

Spring
2017
NEWSLETTER
PRESERVING SPECIAL
PLACES SINCE 1988

Box Turtles: rare and at risk



But your HCT support makes a difference...

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HCT's Mission

HCT preserves land to protect woods, water, wildlife and our shared quality of life in Harwich.



Stay Informed

Visit www.harwichconservationtrust.org for updates on HCT's wild happenings from walks & talks to land stewardship and land-saving success to innovative volunteer citizen science projects.

Main cover photo of box turtle by Janet DiMattia; box turtle in road photo by Mike Lach

Newsletter design by West Barnstable Press

Box Turtles: Rare and at Risk

It's always a thrill when you find a box turtle on the edge of the wild, crossing paths with you on local roads, the bike trail, or maybe even in your yard. Every box turtle has its own unique pattern of orange, yellow, dark brown, and black starbursts gracing her/his domed shell. They have the potential for long lives, but habitat loss and fragmentation as well as roads

have taken a heavy toll. These turtles have suffered such a decline that they are designated as a rare Species of Special Concern by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (MA NHESP).

But your land-saving support enables Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT) to proactively preserve prime box turtle habitat that give these shy creatures a chance to safely find food, nest, and shelter. A review of East Coast box turtle tracking studies reveals that home ranges, on



Photo by Kelly Sattman

average, can vary from less than two acres to more than a dozen acres. Many of the woodland properties preserved by you through HCT are in this acreage range and fortunately more recently, much larger landscapes have been protected (examples: 49-acre Pleasant Bay Woodlands and 17-acre Muddy Creek Headwaters). We also watch for opportunities to preserve land that expands existing conservation areas like the Town Bell's Neck Conservation Lands.



The plastron of a hatchling, photo by Mike Lach

In addition, we regularly monitor lands protected by HCT to understand habitat changes including the presence of invasive plants. Ongoing land stewardship is vital for maintaining habitat diversity, which is important for box turtles as well as a variety of wildlife species.

Box Turtles: Rare and at Risk

To understand more about the distribution of box turtles across Harwich, we invite you to keep a lookout for turtles this spring and summer during your town-wide travels. Watch your email for HCT's e-news providing details about how to help. We want to know when and where you've observed a turtle.

To sign up for HCT's e-news, just visit our website: www.harwichconservationtrust.org and in the upper right corner click "Join our e-newsletter."

Meanwhile, thank you for supporting HCT's land-saving work and land stewardship, both of which provide healthier habitat for box turtles.

Interesting Box Turtle Facts

Eastern box turtle (Terrapene carolina) is a terrestrial turtle, inhabiting many types of habitats. It is found in both dry and moist woodlands, brushy fields, thickets, marsh edges, bogs, swales, fens, and stream banks.

The box turtle earned its name because a natural hinge on the lower shell (plastron) allows it to pull its head, legs, and tail inside the upper shell (carapace) and plastron.

Box turtles overwinter in upland forest, a few inches under the soil surface, typically covered by leaf litter or woody debris. As soil temperatures drop, the turtles burrow into soft ground.

In summer, adult box turtles are most active in the morning and evening, particularly after a rainfall. To avoid the heat of the day, they often seek shelter under rotting logs or masses of decaying leaves, in mammal burrows, or in mud. They often scoop out a "form" (a small domelike space) in leaf litter, grasses, ferns, or mosses where they spend the night.

They are omnivorous, feeding on animal matter such as slugs, insects, earthworms, snails, and even carrion. Box turtles also have a fondness for mushrooms, berries. fruits, leafy vegetables, roots, leaves, and seeds.

Females reach sexual maturity at approximately 13 years of age. Mating is opportunistic and may take place anytime between April and October.

Females nest in June or early July and can travel great distances to find appropriate nesting habitat. They may travel up to approximately 1,600 m (one mile), many of them crossing roads during their journey. Females typically start nesting in the late afternoon or early evening and continue for up to five hours.





