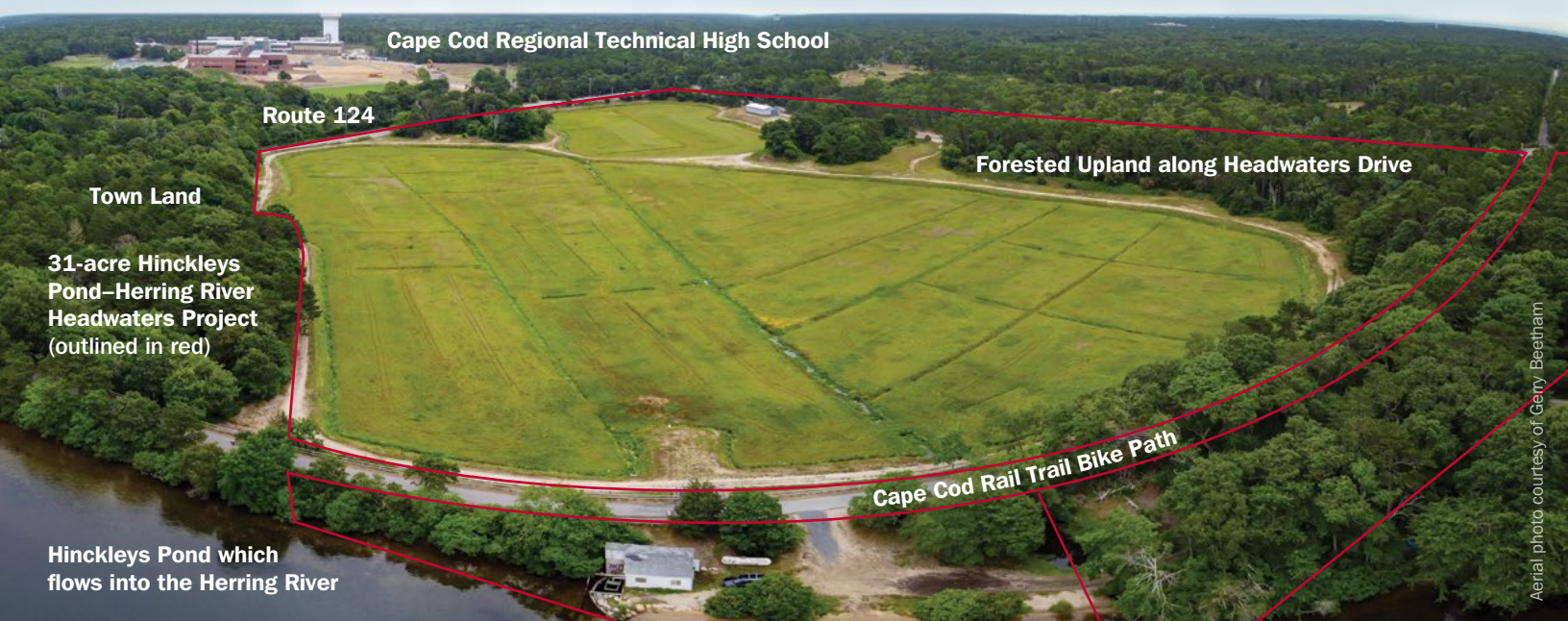




# Keeping Watch, Taking Action

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## UPDATE

# 31-acre Hinckleys Pond—Herring River Headwaters Project

Your donation will be doubled to help us raise the final funds by Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>

**How does this project benefit the community? This 31-acre property stands out as an important conservation and walking trail project for the following reasons:**

- ✓ The property is adjacent to a Wellhead Protection Area for public water supply. Recognizing the importance of protecting watershed lands, the Town of Harwich Board of Water/Wastewater Commissioners supports this land-saving project.
- ✓ The property contains approx. 31 acres, which is substantial acreage that can provide a new walking trail destination with scenic views for residents and visitors.
- ✓ The land borders both sides of the 25-mile Cape Cod Rail Trail; each side buffering more than 1,000 feet of the scenic regional bike path that spans from Yarmouth to Wellfleet. This bike path section in Harwich offers panoramic scenic views of the property and Hinckleys Pond.
- ✓ The property is almost entirely within the watershed to Hinckleys Pond, the primary surface water source for the Herring River. River herring spawn in Hinckleys Pond and also transit Hinckleys Pond through herring runs to additional spawning ponds of Long Pond and Seymours Pond. If the upland is developed, then at least six houses could occupy the site and add six septic systems to the Hinckleys Pond/Herring River watershed.
- ✓ The Herring River watershed is part of Phase 8 for sewerage in the Town of Harwich Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan. Preserving the property reduces septic system nutrient loading, which reduces costly sewerage, thereby saving taxpayer money.
- ✓ The property includes extensive public road frontage including approx. 1,200 feet on Pleasant Lake Avenue (Route 124) and approx. 1,500 feet of frontage on Headwaters Drive with both roadways offering motorists and travelers scenic views of the property.
- ✓ The property is adjacent to approx. 6.5 acres of Town-owned land under jurisdiction of the Selectmen and shares a common border of approx. 844 feet.
- ✓ The property is directly opposite the new state-of-the-art \$120 million Cape Cod Regional Technical High School. With the simple addition of a crosswalk between the school and the land to allow students and faculty pedestrian access, this unique proximity to a regionally important educational center could offer “outdoor classroom” learning opportunities for students either from Cape Tech or nearby Monomoy Regional High School.
- ✓ Because of the property’s overall relatively flat topography with slight slopes and wide trails, a future aspiration could include creating a wheelchair accessible trail loop compatible with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- ✓ The land preservation project is consistent with the Town of Harwich Open Space and Recreation planning goals, including protecting water resources, wetlands, fisheries and wildlife.



