WOW! Thanks to your land-saving support, we reached our goal for the 17-acre Muddy Creek Headwaters Project.

Details on page 2
You made the land-saving difference for 17 acres of woodland, wetland, meadow, and tidal river shoreline. Thanks to your donations, small and large, we’ve made our $1.6 million goal. Congratulations!

In early 2017, we plan on purchasing the property and starting on land stewardship steps by spring. These steps include removing dilapidated structures and restoring natural qualities to those sites. Thereafter, we will be creating a parking area near Church Street to access a walking trail loop, which we hope to open by summer 2017.

With your help, future generations will enjoy 17 acres in Harwich and Chatham with 1,400 feet of shoreline on Muddy Creek (Monomoy River) that flows into Pleasant Bay.

You make land preservation possible. Thank You!

Enjoy the following story about a Muddy Creek canoe adventure.

Photos, here and on the next few pages, of the birds at Muddy Creek and of this handsome fox were taken by Janet DiMattia.
Exploring Muddy Creek by Canoe

Finally, my long-anticipated trip up Muddy Creek happened in a canoe with a dear friend. It was on the last of the incoming tide on one of those beautiful late summer days in a borrowed boat. We put in at Jackknife Cove, careful to walk the canoe to the edge of the creek without trampling vegetation between patches of salt marsh cordgrass. The tide swiftly took us under the new bridge as we ruddered to avoid the rock riprap sides.

The strength of the tide was reduced as we entered the creek proper, an open area where the on and off again breeze caught our forms and made us use our paddles to keep on course. But the paddling was easy. Ospreys flew overhead. They flew from tree to tree, no doubt fishing on the incoming tide. The unmistakable cackling call of the belted kingfisher, also fishing for a meal, turned our heads. We counted at least three. The kingfisher nests in burrows on eroded bank faces. They are one of many animals that see an eroding coastal bank as home. They depend on unvegetated banks in which to excavate their nesting cavities. Kingfishers feed almost entirely on fish and other aquatic critters, catching them by diving into the water. Once you recognize their call, you’ll never forget it.

Over the last several decades, most people travelling Route 28 toward Orleans were probably unaware they were passing over a bridge, well, a bridge of sorts. Someone told me it was a “scupper bridge,” so nicknamed because of the openings in the rocks beneath the road which were like the scuppers on a boat which allow water to drain from the boat’s deck. But these scuppers had restricted the natural flow of the incoming tide and the outgoing freshwater between Pleasant Bay and Muddy Creek. The type of vegetation found on the landward side of the bridge, though somewhat salt tolerant, was that of a freshwater wetland due to the dominance of the groundwater flowing from the headwaters of the creek.
Of particular interest to me will be the changes that take place as some of the plants and trees die, not adapted to the inundation of water with higher salt content, and the salt tolerant species take their place. Already, pitch pines closest to the water’s edge are stark rusty-brown signifying their demise. I took notice of high bush blueberry bushes, some which may persist, but others that will not. It will be curious to see what species find their way to fill these niches. Will salt tolerant woody shrubs like Groundsel Bush (*Baccharis halimifolia*) or Marsh Elder (*Iva frutescens*) show up? The salt marsh cordgrass that already exists closest to the bridge will no doubt expand its reaches. And this is anticipated to be one of the important results of the new bridge, that acres of salt marsh will be restored.

As we moved up the creek, we were pleasantly rewarded by views of a forested shoreline in all directions. There was rarely a house or lawn to be seen. I had expected to see the houses that line most of Chatham’s side of the creek, but instead it was a welcome view of simply nature thanks to the leaves on the trees. We took the bend to the right and came across two Mute Swans. The mute swan, while beautiful, is an invasive species, brought to this country from Europe because of its beauty. And as the Cornell Lab of Ornithology says, “their aggressive behavior and voracious appetites often disturb local ecosystems, displace native species, and even pose a hazard to humans.” Impressive in size, we were particularly concerned about that last point, and very glad nesting season was over so they would not be defending eggs or chicks or cygnets! We were escorted by one for a short way, but without incident.

And then we spied Green Herons, crouched on a low branch waiting for a fish or other invertebrate. Classic photo op! And then we saw a second, a third, a fourth! Green Herons are small stocky herons, with slender yellow legs and dagger-like bills. Their backs are colored a velvet-green atop a body of rich chestnut and a dark cap that can be raised into a short crest. I’ve read that they sometimes actually lure fish close for the catch, using small items such as twigs, feathers, worms or insects as bait that they drop into the water. They nest in a large fork of a tree or bush, with overhanging branches to conceal the nest. The nest is usually on or over the water, but may be up to a half-mile away and may be located anywhere from ground level to 30 feet off the ground and sometimes higher.