Above: Female Box Turtle laying eggs, photo by Janet DiMattia

Left: Hatchling, photo by Michael Lach

The male box turtle almost always has red eyes, and females have yellowish-brown or sometimes dark red eyes. source: MA NHESP

17-Acre Muddy Creek Headwaters Project

UPDATE:

17-acre Muddy Creek Headwaters Project

On HCT's behalf, the 17.34-acre Muddy Creek Headwaters landscape was acquired on March 2nd by The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc. from the Marini family as a "buy and hold" step. HCT has been working on preserving this priority landscape since at least 2004. With the combined land-saving philanthropy from you, our loyal HCT supporters, you're enabling HCT to complete this complicated land-saving project.

The temporary "buy-and-hold" of the property by The Compact (a regional nonprofit land trust service center: www.thecompact.net) allows HCT time to remove the dilapidated structures, and thereafter, also allows time for The Compact to convey a conservation restriction to the Town for \$800,000 (comprised of \$500,000 in Community Preservation Act funds plus \$300,000 supplemented by HCT). In addition, The Compact's temporary ownership enables the Town to receive a \$400,000 state Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) reimbursement grant.

The Compact's ownership of the property in 2017 also enables the Marini family to qualify for a state income tax credit of up to \$75,000. Ownership will transfer from The Compact to HCT later this year or early 2018.

An abandoned and deteriorated house and tennis court had occupied the site for several years. HCT solicited bids for removal of the structures and ultimately contracted Robert B. Our Company, Inc. to abate the asbestos within the house (Banner Environmental abated the



Photo by Zygote Digital Films

asbestos as a subcontractor to Robert B. Our Co.), demolish, and remove the structures. A limited amount of soil in which was discovered home heating oil that leaked from an exterior storage tank was also removed. The soil removal down to 15 feet deep was overseen by Horsley & Witten Group, also contracted by HCT. Luckily we discovered the decades old oil leak before it intersected with the water table. In addition, there were various leftover fuel containers in the basement that were removed by Global Remediation Services.

continued on page 5



Kingfisher perch along the shoreline. Photo by Janet DiMattia



The abandoned house had been open to the weather for many years. Photo by David Simmons

17-Acre Muddy Creek Headwaters Project



Robert B. Our Company removes the abandoned house. Photo by Zygote Digital Films

The next step is a comprehensive ecological restoration of the disturbed areas which is being implemented by Blue Flax Design in consultation with HCT. Steps include naturalizing the site and expanding sandplain grassland/meadow habitat. These types of plant communities represent less than 2% of habitat types across the Cape. The majority of the landscape is pine/oak woodland. We're also working with AmeriCorps to establish a trailhead and install a trailhead kiosk built by Eagle Scout Trevor Branch (Troop 77, Brewster). HCT's volunteer Boundary Quest team started to mark property boundaries this spring. When the habitat restoration and trailhead creation are complete, HCT plans to open a walking trail which could occur this fall. However, to allow sufficient habitat recovery, the trail may open in 2018.

With the installation of the new Route 28 bridge at the mouth of Muddy Creek, the tidal river and newly available kayaking/canoeing opportunities have become very popular, including views from the water of the 1,400 feet of shoreline along the newly preserved 17 acres. If we didn't proactively pursue the preservation of these 17 acres, then a 12-lot subdivision could have occupied the landscape bordering Muddy Creek that flows into Pleasant Bay at Jackknife Cove.



Red-tailed hawks inhabit the property. Photo by Janet DiMattia

Thank you to all who made this land-saving project possible, including: individual & family donors, Pleasant Bay Challenge donors, Wequassett Resort, foundations (Neil & Anna Rasmussen Foundation, John T. Ryan Jr. Memorial Foundation, Cape Cod Five Charitable Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation, Bafflin Foundation, William E. Simon Foundation, Angell Foundation), nonprofits (Chatham Conservation Foundation, Brewster Conservation Trust, Friends of Pleasant Bay, Ducks Unlimited, Friends of Chatham Waterways, East Harwich Community Association), Town Meeting voters, Town Hall staff & committees, HCT volunteers, and many more who together preserved this valley of woodland, meadow, wetland, and Muddy Creek shoreline to protect Pleasant Bay. Stay tuned for a future trail opening!



