



COHASSET
CONSERVATION
TRUST

*Preserving the Cohasset
landscape since 1967*



The Mohawk with Great Brewster Woods in the background



COHASSET
CONSERVATION
TRUST

Cohasset Conservation Trust, Inc.
PO Box 314 Cohasset MA 02025

PRESORTED STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
COHASSET MA
PERMIT #7

Return Service
Requested



**COHASSET
CONSERVATION
TRUST**

DIRECTORS:

Dick Avery	383.6043
Mark DiGiacomo	383.6413
Jim Hamilton	383.9834
John Hartshorne, Emeritus	383.0317
Charles Higginson	383.9427
Dick Leggat, Emeritus	383.1908
Ed Long, Emeritus	383.1426
Karen Quigley	383.6368
Debbie Shadd	383.1624
Gary Vanderweil	383.6590
Jeff Waal	383.6882

Barbara Churchill Conservation Area

July 2006

Dear Friend of CCT,

We are pleased to provide you with Cohasset Conservation Trust's Summer 2006 Bulletin. The Trust celebrates its 39th birthday this year. Its purpose continues to be the preservation and protection of open space and the encouragement of the study of our natural resources. In carrying out this purpose the Trust has many legal, organizational, and operational responsibilities, all accomplished by its volunteer directors with some outside professional help. CCT is a member of the Land Trust Alliance and has adopted its *Statement of Land Trust Standards and Practices*, which, in a general way, provides guidance to the Board of Directors in carrying out its responsibilities.

The two main vehicles the Trust can use to preserve and protect open space are to own the property outright, or to obtain and maintain a conservation restriction on it. The Barnes property, purchased by the Town in 2003, with the financial help of many townspeople as well as the Trust itself, is an example of a conservation restriction: the town owns the land, but CCT has the conservation restriction. Our responsibility is to ensure that the property remains as open space indefinitely.

We are in a position to receive land by donation, and would encourage anyone with an interest in preserving part of their own property to consider donating it to us, or, alternatively, to contact us about placing a conservation restriction on the land. Any of our directors can provide more information on this.

We appreciate your support of CCT.

Sincerely,
Cohasset Conservation Trust, Inc.

Gary Vanderweil, President

Photographs from Cohasset Conservation Trust files



Cohasset Conservation Trust Summer 2006



Brass Kettle Conservation Area



The Trust played an important role in the Town's acquisition of the Brass Kettle Conservation Area's purchase – 100 acres of open space bounded by conservation lands comprised of Lily Pond, 824 acres of The Trustees of Reservations Whitney Thayer Woods including Turkey Hill, and 4,000 acres of Wompatuck State Park.

Altogether these properties offer many miles of lovely uninterrupted walking trails, creating an interesting network that leads from a parking area at the King Street trailhead to Lily Pond, west to Wompatuck Park, and then north to Whitney Thayer Woods and Turkey Hill.

Thanks to the vote of Cohasset citizens at the 2004 Town Meeting, the Water Department—

together with generous financial assistance from the Cohasset Preservation Commission, grants from the state and the private Cohasset Conservation Trust— made the funding available to purchase the private lots of land comprising this conservation area. Cohasset has over 30% of its landmass set aside as green space which gives the town its unique character by having one of the finest coastlines and harbors on the South Shore together with an abundance of green space.

These 100 acres provide a vital conservation area and watershed for Cohasset's drinking water supply at Lily Pond into which two tributaries flow, the major one being Brass Kettle Brook.

The National Heritage and Endangered Species Program has identified the entire property and much of its surroundings as core habitat for rare species. There are more than 70 species of trees and plants inhabiting this woodland. Grouse, partridge and deer make the heavily wooded areas their home.



This area is an important part of Cohasset's colonial history dating back to 1770 when the Massachusetts General Court granted permission for Cohasset to separate from Hingham. The path from King Street, called Great Lot Lane on Gilbert Tower's hand-drawn Cohasset maps, was one of the roads that linked the two towns. It crosses two tributaries, bridged by rock slabs that once supported the weight of horses and wagons. The many stonewalls seen from the path are indications that the landscape was once cleared of trees for the grazing of livestock. Today, trees and undergrowth have once again reclaimed the land, giving it the appearance that it had when Native

Americans made this their home before it was settled. Several of the stonewalls follow the eighteenth century narrow parcels of land along east-west property lines that comprised the way the town was divided into First, Second and Third Precincts.

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, King Street was one of the major rural farm sections of town. Just yards from the parking lot stood the cider mill shed for the Samuel James Farm which featured a horse powered cider mill. For more detail about this area's geography and early colonial times through the mid-twentieth century, read Cohasset's first two histories, E. Victor Bigelow's *Narrative History of Cohasset, Volume I* and Bertram Pratt's *Narrative History of Cohasset, Volume II*.