As we entered the left fork toward the most upper reaches of the creek, we had to steer clear of massive poison ivy bushes that reached out over the water towards us. A bit further on, as we failed in our maneuvering, we collided with similar vegetation, but few! It was pussy willow! Then, the tide had apparently just turned and ahead appeared the shades of white water as the outgoing tide was riffling over a fallen log. It was a small thrill as we successfully passed over the log without calamity. Then, the prehistoric cry of a Great Blue Heron (GBH), we saw its majestic wings in flight. Another flew overhead, and we strained to see which tree it landed in. It was so well camouflaged. The Great Blue Herons build stick nests in tree tops in colonies with other GBHs called “heronries”. GBHs can hunt at night as well as daytime because of heightened night vision. 

*continued on page 5*
Preserving the 17-acre landscape on Muddy Creek helps to:

- Protect approx. 1,400 feet of Muddy Creek shoreline, thereby protecting the scenic view that will be enjoyed by the public using non-motorized watercraft (i.e. kayak, canoe) now that the tidal restoration/bridge project is completed at Rt. 28.
- Protect forested upland and meadow for a walking trail loop in East Harwich on the border with Chatham.
- Protect the water quality of Muddy Creek and Pleasant Bay which provide critical habitats for a variety of resident and migratory wildlife species, including river herring and American eel.
- Protect land within Priority Habitat for Rare Species (i.e. the geographic extent for state-listed rare species) as designated by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP).
- Protect land within NHESP Estimated Habitat for Rare Wildlife (i.e. based on occurrences of rare wetland wildlife observed within the last 25 years and documented in the NHESP database).
- Protect land mapped by the Statewide Land Conservation Plan.
- Protect potential archeological significance.
- Protect natural resources consistent with goals set forth in the town’s Open Space & Recreation Plan and the Barnstable County Regional Policy Plan.

In these upper reaches of the creek, herring and American eel come in their season with the hopes of reaching Ministers Pond and Mill Pond. Yes, believe it or not, that is the historic hydrologic connection. Prior to modern development, wetlands connected these ponds to the creek. Now, the remnant water flow is through a pipe/culvert under Old Queen Anne Road and Meetinghouse Road. We have altered so much over the last hundred years and we now know we need to restore the important functions of these wetlands. The Muddy Creek Bridge is an example of a restoration project that we can personally watch as the creek reverts and is rejuvenated to its historic function.

A trip up Muddy Creek, whether by kayak, canoe or a virtual visit by video, will be one you will never forget. It is a treasure for the Towns of Harwich and Chatham that share the creek. It is a treasure for all. 

by Kristin Andres, Director of Education & Outreach, APCC, courtesy of The Cape Cod Chronicle

Photo by Alan Pollock
The garden there was huge. “As a young child, I had no interest whatsoever in gardening,” Shinkwin says. “But my dad found plenty of opportunity to get me out there on my hands and knees.”

Shinkwin describes an idyllic childhood. When his father remarried, the family moved with their dog into a home that was “fun city.” There were three sisters – the oldest had moved out by this time and the two younger sisters remained. “Their young men, just out of the service, came and went, courting the girls, who went dancing at the USO, and returned home to sit outside in the evenings laughing, joking, and ‘having a time of it.’

“Oh there’s a story alright,” says Bill Shinkwin from his home in Wisconsin. “And it starts with my dad, but not where you might think.”

Shinkwin’s voice carries all the lilt and warmth of a natural born storyteller. Although he’s speaking by phone, any listener can hear he’s happily settled in to tell the tale of the holly trees, or, more to the point, the story of his dad who owned the land on Long Road, and who was, above all else a gardener.

“During World War I, my dad was in the expeditionary force in France,” Shinkwin begins. “He wrote letters to his family, to his mother, in Chelmsford.”

Shinkwin has read some of the letters. He chuckles. “All of them were about what was going on in Chelmsford; what the season meant in terms of planting. He’d write things like: it must be about the right time to plant the carrots now…or something needed to be harvested, or soil needed to be turned over.

“There was a war going on all around him,” Shinkwin said. “He never mentioned that though – it was always about the gardens at home. Even before I was born, and after, wherever my dad was, there was always a garden.”

When Shinkwin was young and living in Lowell, his mother died. Some time later, his father remarried the woman Shinkwin calls his “second mother.” “I’m not too fond of the term stepmother – she was as much a mother to me as my first. Her family was from Billerica; my family moved from Lowell to that nearby town where my second mother’s family owned nearly 20 acres,” he said.

