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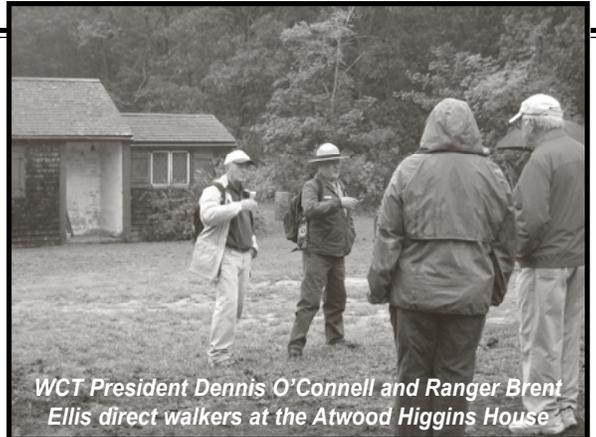
NEWSLETTER OF THE WELFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST
DECEMBER 2008

WWW.WELFLEETCONSERVATIONTRUST.ORG

Walks in Wellfleet Saturday, September 13, 2008

On September 13th, an overcast and sometimes drizzling Saturday morning, over fifty walkers gathered at the Atwood Higgins House on Bound Brook Island to participate in the second annual Wellfleet Conservation Trust "Walks in Wellfleet."

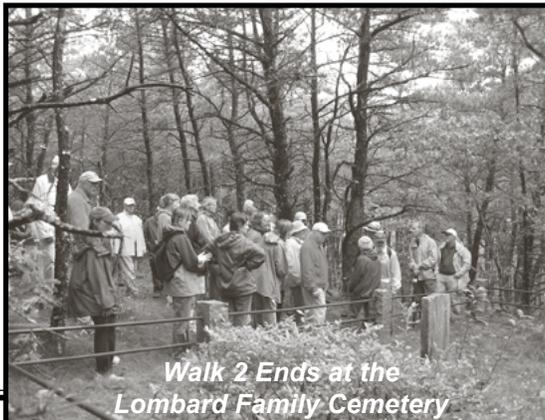
Trust President Dennis O'Connell welcomed the walkers and spoke about the mutual interests and partnership of the Conservation Trust, Town of Wellfleet and the Park Service in historic, educational and conservation matters.



WCT President Dennis O'Connell and Ranger Brent Ellis direct walkers at the Atwood Higgins House

Park Ranger Brent Ellis and National Seashore volunteers provided historical perspective and informative anecdotes about life on the island in the 1800s. The walk started with a tour of the Atwood Higgins House which the Park Service opened for the event. The walks selected by the participants included a visit to the site and monument commemorating the Island Schoolhouse which was built in 1840, the Lombard Family Cemetery and overlooks of Cape Cod Bay.

As with the first WCT walk on Griffin Island in 2007, the feedback from veteran Wellfleetians and visitors alike was positive without exception, and reinforced the conservation mission of the Trust, the significance of our local history and the importance of the National Seashore as a resource to be preserved, protected and enjoyed by all.



Walk 2 Ends at the Lombard Family Cemetery

We look forward to the third annual walk in September 2009 at another special place in Wellfleet and hope you will join us.

As we get closer to the date, look for updated information on our new web site.

Please visit: www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org.



Herring River Tidal Restoration Project Update

The Mass Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Ian Bowles has issued his determination that the project requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This determination is a result of the MEPA process of preparation of the Environmental Notification Form and MEPA scoping hearings.

This EIR must address existing conditions, proposed conditions, and proposed floodplain elevations. The Herring River Restoration Committee (HRRC) must form a working group with representatives from Coastal Zone Management, Division of Marine Fisheries, Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program, Area of Environmental Concern program, Mass DEP, Mass Historical Commission, EPA, and Army Corp of Engineers.

The Herring River tidal restoration will be restored gradually over time using adaptive management approach that relies on science based and incremental management decisions. The EIR will identify how Adaptive Management approach will be employed throughout program.