# Planning ahead to protect nature

**Bequest from John Brezinski** (March 31, 1953 – February 1, 2019)

**We miss John stopping by the office with his creative bird calendar and cheerful outlook. He appreciated nature and planned ahead for its protection. Thanks to John's bequest, we've reached a major milestone in the fundraising for the 31-acre Hinckleys Pond—Herring River Headwaters Project.**

John was a member of HCT and East Harwich resident who lived on Kendrick Road not far from HCT's newest trail destination of Pleasant Bay Woodlands. He was a kind and gentle person with a wry sense of humor. A great lover of the outdoors, he grew bountiful gardens, the harvest of which he would share with friends and neighbors.

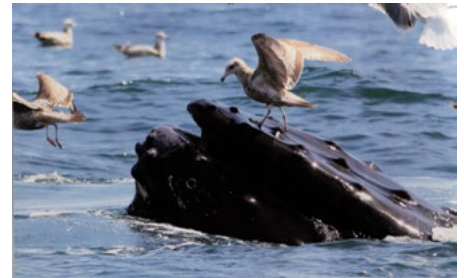
He grew up in a working-class neighborhood of Taunton, Massachusetts, had a brilliant mind, and was proudly independent. When he was a student at UMass Amherst he focused on Science and Mathematics. One of his ways of supporting himself while in school was driving a campus bus.

John bequeathed scholarships to UMass for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) students and also created a scholarship for the campus bus drivers. As a play on the famous Rhodes Scholarships, he created the "John B.'s Roads Scholarship" to support full-time junior year students who are also Transit Service employees.

He also loved birds and enjoyed photographing the variety of species that call Cape Cod home. His unique bird photographs were featured in a calendar that he put together each year. Also a fan of local waters, he fished from kayaks and boats which he built, and was also an enthusiastic shellfisherman.

He set up scholarships and bequeathals across New England, leaving money to hospitals, the schools he attended, his workplaces and to the organizations he cared about in Harwich.

When John stopped by the HCT office several years ago to let us know that he was planning to leave HCT in his will, he insisted that the funds be used for land acquisition, "rather than overhead or new rugs for the office." Sadly he passed away in February of 2019. As his estate settled, we recently learned that he had provided for HCT's land-saving work with a \$30,000 bequest.



**John loved to photograph birds for his annual calendar.**

We think John would have been pleased to see his gift devoted to the 31-acre Hinckleys Pond-Herring River Headwaters Project.

His bequest can help preserve the land to protect the health of Hinckleys Pond and Herring River as well as offer a new trail and save scenic views for folks enjoying the neighboring bike path.

## YOU CAN HELP!

**Help make a lasting, local difference for land, water, wildlife and our shared quality of life.**

**The fundraising goal is \$800,000 by Dec. 31, 2021.** Thanks to support from Hinckleys Pond Association members and folks across the community, we've been making steady progress. A recent bequest from John Brezinski enabled us to reach \$360,000 (see story above), which left \$440,000 to raise. A challenge donor has pledged to contribute 50% of the remaining \$440,000 if we can raise the other 50% in matching funds. In other words, every donation of yours is doubled until we reach \$220,000, and then we'll reach our final fundraising goal.

Visit [www.harwichconservationtrust.org](http://www.harwichconservationtrust.org) to donate by credit card. Or, with the enclosed envelope, write a check payable to Harwich Conservation Trust and mail to: HCT, P.O. Box 101, South Harwich, MA 02661

In the check memo, write: Hinckleys Pond Project



## THE BROWN FAMILY OF HARWICH:

# The Gift Of Land

Back in 1962, Jake Brown, a self-described “ocean person,” and his wife Barbara purchased their first parcel of land in Harwich, a hillside between rolling woodland and Hinckleys Pond. Their new haven was not oceanfront property, but its location overlooking the freshwater pond captured the Browns' imagination and their hearts.

