, with characteristics of both bacteria and blue-green algae, thrive in waters that contain high levels of nutrients, especially phosphorus. A visitor to the pond last summer would have seen gray-green, paint-like swirls on the surface.

At certain points in their life cycle, cyanobacteria release toxins into the pond. This neurotoxin can cause illness and even death to dogs and other mammals that drink it. In humans, it targets the liver, kidneys, and central nervous system, and



Reuben's Pond in East Orleans; all of the town's freshwater ponds are impaired by excessive nutrients entering the water. Photo by Hardie Truesdale.



Scanning electron microscope image of crystal structures in a type of cyanobacteria. Credit: Creative Commons.

irritates the skin. Some people who drank water or ate fish from cyanobacteria-laden lakes in New Hampshire experienced severe symptoms, according to recent research.

Over the past year, the Marine and Fresh Water Quality Committee contracted with the School of Marine Science and Technology at UMass Dartmouth (SMAST) to study Uncle Harvey's. The SMAST

results showed that nutrients enter the pond each year from two primary sources. First, sediments in the pond bottom release nutrients during periods of low oxygen (typically in summer); second, nearby septic systems leach nutrients into groundwater and thence into the pond. The first source accounted for 67 percent of the problem, and septic systems for 26 percent.

After studying various remediation options, and out of concern for the health of residents and the pond, the town committee has recommended the use of alum—a compound of aluminum and potassium—in Harvey's Pond to reduce the nutrient load from sediments. Alum would be introduced to the deepest parts of the pond via a small barge making passes back and forth over a marked area to spread a slurry. As it settles, the aluminum captures phosphates in the water, then binds with

phosphorus in the sediments and prevents its release, significantly reducing the phosphorus available for plant growth. Alum treatments have recently been used in Nickerson State Park ponds to address cyanobacteria blooms. The committee will meet with abutters in the coming months to address questions and concerns about this approach. It has also recommended to the Board of Selectmen that several shore-side homes be connected to the sewer system planned for the nearby Meetinghouse Pond watershed.

Pilgrim and Crystal Lakes

SMAST conducted studies at Pilgrim Lake last summer, and a management plan will be formulated in the coming months. This year, residents near Crystal Lakes may notice considerable water-monitoring activity starting in April, as a team from SMAST collects measurements and water samples to look at the impacts of phosphorus and stormwater runoff. This work will lead to formulating a management plan for the lake next year.

Cedar and Baker's Ponds

Also this spring, MassDOT will begin repaving Route 6 through Orleans. The good news here is that the planned work includes diverting all direct discharge of stormwater from Route 6 that currently flows into Cedar Pond. Future discharge will be piped to new "constructed wetlands," where sediments and pollutants can settle out before water enters the pond. Similarly, the stormwater from Route 6 near Baker's Pond will be treated before it reaches the pond. Another issue at Cedar Pond has been waste from cormorants roosting on the large-diameter wires over the water. Eversource has committed to removing those wires by the end of 2018, which will dramatically reduce the input of phosphorus and nitrogen into the pond.



Cyanobacteria bloom in a NH pond. Photo courtesy NH DES.

What You Can Do for Ponds

The best way to help our ponds (and saltwater estuaries) is to keep harmful nutrients out of them in the first place. As we do the annual spring clean-up and tend our lawns and gardens, try to avoid the use of fertilizer and herbicides. Check the Orleans Fertilizer Bylaw before you or a landscaper consider fertilizing your lawn. Locate leaf compost piles away from water bodies, so that decomposing organic matter doesn't wash into the water and add nutrients. Water running down your driveway or off your roof should be diverted into dry wells or vegetated areas, instead of running into water bodies. Pick up after dogs and remove litter found when out walking. Individually and together, we can make a difference in restoring freshwater ponds.