Barnes Wildlife Sanctuary



The Barnes Wildlife Sanctuary was acquired in 2003 by Cohasset from the Barnes family in a unique partnership: half the million dollar purchase price came from the MBTA as mitigation money incidental to renewing the commuter railroad right of way; \$250,000 from the State's Executive Office of Environmental Management as a 'Self-Help' grant; the water department contributed \$50,000; \$87,000 was raised in public solicitation; and the Conservation Trust contributed the remainder of \$113,000 plus fund-raising expenses. The Trust can be credited with taking the initiative in the successful public solicitation.

Though the town owns the 32-acre property, the Trust holds the Conservation Restriction which permanently protects the property from development.

Along with Wheelwright Park, the Cohasset Boy Scout retreat, and the partly restricted privately-owned White Family/Holly Hill Farm property, the Barnes land is an integral part of a 230-acre rare deep-forest core-habitat stretching from Jerusalem Road to Sohier Street and from Little Harbor to the western side of Forest Avenue.

The Sanctuary land is characterized by irregular steeply-sloping outcrops with elevations ranging from 63 feet to 119 feet. Wetlands are drained by intermittent streams that discharge into Little Harbor. Just imagine if this treasure had been sold to developers!

The forests of the Sanctuary support coyote, fox, deer and nineteen species of birds including nine migrant species. The watersheds provide habitats for amphibians and invertebrates. The undeveloped lands also contribute to the public interest by helping to maintain high water quality for Cohasset residents since much of the acreage is located in the Sohier Street Well Field Zone of Contribution.

The Wheelwright Park area, which includes the Sanctuary, is listed in The Historical Index Survey of Architectural and Historical Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as having an ice skating pond, fireplaces, picnic sites, and over 4,000 feet of enhanced gravel paths built by

President Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration in 1935.

Hiking, bird watching, photography, picnicking, dog walking, skating, horseback riding, sightseeing, nature walks, nature study, and painting are all encouraged activities open to all, regardless of residency.

The main parking area is located at 206 North Main Street across from the Little League Field and immediately north of Red Gate Lane. A master

trail map and kiosk is located in the main parking lot where the trail begins winding through Wheelwright Park to the Sanctuary.





Land Conservation



Pegram Preserve

In addition to our spectacular coastline, Cohasset has always been defined by ledge and wetlands, but we are losing these landscapes that enrich our lives at a frightening pace. Land that was deemed 'undevelopable' only a few years ago, is now being cleared, blasted, and/or filled to make way for more development. The impact on the remaining land will be devastating as broader patterns within the ecological and cultural landscape are disrupted.

Open space provides critical habitat and corridors for wildlife and plants, protects important water supplies, provides areas for recreational activities, protects historically significant places, and preserves the charm and character of the area in which we live.

Open space makes sense for a town's tax base because undeveloped, protected land costs the town nothing, as community services, such as schools, police, and road services, are not required. Many reports have documented the value of open space when compared to the high costs of community services.

Protecting open space can ease the tax burden for individual landowners. Upon a landowner's death, federal estate taxes on property can be as high as 55% of the property's fair market value, essentially forcing heirs to sell all or part of the land to pay the taxes.

Donation of land or placing a conservation restriction on a property can result in substantial income tax deduction and reduce property and estate taxes.

There are a variety of land protection methods available and most of these options offer several financial benefits and tax incentives.

Conservation Restrictions

A conservation restriction is a strategy allowing the landowner to maintain ownership and use of the land while limiting development on the property, ensuring that the land remains in the condition the landowner wishes. A conservation restriction is an addition to the existing property deed and the conditions in the conservation restriction are binding on all future owners. There is great flexibility in creating a conservation restriction.

Land Donations

A. Gifts in Fee Simple

Most of the land protected by conservation groups has been acquired through outright gifts of the land by generous and willing donors. If land is given for conservation purposes the receiving organization is required to maintain the land in its natural state in perpetuity. The tax benefits of gifting land are numerous.

B. Gift of a Remainder Interest

A landowner can give away property to a conservation organization but retain the right to live on it. At the death of the landowner, the full ownership of the land transfers to the conservation organization. The donor of a remainder interest can generally claim a related income tax deduction and potentially high real estate taxes are eliminated.

C. Bequests

A landowner can convey land to an organization such as a land trust in their will. A deduction from the value of one's taxable estate is allowed for land bequeathed for public purposes.

Purchases

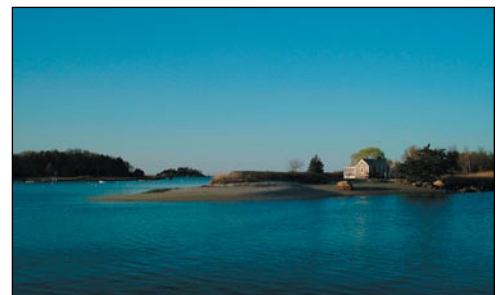
A. Fair market Value

Small regional land trusts are generally unable to purchase conservation land at fair market value. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has several land conservation programs that occasionally purchase land with significant resources characteristics worth preserving. The Commonwealth prefers to acquire lands that build on its existing open space reserves.