“I had always loved the ocean, and I admit I was hesitant at first, because a pond was not the water I'd had in mind, but I certainly became deeply interested in this land,” Jake laughed.

### Old Cape Cod

To reach the Brown family's neck of the woods, you first drive through a well-populated Harwich neighborhood and then wave the pavement goodbye when turning onto a serpentine dirt road. It's easy to feel that you've left the hustle and bustle of houses and humanity far behind. After only a few leafy curves, there isn't a house in sight.

When the trees finally part and reveal the sweeping view of an 11-acre cranberry bog surrounded by forest, birds wheeling above and a small red cottage perched next to Hinckleys Pond, it really is a breathtaking arrival into another world. Anyone who yearns for the quiet loveliness and wild Cape Cod landscapes of days gone by would be forgiven for thinking they must have stepped into a time machine.

“This is the bald eagle's favorite perch,” Brown said, indicating a dead tree near the front of the house. Eagles and ospreys fish in the pond, providing endless fascination for anyone who cares to sit quietly and watch. The land is home to just about every local creature that walks, flies or swims along the pondshore, including deer, foxes, otters, fishers, muskrats, coyotes and turtles.

When the season calls them, river herring make their way into the pond to spawn. In time, their offspring will make their way back downstream through the aptly-named Herring River. Kingfishers fill the air with their distinctive voices while egrets step gracefully in the shallows. In the evenings, great horned and screech owls take to their silent wings in search of prey.

### Turning the Page to Preservation

In 1972-1973, the Browns acquired the adjacent cranberry bog, which they leased to an Ocean Spray grower.



Barbara and Jake Brown.

At its height of production, the bog provided as many as 1,600 barrels of cranberries annually. The family purchased additional acres of adjoining woodland landscape in 1976, ultimately creating a 40-acre summer sanctuary for their three children and five grandchildren, and to share as well with others who also appreciate the tranquility of this unique location.

After decades of enjoying the natural beauty of the area and its wildlife with family and friends, the Browns have partnered with the Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT) over the past few years to preserve their key woodland parcels. In 2017, the family began their open space preservation odyssey by donating 7.2 acres to HCT to ensure that it will be protected in

perpetuity. By preserving the land, the Browns helped to protect the water quality of Hinckleys Pond and the Herring River as it travels from the pond to Nantucket Sound.

In 2018, the HCT Board of Trustees named Jake and Barbara Brown and their family the HCT Conservationists of the Year following their donation of the 7.2 acres, including 346 feet of shoreline on Hinckleys Pond. “The Brown family truly understands that the best way to protect pond health is to preserve surrounding watershed lands. Their forward-thinking gift of pondfront acreage helps HCT advance its Priority Ponds Project, the goal of which is to save these priority pondfront

and watershed lands to enhance water quality and wildlife habitat,” said Michael Lach, HCT Executive Director.

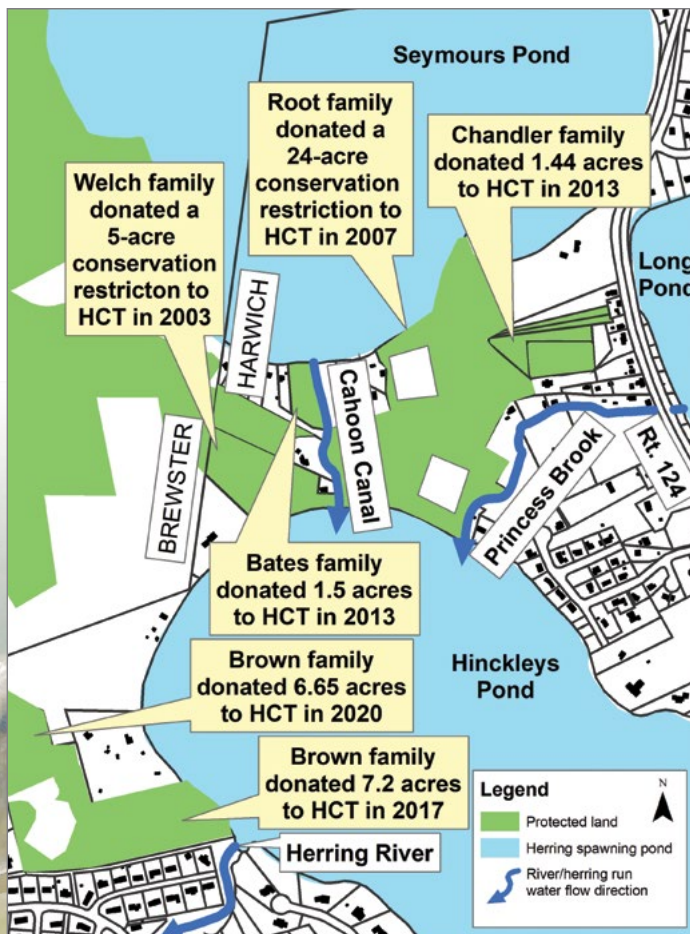
The 174-acre Hinckleys Pond is the primary surface source water for the Herring River, the second longest river system on the Cape and one of New England’s most significant river herring migration routes.