Sarah's Pond

Readers might be surprised to learn that even Sarah's Pond in South Orleans—encircled by conserved land and a very few private properties—is impaired by nutrient loading, most likely from agricultural runoff that entered its sediments many decades ago. Here, the Orleans Pond Coalition plans to test an emerging oxygenation technology that produces tiny oxygen bubbles too small to be seen with the naked eye, which remain at the bottom of the pond for very long periods rather than dissipating to the surface. The added oxygen impedes the process by which nutrients fuel the growth of cyanobacteria and helps restore the pond's natural living communities. OPC's investigation to date indicates that this is a benign and relatively inexpensive technology that has produced positive results in other applications. Having met with all the abutters, OPC is developing a detailed implementation plan and hopes to have this demonstration project in place by this summer. Contact orleanspondcoalition@gmail.com.

Orleans Conservation Trust owns or co-owns properties that directly abut Uncle Harvey's and Sarah's Ponds, and closely adjoin Cedar Pond, as well as lands adjacent to many other Orleans ponds, small and large. So we have a direct interest in their well-being—and that of all local freshwater resources. OCT staff and trustees are working to inform themselves about the best available options for sustaining and improving ponds, and will work to keep members up to date as well.

Carolyn Kennedy of the Town of Orleans Marine and Fresh Water Quality Committee and Judith Bruce of the Orleans Pond Coalition contributed to this report.

Land Trusts and Climate Change

By Mon Cochran

More than forty years ago, my grandmother, Margaret Cochran, gave fifty-eight acres of upland in South Orleans to the recently established Orleans Conservation Trust. These hills and valleys, largely unforested at the time, were the terrain I roamed with abandon as a child, coming to love its plants and animals and imagining the Native Americans who walked the trails long ago. As a young adult, I was pleased to learn that this land would be protected in perpetuity.

Almost half a century later, I'm once again living where I grew up and loving it more than ever. I'm aware, though, of how much has changed. Chief among my concerns is the changing climate. We on the Cape are feeling its impacts: rising seas, more intense storms, temperature shifts that affect our local flora and wildlife—along with secondary effects such as saltwater intruding into freshwater ponds, loss of salt marshes, and changing fisheries as the oceans warm. I worry that my home lands and waters may be so altered that my grandchildren and their children won't be able to experience the interplay of woods and water that I worship.

The clear threat posed by climate change has expanded my understanding of why acquiring and protecting open space is essential to life in Orleans and beyond. And I appreciate the preserved lands around me in new ways. The oak and pine forest around my home has a new dimension: its exquisite capacity to sequester carbon from the atmosphere and thus reduce the impact of greenhouse gases. Out in Pleasant Bay, Little Sipson's marsh is now more than the haunt of the great blue heron; it is a carbon sink critical to the planet's long-term survival.

Land trusts like OCT can play a key role in mitigating the effects of climate change. Beyond land acquisition and management, they can help educate their members and the public on the value, climate-wise, of acquiring and protecting open space—both forested upland and marshland. For example: a property that is a coastal marsh today might be underwater in 50 years. To preserve this habitat, OCT might prioritize properties that are just upland, so the marsh can move inland as sea levels rise. Conserving land for the marsh could help both human and wild communities adapt to climate change. That marsh could buffer a nearby neighborhood from heavy storms, reducing loss of life and property. It could also replace lost habitat for plants and animals, or form part of a corridor so they can migrate to new homes.

This example comes from an exciting new resource: a program launched by the national Land Trust Alliance to help local



The usually calm waters of Little Pleasant Bay inundate a marsh and boat-house at high tide during the March 2nd nor'easter.



CAPE COD
CLIMATE
CHANGE
COLLABORATIVE

land trusts address climate change by providing “strategies, training and tools” (landtrustalliance.org/topics/climate-change). Together

with land trusts around the country, OCT is perfectly positioned to be an active partner in local, regional, and national efforts to reduce the potentially catastrophic impacts of greenhouse gases. As a citizen, an OCT member, a land donor, and a former trustee, I encourage the Trust to take such an engaged and leading role.

Mon Cochran directs the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative and is currently president of the Friends of Pleasant Bay. A longtime OCT trustee, he is a retired professor of early childhood development and the author of e-books on climate change for young readers.