The garden there was huge. “As a young child, I had no interest whatsoever in gardening,” Shinkwin says. “But my dad found plenty of opportunity to get me out there on my hands and knees.”

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“Oh, I was a lucky lad to be surrounded by pretty sisters and these fellows, who were really pretty nice guys,” Shinkwin says. All of his siblings eventually grew up, left the nest and went into the service, or to school, and onto marriage and careers.

Shinkwin says his father’s passion for gardening never waned. With the family now raised, his parents began contemplating a place on the Cape. Before making the move, however, Shinkwin says his father went out on a number of scouting expeditions.

continued on page 7
“Cape Cod, of course, isn’t known to have the best when it comes to soil,” Shinkwin relates, and then laughs when he recalls his dad kept a shovel in the trunk. “When he saw what he thought was a nice patch of earth, and he felt no one was looking, he’d hop out, grab the shovel and turn over a clump or two to check, to see what was there.”

And here, the storyteller announces, we have arrived at the advent of Holly Knoll – an open acre of land on Long Road, which had pretty good soil and not a holly tree to be seen. “My dad knew the soil was good,” Shinkwin says. “That’s why he offered to buy it.”

And so, Bill’s parents moved to Cape Cod and grew a fine garden. They provided fresh vegetables to the Ebb Tide restaurant and people from around Harwich came to the Shinkwins’ house to buy fresh produce. Eventually, they gave up supplying the restaurant and just sold fresh produce door to door.

“They never had a farm stand out or anything. People just came right up to the door and knocked, or they’d bring it around,” said Bill.

In due time, Shinkwin explains, his dad’s focus broadened. On rambling hikes through the woods, Shinkwin Sr. took clippings of holly bushes and nursed them along in an old cold frame on the property. He planted them and they grew.

“In my mind, that was my dad’s problem,” Shinkwin says. “He over planted. There was always too much.”

Today a sizable collection of holly trees stands on the property and is only a portion of what Shinkwin’s father grew over the years. Today, many of the holly trees found around town were likely cultivated on Shinkwin’s little farm on Long Road.

“At this point, I’d gone off and been in the service, I’d found my lovely wife, and had a career,” Shinkwin says. “But it became sort of a joke. Whenever I came to visit, my father would tell me something along the lines of ‘Oh, I ran into Mrs. Young and she’d like some holly. I told her when my son comes back from Milwaukee, he’ll bring you a plant.’ Before I’d even unpacked my bags I’d be up to my waist in a hole, digging out holly. Then when I got to whoever it was who wanted it, well they wouldn’t know where they wanted it planted. Now I’m digging another hole. This went on and on.

“I did finally put my foot down when I came to visit,” Shinkwin laughs. “I had to tell him ‘Look, Dad, I didn’t come 1,200 miles to work my whole vacation digging holes in Harwich’.”

Shinkwin pauses a moment. “He never sold them. Folks were just recipients of his generosity.”

With the sentiment in mind that many, many people benefited from the Shinkwins’ generosity – their holly along with the bounty from their gardens – it is fitting that the land Bill Shinkwin’s dad deemed to be good earth is now preserved with the Harwich Conservation Trust. Now folks driving by on Long Road can benefit by enjoying the view of roadside greenery graced with evergreen hollies.

continued on page 8
After the death of their parents, and with Bill, his wife and sisters getting on in age, donating the property seemed the thing to do: The parents’ small cottage, its land, and the adjacent lot were donated to the Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT). The holly trees continue to grow and are rumored to be home to a growing family of turkeys. Cardinals and other birds flit among the branches – also beneficiaries of such abundance.

Unlike other donations to HCT or purchases made by HCT, the Shinkwins’ donation of their Cape home has not only preserved land, it currently generates income for the Trust.

“Thanks to the Shinkwins’ donated home, HCT benefits from rental income that contributes to HCT’s land-saving mission. Their innovative gift continues their family tradition of giving back to the community. I think of them every time I drive by the house and the hollies, simply wonderful people” says Michael Lach, the Trust’s director.

“The Shinkwins’ unique gift inspired HCT to develop a new giving opportunity called ‘Homes for Habitat.’ When donating a house no longer wanted or needed, donors create a variety of options for the Trust and its work,” Lach explained.

Depending on the donor’s interest with ‘Homes for Habitat,’ the gift can be during her/his lifetime or by bequest. Gift flexibility is key and will enable HCT to:

- lease the house for income (as in the Shinkwins’ case)
- provide housing for HCT staff or interns
- “un-develop” the house to restore wildlife habitat (also an option in the Shinkwins’ case)
- or sell the house using the proceeds to preserve other important natural land.