In December 2020, to increase watershed protection, the family donated an additional 6.65 wooded acres on the border of Harwich and Brewster to HCT. In 2021, they’re donating 4 adjacent acres they own in Brewster to HCT’s sister land trust, the Brewster Conservation Trust.

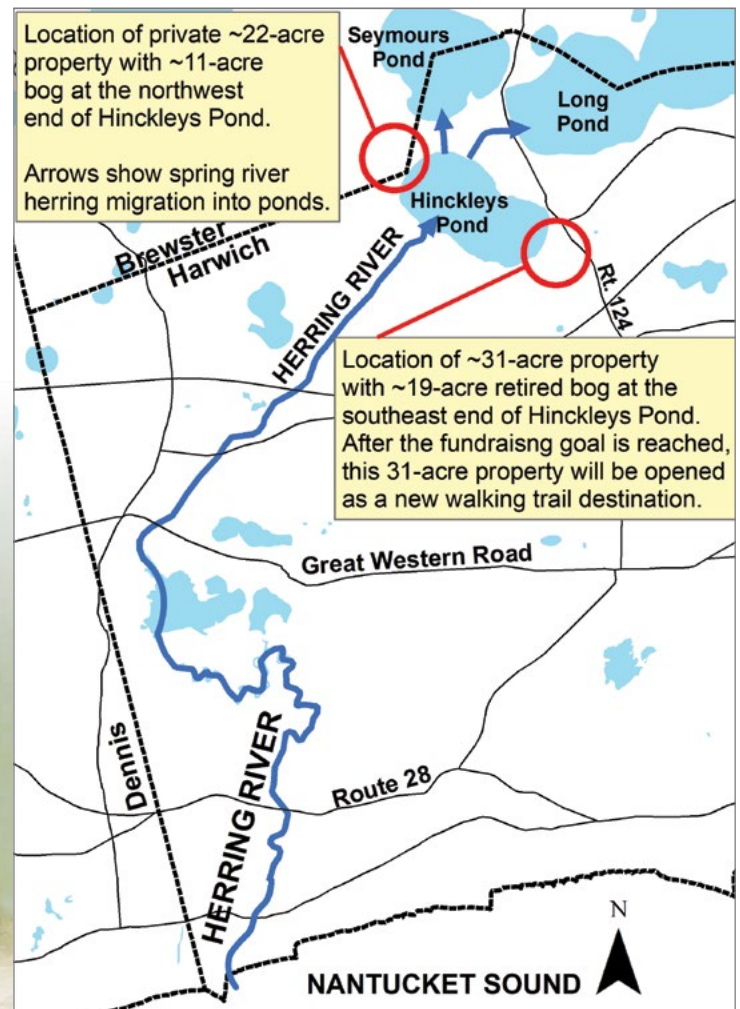
## Holistic Eco-Restoration for Hinckleys Pond

Next on the Browns’ land and water protection list is working with HCT on a holistic, watershed-scale ecological restoration project centered on a plan to re-wild the retired cranberry bogs bracketing the pond. The larger bog site along the Cape Cod Rail Trail near Cape Tech was owned by the Jenkins family who decided to hold their final harvest in 2020. They chose to work with HCT on preserving their land for trails, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and pond protection. (See project update on page 2.)

– Continues on page 6



Map of where landowners in the Hinckleys Pond watershed have preserved land with HCT.



Map showing the locations of the two eco-restoration sites.





BEFORE



AFTER

**HCT and the Brown Family are in the planning stage of an eco-restoration vision to re-wild the retired bogs bookending Hinckleys Pond. At a similar site in Plymouth, shown above in before and after ecological restoration images, the plant diversity recovery is readily visible within one year.**

*Continued from page 5 –*

An over-supply of cranberries from the Midwest, Canada, and other large-scale growing operations has pushed down cranberry prices thereby causing local farmers a substantial loss in revenue over the years. Farmers looking to exit the industry can either sell their upland for development or conservation. HCT has welcomed opportunities to collaborate with local growers on purchasing their lands. For example, HCT is striving to raise \$800,000 by December 31, 2021 to purchase and preserve the 31-acre Jenkins property that includes 19 acres of retired bog.

At the same time HCT is raising the land purchase funds, they are also finding funds that can pay for planning the ecological restoration of the retired bog areas into natural wetland habitat, which will exponentially increase biodiversity and also help protect pond water quality.