What Land Trusts Can Do

- Continue to promote the value of open space in mitigating the effects of climate change
- Link their missions to protecting Earth's climate, expressing commitment to a sustainable future
- Set an example of energy efficiency in their own facilities, such as installing solar panels and using non-fossil-fuel-powered tools when feasible
- Advocate (as bylaws allow) for nonpartisan legislation and infrastructure changes aimed at reducing the use of fossil fuels, such as a tax on carbon
- Support local and regional clean-energy development, e.g. the responsible siting of ocean-based wind farms south of Martha's Vineyard and links to mainland Cape Cod

Wigeons, Mergansers, and Owls, Oh My!

By Jamie Demas

On Sunday, last December 4, OCT sponsored a guided walk through the Ice House Pond and Reuben's Pond Conservation Area. This beautiful 25-acre parcel was donated to OCT by the Moore, Wilbur, and Hopkins families in 1973, just a few years after the Trust was founded. Our guide was Bob Prescott, bird expert and director of Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (and former OCT president).

From the trail entrance on Tonset Road, our group of twenty proceeded toward Ice House Pond. The first thing that struck me, about 100 paces in from the trailhead, was half a dozen enormous Douglas fir trees. Bob explained that fir trees are not native, and these were likely planted by the former owners of the property. They tower over the other trees in the area, so they must like the Cape's soil and climate.

This annual walk is also an occasion to help Mass Audubon count waterfowl at this location. Once we arrived at Ice House Pond, we saw a variety of dabbling ducks, including mallards, American wigeons, and American black ducks. Also on hand was a small flock of Canada geese. Interspersed among this mix was a pair of hooded mergansers. These small diving ducks have a distinctive crest, with the male sporting a gorgeous black-and-white pattern and the female an elegant cinnamon-colored crest. Lurking by the edge of the pond on this



Hooded mergansers, a male and two females. Photo by Bob Kroeger.

chilly afternoon was a majestic great blue heron. (The final tally of waterfowl spotted that day was 115, representing 6 species.)

From Ice House we followed the connecting trail over to smaller Reuben's Pond. When we got to the hill overlooking the pond, we heard a loud commotion coming from a "murder" of crows. We all looked up and someone exclaimed, "The crows are chasing something!" It was difficult to see through the thick forest, but eventually we got a clear view of the crows dive-bombing a pair of great horned owls. Bob explained that crows try to prevent the owls—fierce predators of other birds as well as many rodents and even raccoons and skunks—from nesting. One of the owls eventually settled in a tree near the trail, and we got a good look

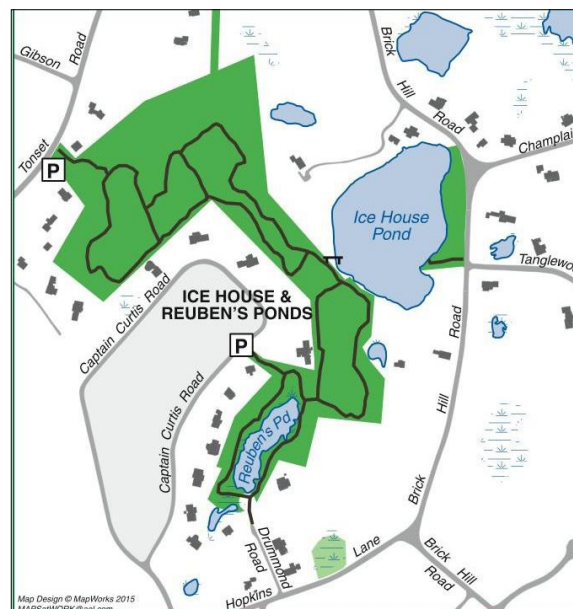
at the magnificent bird through Bob's scope. It was a real thrill for all of us on the hike.

This was only my second visit to Ice House Pond, but I have since been back many times. It's a special place, and the OCT walk was such a memorable experience. As OCT member Bob Warneke so aptly put it, "Anytime you can be in the field with Bob Prescott is to be relished, and the owl show made it all the more so." We send our sincere thanks to Bob for leading us, and we at OCT hope to see you on one of our future walks!

Jamie Demas is a trustee of OCT and a former publishing executive for Macmillan Learning. She lives near Baker's Pond and in Boston.