Eco-restoration is underway to enhance meadow habitat for native grasses and wildflowers like butterfly weed that are beneficial to pollinators. Photo by Janet DiMattia

Cold Brook Eco-Restoration Project

HCT Takes Next Step With Cold Brook Eco-Restoration Project

Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT) and the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) have selected Inter-Fluve, Inc., an engineering firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts that specializes in river and wetland restoration, to complete the ecological restoration design and begin the permitting process for HCT's Cold Brook Eco-Restoration Project in Harwich Port. HCT has partnered with DER and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to plan, design, permit, and ecologically restore the wetland and stream habitats of the retired cranberry bog complex that comprises HCT's largest protected landholding called the Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve.

The three primary project goals include enhancing wildlife habitat diversity, improving water quality, and enhancing the walking trail experience for visitors. The eco-restoration project will result in the removal of several deteriorating water control structures associated with retired cranberry bogs, reconstruction of stream channel and flood plain, re-establishment of wetland hydrology in former peatlands, and removal of barriers for migrating fish such as American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*).





In 2009, HCT approached DER to discuss restoration options for Cold Brook that in addition to enhancing wetland function and wildlife habitat, would provide improved public access to the Cold Brook Preserve. Discussions continued through 2011 when Cold Brook was selected under a formal process as a Priority Project of DER, which makes the project eligible for state funding of ecological investigations and data collection, feasibility study as well as project management assistance. The goal of DER is to restore aquatic habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The hiring of Inter-Fluve was made possible by a \$40,000 grant from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET), \$35,000 from DER, and \$25,000 from the

Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. MET is a grant program within the State's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs with a mission to support projects that leverage innovative approaches to protect and restore natural resources. Funded through the sale of environmental license plates and legal settlements, MET is one of the largest sources of grant funds for water resources in the Commonwealth. Since its founding, MET has awarded over \$20 million in grants to organizations protecting and enhancing the Commonwealth's water resources and natural environments.

Cold Brook Eco-Restoration Project



"Driving around the Cape, you see many cars with MET's 'Preserve the Trust' right whale, trout, and other specialty license plates. It's great to know that in buying those license plates, those folks are in effect also driving the funding for protection of water resources around the state, including right here in Harwich Port with the Cold Brook Eco-Restoration Project," said Michael Lach, HCT Executive Director.

Interestingly, Inter-Fluve's Nick Nelson was born on the Cape and is a Harwich native. "We're thrilled to partner with Nick and his Inter-Fluve team. They have hands-on knowledge and experience from projects in Plymouth and Falmouth restoring natural wetlands and hydrology in retired bog systems. We're off to a great start working with Inter-Fluve as well as the state's Division of Ecological Restoration and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on the project design," said Lach. HCT and the Town of Harwich are also exploring ways to reduce nitrogen in the Saquatucket Harbor watershed through the Cold Brook Eco-Restoration Project.

For more information about MET's "Preserve the Trust" specialty license plates, please visit:

https://secure.rmv.state.ma.us/SpecialPlates/intro.aspx

For more information about the Cold Brook Eco-Restoration Project including a project summary, three-minute video, answers to project questions, and an interview that aired on the Cape & Islands National Public Radio station (WCAI 94.3 fm), please visit:

http://harwichconservationtrust.org/cold-brookeco-restoration-project/

Photos by Bill Giokas

Meet Your Local Farmers

More than 900 people of all ages enjoyed connecting with 50 local farmers and farm-supporting groups at the 8th Annual Meet Your Local Farmers event on Saturday, March 25th in the Harwich Community Center. This spring time gathering is a great way for folks to connect with farmers, understand where local produce comes from, learn about farm related activities, buy some delicious products, and kick off the gardening season. Save the date of Saturday, March 24, 2018 for the 9th Annual Meet Your Local Farmers event! To receive HCT's free e-news (email) announcements

about this event and other fun opportunities, please visit www.harwichconservationtrust.org and in the upper right corner, click "Join our e-newsletter."