Recently the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Southeast New England Program selected HCT as one of five grant recipients in Massachusetts. The EPA grant of \$146,700 is pivotal for phase one planning to set the stage for eco-restoration that can help protect the pond and Herring River by transitioning the retired bogs into healthy wetlands.

HCT and the Brown family are working together by sharing research at their respective sites on opposite sides of the pond.

The phase one grant will fund data collection, eco-restoration design, and permitting to inform the scope of work for phase two, which will be the actual eco-restoration construction. Ultimately, about 30 acres of wetland habitat and 500 feet of pond shoreline will be restored. There will be public trails and student learning opportunities. Residents and seasonal visitors who use the Cape Cod Rail Trail bike path to cycle and walk will also benefit from enhanced scenic vistas.

## Giving to Future Generations

Through their donation of key upland parcels, and eventually the re-wilding of former bogs into vibrant wetlands, Jake and Barbara Brown are giving back to the land that has given so much to them, to their children, and to their grandchildren over the decades. The landscape will be preserved in perpetuity, helping to protect the water quality of Hinckleys Pond and the Herring River in its journey to Nantucket Sound.

"I have worked with the extended Brown-Welch family for 20 years on

their land-saving mission in Harwich and Brewster. As a family, they truly get it: they are borrowing the land from their children. They are working hard to make sure the Cape Cod experience they have enjoyed in the woods by the pond will be available for more generations," said Mark Robinson of The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc., a regional land trust service center that provides technical assistance to land trusts across southeastern Massachusetts including the Cape.

As we move into the future, every spring the herring will travel upstream to spawn again in Hinckleys Pond, where they will have over 300 more feet of protected shoreline habitat thanks to the Browns and Harwich Conservation Trust. The Browns have not only protected the setting of so many treasured family memories from development, they've also ensured that the local wildlife can continue to dwell in these scenic pond, woodland and shoreline habitats.

"It's so important to protect Hinckleys Pond and the watershed," said Melissa Brown, daughter of Jake and Barbara Brown. Clearly the environmental ethic espoused by Jake and Barbara also resides in their three children Melissa, Cassie, and Jake, Jr.



**“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make.” – Dr. Jane Goodall**

“The children and grandchildren are the next generations of stewards that will care for the land and water around us,” Melissa added, underscoring the importance of teaching our kids about the link between preserving land to protect water. Thanks to the Brown family choosing to proactively work with HCT in the present, we will all benefit in the future by experiencing a healthier pond and river.

**Story by Jennifer Sexton-Riley**

**Eco-restoration photos by Alex Hackman, Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration**



Green heron courtesy of Janet DiMattia

## You're Invited...

**HCT's 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting Goes Virtual with CBS News Correspondent Seth Doane including his recent interview with Dr. Jane Goodall**

**Saturday, November 6, 2021 • 1:00-2:30 p.m. EST**



We look forward to highlighting our shared successes, honoring HCT's 2021 Conservationist of the Year, and tuning in with our featured speaker Seth Doane.

To receive the meeting link, please email [events@harwichconservationtrust.org](mailto:events@harwichconservationtrust.org) and include in the email subject line "HCT Annual Meeting."



Seth Doane interviewing Dr. Jane Goodall in England.







# The Bald Eagles of Bell's Neck

The idea of a bald eagle in flight, its dark wingspan and dramatic white head shining against a blue sky, conjures up many images in the mind.

Fierce beauty. Natural grace. Freedom to soar among the clouds and majestic peaks of some remote mountain range. The bald eagle does not necessarily conjure up images of Harwich.



That's exactly where many local photographers and bird aficionados have gathered, however, to catch a glimpse of our handsome national bird.

Many of our friends and neighbors are surprised to learn that they share their neighborhood with the beautiful white-headed raptors, the recovery of which after a close brush with extinction due to DDT use in the mid-20th century, is one of our nation's greatest conservation success stories.

## Bald Eagles Start to Appear

Lisa Valkenier, who lives on Swan Pond, near Bell's Neck and the Harwich Herring Run, knows only too well the tremendous odds bald eagles overcame to recover from the perils of consuming DDT-contaminated fish before the pesticide was banned back in 1972. Her uncle worked in Cape Cod mosquito control, which used DDT in the 1960s. Today, Valkenier is thrilled to encounter bald eagles and other birds of prey in her neck of the woods.

"To see the return of ospreys and bald eagles in my lifetime is very special," Valkenier said.

She remembers when she first spotted bald eagles in her neighborhood.

"Three or four years ago in the early spring I was outside and I saw this unidentifiable bird on a tree on top of the bluff overlooking Swan Pond," Valkenier recalls. "All I could really see was a blob with wings, a dark color,

and a white tail. I thought, this isn't an osprey. It was before April 1. They hadn't come back yet."