Shinkwin says he’s unsure if he’ll ever get back to this neck of the woods to have a look at the property, yet he loves knowing his dad’s holly trees still thrive and the land continues to provide a haven for birds and squirrels. His dad would be happy!

Article by Susanna Graham-Pye
According to 2015 records of the Mass. Division of Conservation Services, more landowners on Cape Cod have received state tax credits for donating or selling their land in a charitable sale or conservation restriction than in any other county in the state. A total of 60 landowners had received a total of $2.56 million for preserving their land with local Cape Cod land trusts, The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts (also known as The Compact, a regional land trust service center), and Town conservation commissions.

Almost 300 acres on the Cape were preserved using the tax credit in the 5-year period (2011-15). All of the Cape’s 15 towns had at least one project completed except Mashpee. (One tax credit project is pending in Mashpee for 2016.) A statewide tally of completed projects through September 2016 shows almost $10 million in conservation land tax credits have been awarded to Massachusetts landowners.

The Conservation Land Tax Credit program was adopted by the legislature in 2009 and implemented in 2011. Amended in 2012, it provides a refundable tax credit to Massachusetts landowners with “conservation-worthy” natural land. Landowners need not live in the state nor pay taxes here. If the land is eligible, the landowner is eligible. Landowners can claim half of the donated value up to $75,000. They receive a refund check or elimination of their state income tax for that year or both. Gifts of land, conservation restrictions, and charitable sales of property are all eligible transactions. The conveyance must be made to a non-profit conservation organization (land trust) or town or state environmental agency. The landowner must have clear title and support the tax credit claim with an appraisal.

On Cape Cod, conservation transactions under the tax credit program have ranged from a conservation restriction on one acre of pine woods in Wellfleet to a charitable sale of 40 acres of barrier beach and marsh in Dennis. In partnership with The Compact, HCT has worked with landowners on projects protecting woodland, wetland, and other natural resources in Harwich. The tax credit from the state is in addition to a federal income tax deduction for the same transaction.

One example: Landowner donates an eligible forest parcel worth $180,000. She would receive the maximum $75,000 from the State. The $180,000 gift could also provide her with $45,000 to $60,000 in saved federal taxes (over multiple years), if she is in an average tax bracket. If she sold it for development instead, she would have broker’s fees and capital gains taxes to pay. The net difference between the two outcomes might not be great in dollars—and the land would be preserved!

For more information, please contact HCT’s Executive Director Michael Lach at 508-432-3997 or mike@harwichconservationtrust.org.

By Mark Robinson, Executive Director of The Compact
Wildlands Music and Art Stroll

More than 300 visitors enjoyed HCT’s 4th Annual Wildlands Music & Art Stroll on a warm, sunny Saturday, September 10th. People of all ages and multiple generations strolled HCT’s 66-acre Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve. The Guild of Harwich Artists painted en plein air and local musicians played jazz, classical, and folk music on the original “piano in the woods” as well as guitar, violin, accordion and other instruments.

We extend a special thanks to all involved including:

HCT Volunteers
Barnstable County Sheriff’s Department
Cranberry Liquors
First Student (shuttle buses)
Nauset Disposal
Robert B. Our Company, Inc.

Town Support:
Town of Harwich Fire Department & EMTs
Town of Harwich Police Department
Town of Harwich Board of Selectmen
Town of Harwich Harbormaster
Town of Harwich Highway Department
Harwich Community Center
Harwich Historical Society
Monomoy Regional High School

Thank you to our talented artists from the Guild of Harwich Artists including:

Chris Banks
Karla Cardillo
Elizabeth “Dib” Carlson
Ellen Cuddy
Kathy Elkamouny
Larry Folding
John Glass
Barbara Grasso
Elaine Felos Ostrander
Maryrose Reynolds
Weedie Tyldesley

Paint brushes all but hide artist Kathy Elkamouny

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Thank you to our talented musicians including:

Kathleen Healy
Dorothy Hemmings
Just Plain Folk
Keltic Kids
Tom Leidenfrost
Jordan Renzi
Dylan Routhier & Keb Hutchings-McMahon
Jennifer Stratton & Gerry Mack
Tom Telesmanick
Ruth Treen

Thank you to The Local Scoop for their delicious ice cream.

Keltic Kids: Alex Birdsey, Jonathan Ford, Fern Tamigini, and Bailey Ford
The First People: Before & After the First Encounter
Three-Walk Series about Native American History

Join 12th generation Cape Codder Todd Kelley and native Wampanoag/Nipmuc Marcus Hendricks on a series of walks exploring the lives of the First People local to this area and the circumstances that led up to their first encounter with the Pilgrims. We will then examine the consequences of interactions that followed up to the time of King Philip’s War in 1675. The Harwich Conservation Trust, Wellfleet Conservation Trust, Truro Conservation Trust, and Native Land Conservancy have partnered to offer this unique walk series.