Photos by Stephanie Foster, The Cape Codder





Meet Your Local Farmers









Above photo by James Carbone

Above photos by Stephanie Foster, The Cape Codder

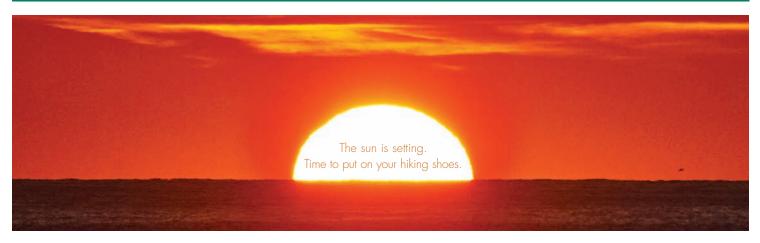


Above photos by James Carbone





Native Nightlife Walks under the Full Moon



Guided Walks in the Cape Cod National Seashore: "Native Nightlife Walks"

Sponsored by Harwich Conservation Trust and Eastham Conservation Foundation (Eastham's local land trust), join 12th generation Cape Codder Todd Kelley and Native American Nipmuc/Wampanoag Marcus Hendricks on one of three walks exploring the cultural and natural nightlife of Cape Cod. Learn about the lifeways of the First People (Native Americans) as well as old Cape Codders in relation to the rhythms of native plants and animals at dusk and during the night. Learn why the First People told stories at night (the foundation of the oral storytelling tradition) and why they fished at night among other activities.

These walks take place around the time of the summer full moons in June, July and August. Choose any of the three dates to explore the many ways that the natural world flourishes after diurnal (daytime) birds and animals go to bed and crepuscular (dawn and dusk) wildlife as well as nocturnal wildlife become active.



Photo by Rick Moriarty



Photo by Rick Moriarty



Photo by Rick Moriarty

Native Nightlife Walks under the Full Moon

June Full Moon "Strawberry Moon"

Day/date: Monday, June 12, 2017 Rain date: Tuesday, June 13, 2017

July Full Moon "Thunder Moon"

Day/date: Monday, July 10, 2017 Rain date: Tuesday, July 11, 2017

August Full Moon "Sturgeon Moon"

Day/date: Monday, August 7, 2017 Rain date: Tuesday, August 8, 2017

Time for each walk: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.



Cost: \$15.00 per person. Space is limited, pre-registration (payment) is required.

Register (pay) online by credit card at www.harwichconservationtrust.org

Location: Cape Cod National Seashore, Eastham You will receive directions to the meeting place with your reservation confirmation email.

Bring walking/hiking shoes, long-sleeves, lightweight pants, water, and if available a headlamp or flashlight because of returning in twilight. These moderate paced walks include a woodland trail, some paved bike trail, a wooden footbridge, and some soft beach sand. These walks are recommended for ages 12 and up.

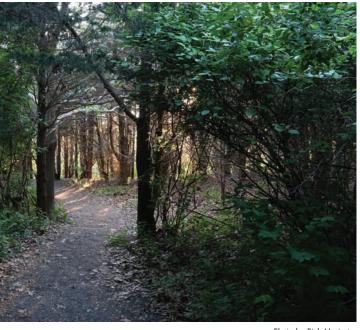


Photo by Rick Moriarty

Janet DiMattia: A Volunteer with a Photographic Eye

Janet DiMattia's nature images brighten the pages of HCT's newsletters. Her photographs are stunning. Lighting and focus are important ingredients in nature photography, but there is another component that is essential: patience. Janet captures a moment because she devotes time to be there, at the ready, when a mother feeds her baby bird or a bumble bee pollinates a flower.

Cape Cod became Janet's home 17 years ago after retiring from elementary education in Connecticut. She had a special connection with the Cape and its natural beauty from childhood when her family vacationed here.