Valkenier wasn't able to identify the bird at that time, but when she spotted it again later on a dead tree, she was pleased she had listened to a talk sponsored by the Harwich Conservation Trust. The speaker was Jason Zimmer, District Supervisor of the Southeast Wildlife District for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

"Zimmer talked about how the last documented bald eagle nest recorded in Massachusetts was in 1905," Valkenier recalled. "Then two years ago, a pair nested at the Brewster dump and that unfortunately failed. I started seeing people at the Herring Run, birdwatchers taking photos. I have seen more bald eagles this year, in two big dead trees which they and the ospreys love to sit on. I don't know enough about courtship behavior, but I saw them hanging out. They are sensitive, so I try not to bother them."

## Photo Opportunities

Photographer Diane Lomba of South Yarmouth-based Salty Air Photography is one of the eagle watchers who visits Bell's Neck with her camera hoping for a lucky encounter with the impressive raptors as they soar over the West Reservoir.

A longtime nature photographer, Lomba recalls hearing about the bald eagles of Bell's Neck in 2017

from photographer friends who had spotted them in the area. By 2018, Lomba was visiting the spot regularly, sometimes with her daughter, Kylie Palomba, a student of environmental science and criminal justice, hoping to capture images of the huge birds in flight.

"I remember the first time I drove across the bridge on Bell's Neck Road when I saw two bald eagles on a dead tree, far away," Lomba said. "They were in the distance, but I could tell what they were. When I looked through my binoculars, there was no doubt they were bald eagles. I photographed them for the first time that day."

Lomba has photographed wildlife in various locations all over Cape Cod for more than ten years. An admissions coordinator at a long-term care facility, she never misses an opportunity to leave a bit early in the morning before work, or to pause on the drive home, to park, leave the car behind, and spend time in nature with her camera and binoculars.

## Raising Awareness

"What's important is the simple awareness that they are here," Lomba said. "Most people don't take the time to stop and quietly walk down a trail. When you're driving down the road, you wouldn't necessarily think to stop, take out your binoculars and scan the trees."

— Continues on page 10





*Continued from page 9 –*

As a photographer, when I share my work sometimes people ask, ‘How do you even see this stuff? I never see things like this.’ People drive by things—birds, animals—all the time and don’t take the time to stop and look. It’s hard to shut out the world. Everyone is so fast paced. But if you slow down and take the time, you will see what’s really out here.”

Awareness is one of the most important pieces of the conservation puzzle. Bald eagles may not compete for our attention as enthusiastically as social media and advertising do, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t here and more than worthy of our time, patience and appreciation.

In fact, our attention is absolutely crucial for the preservation of the habitat these remarkable creatures need in order to survive, thrive and bring forth the next generation. And the next.

“It’s a special treat to lie in bed in the early morning and hear the eagles and their squeaky-sounding calls, and to see them out the bedroom window in the dead tree overlooking Swan Pond,” Valkenier said. “I think my place is the highest point in the area, a whopping 35 feet above sea level, and that dead tree, which will tumble one day, is the highest natural spot around.”

Take an hour or two and visit Bell’s Neck to meet your feathered neighbors.

Bring along your binoculars and your camera, if you have one. Become familiar with the awe-inspiring creatures who share your surroundings. Discover what the cry of our national bird sounds like in person, and watch as they soar and dive in the beautiful, protected habitat that is Bell’s Neck Conservation Lands. Prepare to be amazed by all you’ve been missing, and then spread the word.

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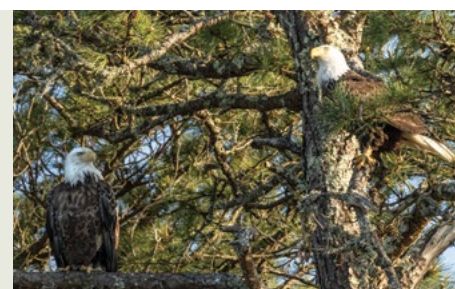
**Story by Jennifer Sexton-Riley**

**Photographs by Diane Lomba**

## **WALK BELL'S NECK TRAILS TO SPOT AN EAGLE**

Explore the woodland trails of the Bell’s Neck area with water and marsh views, and who knows, maybe even see a bald eagle.

To find a trail map and parking areas for the town-owned Bell’s Neck Conservation Lands, visit HCT’s website at [www.harwichconservationtrust.org](http://www.harwichconservationtrust.org) and click “Trails.”





# Welcome Astoria Peterson

Astoria (Stori) will be serving with HCT Tuesdays and Wednesdays, helping with land stewardship, organizing volunteer efforts, planning community events, and developing an educational native plant garden.

Stori is from Pomona, California and is excited to explore and serve in New England.