Great horned owl.
Photo by Elizabeth Migiore.



After the Storms

By Andrew Bagnara, OCT Land Manager

The major nor'easters that brought power outages and road closures to Orleans, from Rock Harbor to Quanset Road, also dealt a powerful blow to our OCT lands around town. Stretches of woodland look as though giants had crashed through them, toppling huge trees in their path. On one of our trails—part of an extensive system in the Ice House and Reuben's Pond Conservation Area—at least 20 big trees came down across the path, with more blocking some of the nearby trails. The trunk diameter of many of these massive pines was larger than the average chainsaw bar. Some even had thick, branching stems of poison ivy reaching out from the trunk, making the task of clearing the area very difficult.

Fortunately, the Trust has been served throughout this year



by our wonderful AmeriCorps service member Rob Bennett. In the storms' aftermath, Rob has worked tirelessly chainsawing and clearing away the downed trees from our trails. If not for him, we would probably still be



Above and left: AmeriCorps service member Rob Bennett clears downed and dangerous trees on OCT land after the March storms.

working on those trees. It's just another example of how lucky we are at OCT (and all the Cape land trusts) to be able to partner with AmeriCorps and its great volunteers year after year.



LANDMARKS, cont'd

Decorating for the Birds

This past holiday season, OCT took part in an inaugural Holiday Decorating Contest sponsored by the Orleans Chamber of Commerce. Trustees and volunteers, guided by Bonny Runyon, created beautiful (and tasty!) wildlife-themed decorations for our headquarters on South Orleans Road, and residents could vote for our entry in the "People's Choice" category. No prizes, but it was a win for our neighborhood birds and other critters who enjoyed

munching on our contributions through the New Year, while drivers enjoyed glimpses as they passed.



Wildlife-themed holiday decorations at OCT headquarters at 203 South Orleans Road.

Gifts and Donations *Braddock's Way Campaign*

From April 14, 2017 through January 2, 2018, Orleans Conservation Trust received support from its members and the Orleans community in the form of donations toward the purchase of Lot 13 on Braddock's Way. (See story on page 4.)

Every gift demonstrates a commitment to conserving land and plays a vital role in helping OCT fulfill its mission—to acquire and hold land in its natural state for conservation purposes forever, for the use and benefit of the whole community.

Gifts:

Anonymous (1)

Joshua Arnow and Elyse Brill

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Isaac Braddock

Brooks Charitable Giving Fund

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David Wiener

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What Does the New Tax Law Mean for You?

And for land conservation? The new year brought lots of changes to the way income taxes are assessed. One of these changes can potentially affect whether it will be advantageous to deduct your charitable contributions. Why? Because the new Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) eliminated or restricted many itemized deductions, beginning in 2018, and raised the standard deduction. This means that fewer taxpayers are likely to itemize.

The good news is that charitable contributions to 501(c)3 organizations such as OCT are still 100 percent deductible for taxpayers who continue to itemize deductions.

According to H&R Block, about 30 percent of taxpayers have traditionally itemized deductions (on Schedule A) because their total itemized deductions were more than the standard deduction, based on their filing status. Under TCJA, however, the standard deduction increases to \$12,000 for individuals,



\$18,000 for those filing as “head of household,” and \$24,000 for couples filing jointly. There is no longer a personal exemption. This compares to \$6,350, \$9,350 and \$12,700 respectively in 2017, plus a personal exemption of \$4,050 per person.

We won't touch on all of the other changes, but one likely to impact taxpayers in Massachusetts is the new cap on deductibility of state and local taxes. These taxes include state and local income, sales, real estate, or property taxes. Beginning in 2018, the deduction

for these taxes combined is capped at \$10,000.

More detail on the potential impact of TCJA on conservation giving can be found in this article at the website of the American College of Environmental Lawyers, acoel.org/post/2018/03/20/land-conservation-and-the-new-tax-law.aspx

Whether or not you deduct your charitable contributions in the future, we at OCT hope you continue to see the value of your gifts to Orleans and our surrounding communities.

Orleans Conservation Trust

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