Cost: $45.00 for the series (if you join one or all three walks, it’s a one-time fee of $45.00)
Advance registration is required. Space is limited. To register (and pay), go to www.harwichconservationtrust.org. Directions will be emailed to you with registration (payment) confirmation.

Walk Descriptions:

**Family Life Prior to European Contact**
**Saturday, October 29, 2016**
10:00 a.m. to noon (rain date: Sunday, Oct. 30)
Harwich, Hawksnest State Park

Celebrate the bounty of natural resources from the coastal waters to the upland forest and kettle ponds. Live family life in a community intimately connected with the rhythms of the land through their daily activities and sharing of stories that are the essence of communal memory.

**Corn Hill and Myles Standish’s Foray into the Interior Leading up to the First Encounter of 1620**
**Saturday, November 5, 2016**
10:00 a.m. to noon (rain date: Sunday, Nov. 6)
Truro, Cape Cod National Seashore

Witness the European intrusion into peaceful interior communities setting the pilgrims’ immediate needs ahead of decorum. Trace the footsteps of the Messengers as they followed Myles Standish and his men from Corn Hill to the First Encounter. We will conclude this foray with the Billington boy incident that forged the Treaty of 1621 and made European amends for Corn Hill.

**From the Praying Indians of the Lower Cape to King Philip’s War of 1675**
**Saturday, November 12, 2016**
10:00 a.m. to noon (rain date: Sunday, Nov. 13)
Wellfleet, Cape Cod National Seashore

Consider how the First People of the area had to make difficult decisions about family and community in a rapidly changing world. We will compare the outcomes of social displacement for many communities and the safety of the Lower Cape for others at the time of King Philip’s War.

All About River Otters

Saturday, February 11, 2017 (2:00 p.m.)
Harwich Community Center
$5.00 per person

Liz Baldwin is the Assistant Director of BiodiversityWorks a non-profit on Martha’s Vineyard. In 2011, Liz and her colleague, Luanne Johnson founded BiodiversityWorks to focus on wildlife research and monitoring in the region and to mentor high school and college students in field biology (www.biodiversityworksmv.org).

One of their earlier research projects was documenting river otter activity across the island. Liz expanded the project for her masters degree and looked at the activity patterns, behaviors, and population status of the river otter in a northeast coastal environment. In 2013, she graduated with a degree in Conservation Biology from Antioch University New England. She will talk to us about the biology and natural history of the North American river otter (Lontra canadensis), results from her thesis and how to identify otter track and sign.

As autumn unfolds, we’ll be adding more fascinating presentations to our 2017 Winter Talk Series. To learn more, please visit www.harwichconservationtrust.org where you can also sign up for our free e-news to receive event updates.
IN MEMORY OF:

In Memory of My Wife Evie
Ron Armbruster

In Memory of Rose and Bill Armon
George and Sally Cormier

In Memory of Sara and Calvin Ayer
John and Cathy Ayer

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George C. Baldwin, Jr.

In Memory of My Sister Lee W. Baldwin
Gail Hancock

In Memory of Tom Barker
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Corallia wren photo by Janet DiMattia

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Autumn 2016
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Snowy owl photo by Janet DiMattia
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In Honor of our 50th Wedding Anniversary
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Diane and Steve Boettcher

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In Honor of Max, Mia and Cassadie
Carol A. Chichetto

In Honor of Ursula Corbett
Shannon and Nino Corbett

In Honor of The Gorham Family
Carolyn Gorham Murray

In Honor of my Grandchildren who I hope will enjoy the Cape for years to come.
Lynn Schweinshaut

In Honor of the HCT and all the good you do. XO
Jane A. Pedersen

In Honor of the Harwich Conservation Trust Volunteers
Clayton (Tony) and Mary Jane Ryan Jr.

In Honor of Allen and Martha Campbell
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Marcia Andrews
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Placing HCT in your will (also known as a bequest) is a forward-thinking way to support our land-saving work. If you are interested, please call Exec. Dir. Mike Lach at 508-432-3997 or email mike@harwichconservationtrust.org. Thank you for considering a legacy that will save special places. Find more information at: www.harwichconservationtrust.org/planned_giving.

If you have year-end giving plans, please consider HCT with the enclosed donation envelope or visit:
www.harwichconservationtrust.org

Thank you!