She studied English Literature at Mount San Antonio College. "I am especially excited to use my background and love of literature to engage the community and connect literature and nature," said Stori. Stori's favorite author is J.R.R. Tolkien and recently she has been reading Steven King's novels. In her free time, Stori enjoys camping, hiking, and stargazing in the mountains of California.

Look for Stori doing trail maintenance or habitat management on one of HCT's properties and say hello!

## National and local focus

Sometimes referred to as "the domestic Peace Corps," the national AmeriCorps program began in 1994, evolving from several federal traditions of community service opportunities.

AmeriCorps Cape Cod is starting its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, and is funded by Barnstable County and through grants from the

Massachusetts Service Alliance and the Corporation for National and Community Service. Housing is provided by Barnstable County and Cape Cod National Seashore.

The local program provides young adults a 10-month, full-time residential living opportunity to serve the environmental and disaster preparedness needs of the fifteen towns in Barnstable County.

**"All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."**

– J.R.R. Tolkien

AmeriCorps Cape Cod members will be assisting Harwich Conservation Trust with larger scale land stewardship projects throughout the year through group service projects of up to a dozen members.

In the past, AmeriCorps members have helped clear trails, maintain meadow habitat, and, most recently, install new split rail fencing at the



D. Isabel Smith Monomoy River Conservation Lands on Bay Road. The efforts of AmeriCorps have greatly enhanced Cape Cod's conservation destinations and expanded the capacity of organizations like HCT to save more land, offer more recreation opportunities, and reach the community through education.

When you see AmeriCorps out and about working in the community to enhance our shared quality of life on the Cape, be sure to offer a hearty thank you.

## Sign up for HCT's eNews

To receive email updates about volunteer opportunities, including AmeriCorps service projects, visit [www.harwichconservationtrust.org](http://www.harwichconservationtrust.org) and in the upper right corner click "Join our eNews."

AmeriCorps members helped build a wheelchair accessible boardwalk at HCT's A. Janet DeFulvio Wildlife Sanctuary with panoramic views of the marsh along Herring River.







## Conservation Starts at Home

**Connor O'Brien, Harwich Conservation Trust's new Director of Land Stewardship, is dedicated to the preservation of Cape Cod's unique and beautiful environment.**

His motivation comes from a love of the natural world combined with the fact that for O'Brien, the Cape is not only a lovely place filled with peaceful woods, marshes, beaches and ponds, but also the place he has called home all his life.

A native of Dennis, O'Brien said he is "one generation removed" from being a three-generation Cape Codder. His paternal grandparents were from Sandwich, but they raised O'Brien's father off-Cape in upstate New York. They moved back to the Cape when their son was in high school.

### Path to HCT

O'Brien's family instilled in him a love of the outdoors. After he completed his degree in environmental studies from Connecticut College in 2013, he dreamed of finding a way to return to his hometown forests and meadows to put his skills to use. He worked in hospitality and real estate before

returning to his passion of serving the environment. Before joining HCT, he interned with the Brewster Natural Resources Department, assisting with shellfish propagation, trail maintenance, and invasive species removal. O'Brien also served as the Upper Cape supervisor with AmeriCorps Cape Cod, where he led AmeriCorps members on natural resource management projects across the Cape.

"I always wanted to really enjoy what makes Cape Cod unique and the activities here, like fishing, hiking, the beaches and the special community," O'Brien said. "Specifically the natural activities. The opportunities the Cape provides are unique and appealing, and you don't experience anything quite like it elsewhere."

In late June, O'Brien began his new position as Harwich Conservation Trust's Director of Land Stewardship. His daily activities center around organizing and facilitating land

stewardship projects, as well as organizing and managing the dedicated volunteers who make HCT's environmental preservation work possible.

### Variety of volunteer opportunities

"There are about 100 seasonal and overall volunteers, including a core group of about 30 really key volunteers," O'Brien said. "We have volunteers who help with record keeping, office work, computer problem solving, and a lot who like to focus on doing the land stewardship side of things like trimming trails, clearing downed trees and putting in split rail fence. This kind of work would not get done without active volunteers. Right now, while the weather is still nice, the outdoor stewardship volunteers are the main focus. In winter the focus will shift, but it's important to get out while we can."





AmeriCorps, Connor (second from right) and Town Conservation Administrator Amy Usowski (far right) pause during trailhead work in East Harwich.

Recent volunteer land stewardship activities that O'Brien has overseen include a weekly gathering in which the "really active, hardcore volunteer groups" venture out to HCT properties to maintain trails and remove invasive plant species. Recently, the group focused on Pleasant Bay Woodlands in East Harwich, nearly 50 rolling acres just west of Round Cove on Pleasant Bay.