Bringing her appreciation of nature to the classroom, Janet's former students participated in Migration Studies of Butterflies and



learned from projects on birds, studying the structure of their wings, seasonal plumage changes, and subtle behavioral differences between species. Janet is still teaching in retirement - her photographs give us detailed information about our bird population. She explains, "Cape Cod offers such a great variety of birds every season of the year. Among my favorites are the Osprey for its availability, the Kingfisher for the challenge, and the Yellow-rumped Warbler and ever present Black-capped Chickadee for their gentle personalities."



Photos of skipper on a cone flower, tree swallow feeding its young, and osprey building a nest by Janet DiMattia

She uses a Nikon D500, a tripod (or other available platforms), and a 300 mm telephoto lens to capture moments in the lives of birds, animals, insects, and plants. Oh, yes, she works with that other essential ingredient . . . patience.

Thank you to Janet, and our many volunteer photographers, for your generous gift of nature photos to Harwich Conservation Trust.



to FCT - in honor of and in memory of

GIFT DEDICATIONS From 9/19/16-4/15/17

IN MEMORY OF:

In Memory of Frederick N. Adams Julia C. Adams

In Memory of Alfie, Penny, Fudgesicle & Zoe William and Doreen Silver

In Memory of Richard F. Anton Kathleen E. Sinnamon and Nathaniel Lawton

> In Memory of Kevin Armstrong Taylor (Tab) and Susan Mills

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In Memory of Lee W. H. Baldwin The Baldwin, Small, Hancock clans Connie L. Pina

In Memory of Karen Berkery Robert and Marilyn Grimm

In Memory of Edmee and Charles Bradley Maria and Robert Bradley

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In Memory of Eddy Brown Ed W. Brown

In Memory of George Francias Cahill Diane Le Duc

In Memory of Carole Campbell Arthur B. Campbell III



In Memory of Herbert Campbell Deborah Nelson Aylesworth

In Memory of Ronan Campion Carolyn M. Campion

In Memory of Joyce C. Clifford Lawrence Clifford

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Lawrence (Renny) and Dottie Damon

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> In Memory of Leo E. Diehl Nancy Diehl DiGiovanni

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> In Memory of Walter Dybik Richard and Karen Shotz

In Memory of Philip S. Eagan Mary M. Eagan

In Memory of Kenneth and Dora Eaton Lois E. Eaton

> In Memory of Naida B. Emery Fred Neiser

In Memory of Mary Ruth Follas John and Carroll Follas

In Memory of Jim and Kate Fournaris Peter and Elaine Stark

In Memory of Elbert and Anne Fox Cynthia Rupp

In Memory of Jane and Jim Fryatt Julie A. Gibson

In Memory of Samuel Garre III Mary Jo S. Garre

In Memory of Marilyn Geller Joel S. Geller

In Memory of Francis Gibbons From All the Connaughtons

In Memory of Leonard Goddard Jacque Goddard

In Memory of Bill Gorham Michael Gorham and Veronika Thiebach

In Memory of Our Grandparents Jonathon and Sarah Idman

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In Memory of Nathan Lieberson Anna E. Lieberson

In Memory of Emily (Atkins) Lindberg

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In Memory of Barbara "Bobby" Loftus Gerard and Susan Loftus

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In Memory of Joseph Lolli Chiara Lolli

In Memory of Vic and Dot MagnusonJames and Karen Magnuson Beil

In Memory of Marion Marsh Suzanne Routhier

In Memory of Timothy McCauliff
David and Jane Murray

In Memory of Scot McClain
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In Memory of Pota L. Meier Walter J. Meier

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In Memory of Paul Opacki Shirley Knowles

In Memory of Robert B. Our Eileen M. Our

In Memory of John L. Parker Muriel E. Parker

In Memory of Christine E. Peterson Henry (Pete) Peterson

In Memory of Stephen PetroPamela J. Petro



Photo by Janet DiMattia

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth L. Pring
Kenneth F. Pring

In Memory of Robert Quinn From All the Connaughton's

In Memory of Stella and Louis Riedl Georgene Riedl and Ralph MacKenzie

In Memory of Nancy RobertsVince and Julie Kraft

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Amy Natiello and Charles Abate
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In Memory of Miriam and Manny Shotz Richard and Karen Shotz