A regional land trust can act as a liaison for owners of land with outstanding resources that are competitive candidates for acquisition by other organizations and agencies.

B. Bargain Sale

Under this method, the landowner sells the property to a charitable organization for less than fair market value. Bargain sales are a standard open space acquisition tool for large private land conservation organizations and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A small local land trust is generally unable to purchase conservation land, even at bargain sale prices. Some regional or statewide land trusts are able to use this option to protect open space deemed critical to a region's scenic and natural heritage.



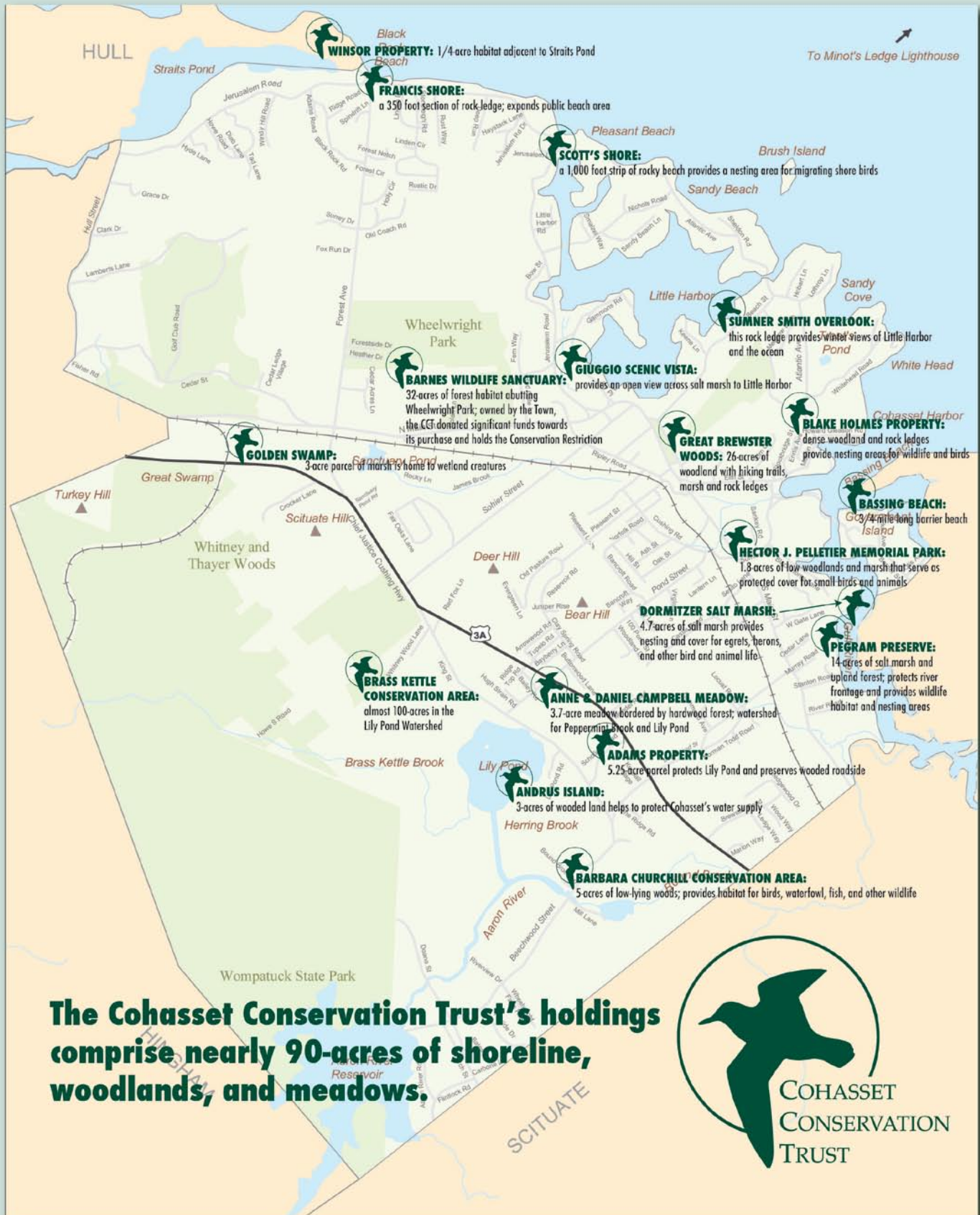
Bassing Beach

If you are interested in learning more about how to protect your property, preserve its natural resource values, and generate tax advantages for you and your family, you should discuss your options with your legal and financial advisors.

Information from the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program



Promoting the conservation & preservation of Cohasset's natural resources since 1967



The Cohasset Conservation Trust's holdings comprise nearly 90-acres of shoreline, woodlands, and meadows.



Cohasset Conservation Trust Summer 2006