"At Pleasant Bay Woodlands, we have a meadow habitat, and we're maintaining it because there isn't a lot of meadow habitat left on the Cape," O'Brien explained. "The Cape used to be made up of a lot of farmland, and meadow-dependent species increased. Now not a lot of meadow habitat is left for these species such as blue-birds, swallows, various pollinators and one of our special endangered species, the New England cottontail rabbit, which lives on the edges of the meadow. This type of habitat requires

active management like cutting any invasive and woody growth to encourage the native bramble, grasses and wildflowers. The wildflowers provide great pollinator habitat, and fortunately people are much more aware of protecting the pollinators now."

Connor and HCT partnered with AmeriCorps Cape Cod for a power tool training day, helping individuals learn how to contribute to the land management effort by using power tools to cut back invasive black locust and bittersweet, plant species which can quickly take over a meadow habitat.

"HCT has been partnering with AmeriCorps Cape Cod for 20 years," O'Brien said. "We're very successfully keeping that relationship going. Land trusts rely on a strong volunteer base and the resources of an organization like AmeriCorps are crucial for our ongoing stewardship projects."

## Enjoying Cape Cod

In addition to his passion about conservation, O'Brien enjoys outdoor activities for relaxation. He said the most likely outdoor place to find him in his free time is on the bike trails.

"I ride a lot," O'Brien said. "Almost every day. We have really great biking infrastructure here on Cape Cod, and the location is really beautiful, riding through cranberry bogs and conservation land. I also enjoy freshwater fishing, especially in the ponds in Nickerson State Park. I catch mostly large and small mouth bass, and sometimes pickerel. I try for the trout, but they are more elusive."

He also enjoys the beach, going at least once a week or more in the summertime, and shellfishing for quahogs and sea clams. "I'm a big fan of shellfish, and I've been trying to make time to go crabbing, because I know people have been successful with it lately," O'Brien said. "That's a great aspect of living on the Cape. You can forage for meals and enjoy the freshest shellfish you can imagine."

**Story by Jennifer Sexton-Riley**

*Originally published this fall in the Cape Cod Chronicle.*

**Photographs by Gerry Beetham**

## VOLUNTEER TO MAKE A LOCAL DIFFERENCE...

Join Connor in helping to care for and maintain Harwich Conservation Trust's beautiful areas of preserved land by taking part in some of HCT's ongoing stewardship projects.

Volunteers are needed for regularly scheduled trail work, invasive plant removal, and property cleanup. Grab your favorite loppers (or borrow a pair) and join in. Individual projects are also available. To complete a volunteer interest survey, visit [harwichconservationtrust.org](http://harwichconservationtrust.org) and click on "Volunteer."







# Donation Dedications...each and every donation represents a thoughtful and generous contribution that helps to save special places.

Gift Dedications from March 28, 2021–October 1, 2021

## In Memory of

### David K. Akin

Victoria Goldsmith

### Beau Alberts

Jon Alberts & Marilyn Marx

### Scott Babin

Adelle R. Babin

### George & Lee Baldwin

Connie L. Pina

### Tom Barker

Jean Barker

Kathy Gallo

### Emily Barrett

Trudie & John Steel

### Charlie Bascom

Ranger & Lisa Spencer

### Travis Bassett

Paula & Ron Plock

### Pooh Bear

Beth Climo

### Ed Blute

Mary Lou Blute

### Mario (Al) Boragine

Nancy F. Hipp

### Clara Bottner

Michael & Donna Foughty

### Mary Ann Bowden

Bruce C. Bowden

### The Bowman Family

Alva (Bowman) Chaletzky

### Maria Dounelis-Bradley

Friends of Brooks Free Library

Linda Marcotte Tatar & Neil Tatar

### Jack Bradley

Nancy E. Bradley

### Baiba Briedis

Jeannette Bragger

### My dad, Dr. Briggs

Marcia Andrews

### Francis E. Brophy

Patrick & Mary Brophy

### Eddy Brown

Edward W. Brown

### David Brownville

Arthur & Barbara De Simone

### Charles Buckley

Jane Buckley

### Dr. Herb Campbell

Jenny Campbell & James Shannon

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Daniel B. Sr. & Mary Carroll

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**All bogs on Cape Cod, bless them...**  
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**Eric Barnes**  
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**Judy & Jonathan Chiel on their 41<sup>st</sup> Anniversary**  
Zoe & Harry Chiel

**Hank Drewniany**  
Susan Glass & Jeffrey Drewniany

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Elizabeth (Pem) Schultz

**Elbe Lodge, where we love to visit**  
Sara Thomson

**Maria Sofia & Lucas 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday**  
Maria E. Mahoney

**Mary Lou McGrath**  
Charles & Elizabeth Murphy

**Frank & Nancy Nichols**  
Lynn Nichols

**Margaret P. O'Brien's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday!**  
Jonathan O'Brien

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Justine Ryan  
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**We're here for you...**

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**Phone:** 508-432-3997

### MISSION

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

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