In Memory of Greg Small The Baldwin, Small, Hancock clans

ne Baldwin, Small, Hancock clan

In Memory of Robert Smith
Nino and Shannon Corbett
Chris and Ann Donner
Patti Smith

In Memory of June and Morton Snowhite Pamela J. Petro

> In Memory of Laurel Sorenson Richard Cooper

In Memory of Ken and Glenna Swanton
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In Memory of Robert Wilkinson Elizabeth Naughton

In Memory of Timothy Woollard Georgene Riedl and Ralph MacKenzie

In Memory of Francis T. Worrell
Marjorie Worrell

IN HONOR OF:

In Appreciation of Gerie SchumannGary and Doris Miller

In Honor of the Alberts Family Jonathan Alberts and Marilyn Marx

In Honor of the Preservation of AnimalsJohn and Sandy Koski

In Honor of BeylaWilliam and Doreen Silver

In Honor of Mario (AL) BoragineDave and Dorothy Callaghan

In Honor of Jacob and Barbara BrownJames H. Bride III

In Honor of Martha and Allan Campbell
William and Christina Maloney

In Honor of Albert Dalmolen Frances Evelyn Dalmolen

In Honor of David and Alice Doherty Kathleen D. Griffin

> **In Honor of Chris Donner** Jennifer Caruso

In Honor of Robert S. Engel Carolyn Engel

In Honor of Tom EvansDorothy Savarese

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In Honor of Madeline Gould Susan M. Bartick

In Honor of my grandchildren, Veronica, Ivy, Lincoln and Olivia Andrea Aldrovandi

In Honor of Wilbur and Aline Johnson

Vanessa Johnson-Hall

In Honor of Christina Joyce

John and Mary Carol Joyce

In Honor of John Kenny Greta Tyson and Alburt Rosenberg

In Honor of Michael W. Lach

Herbert and Cynthia Lach Elizabeth Lewis Nancy Wigley

In Honor of Kimberly Longy and Peter Lapointe

Marty Lapointe-Malchik

In Honor of Thomas E. Leach, Harbormaster (retired)

Robert and Kathleen Leach

In Honor of Joseph and Lillian Malevich Joan E. Malevich

> In Honor of Louis Malluzzo, Jr. Zoe Malluzzo

In Honor of Finn McCool (Loves Thompson Field)

Michael McMahon

In Honor of Ian Mickle Rich Mickle

In Honor of Thomas Paine "Common Sense"

William and Margaret Kenney

In Honor of Oliver E. Pelton Carol G. Pelton

In Honor of my Wonderful Aunt Donna Peterson

Crystal and Garin Casaleggio

In Honor of Gerie Schumann

Amy Natiello and Charles Abate Taylor (Tab) and Susan Mills

In Honor of Gerie Schumann's Birthday

David Metzler Taylor and Susan Mills Nancy B. Poor John and Kathleen Anne Welch

In Honor of William R. Schumann

William and Margaret Kenney

In Honor of Peter Selig's 80th Birthday Miriam A. Selig

In Honor of Robert Smith

Nino and Shannon Corbett Julia Hohmeyer and Harriet Iles



Photo of wild blueberries by Janet DiMattia

In Honor of Allen Ward Barbara Meyer

In Honor of Senator Dan Wolf Bobbie McDonnell

In Honor of Blair and Anne Wormer Paul Keary and Jeanne Lapierre

SAVE THE DATE and RSVP TODAY!

HCT's Annual Celebration & Meeting

Wequassett on Pleasant Bay

Monday, August 14th, 4:30-6:30 pm

Enjoy the spectacular Pleasant Bay views from the Grand Overlook. Learn how you've made a land-saving difference and celebrate our shared special corner of the Cape.



Space is limited, RSVP by July 20th by emailing: events@harwichconservationtrust.org



Leave a Legacy to Save Special Places

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.

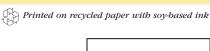




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