The EIR should identify potential alternatives:

- 1. No Action Alternative:** existing tidegates would remain in place and tide levels managed under existing conditions.
- 2. Modified Tidegate Control at Chequessett Neck Road.:** Existing dike would be replaced with new structure with opening 100-130 feet wide fitted with sluice gates to allow full tidal control and management.
- 3. Open Bridge with Upstream controls:** Tidal control would be established at upstream locations with several smaller structures to regulate the limit of tidal flooding.
- 4. Hybrid of Modified Tidegate Control at Chequessett Neck Road and Upstream Tidegate Controls.**

The Alternatives analysis should identify alternatives for avoiding impacts to private properties within each sub-basin. In particular it should include a detailed discussion of alternatives for addressing the Chequessett Yacht and Country Club low lying holes.

The Project will require Chapter 91 Licenses, Water Quality Certifications from Mass DEP. It may require a Conservation Management Permit from Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. It will require review by Mass Historical Commission and will require Orders of Conditions from local Conservation Commissions. It will require review by the Cape Cod Commission as a Project of Regional Impact. 

Friends of Herring River

Project planning for the re-establishment of tidal flow to the 1,100-acre Herring River estuary and floodplain to an extent closely approximating the natural tidal range that occurred prior to diking at the Chequessett Neck Road continues under the direction of the Herring River Restoration Committee (HRRC), a multi-agency group appointed by the towns of Wellfleet and Truro and the CCNS. The Wellfleet Conservation Trust supports this project and works cooperatively with the HRRC to achieve the project objectives.

On November 15th, at the State of the Wellfleet Harbor Conference, a new non-profit organization, Friends of Herring River, was launched. The purpose of Friends of Herring River is to promote the restoration and ongoing environmental vitality of the Herring River estuary. The major tasks of this volunteer group are to inform the public on the status of work and key issues, implement outreach activities to ensure public involvement, and support restoration objectives and worthy scientific, environmental, historical, educational and recreational programs by fundraising, volunteering and initiating other useful events and programs.

To learn more about the restoration and how you may participate or stay informed,
visit the Friends' website at www.friendsofherringriver.org.



Please visit the WCT web site: www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org

Wellfleet State of the Harbor Conference Follow-up Contacts

If you were not able to attend this year's State of the Harbor Conference held Nov. 15 or if you did attend but did not gather together all the contacts for follow-ups, here is a compilation of websites and e-mail addresses to keep you informed.

George Heufelder, Director of the Barnstable County Department of Health and the Environment, suggested a web search with any combination of the key words from his talk on wastewater: alternative onsite septic systems, urine diverting toilets or composting toilets would yield numerous websites to explore. For starters, go to the County website at: www.barnstablecountyhealth.org and look under "Environmental Health" or contact George by email at gheufled@capecod.net.

Amy Costa of the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies reported on the Cape Cod Bay Monitoring Program, which she directs. The 2007 Report is online at the Center for Coastal Studies at www.coastalstudies.org. Amy's direct email address is acosta@coastalstudies.org.

Julie Ellis, SEANET Program Director at Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine, is on the lookout for volunteers as well as eider die-offs. Her phone number at the North Grafton campus is 508-887-4933. The Seabird Ecological Assessment Network's web site is www.tufts.edu/vet/seanet.

Abby Franklin (afranklin@nrc.umass.edu) provided a wealth of websites in her talk on alewives. The River Herring Moratorium Announcement can be found at: www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf/marinefisheriesnotices/pubhearings/public_hearing_river_herring_moratorium_ext_pres_091708.pdf. A survey of anadromous fish passage in coastal Massachusetts appears at: www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf/programsandprojects/anadrom.htm.

The NOAA Species of Concern fact sheet is located at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/species/riverherring_detailed.pdf. The Taunton River Watershed natural history blog provides great pictures of herring and eels at www.glooskapandthefrog.org. Finally the CHOIR coalition offers information at www.choircoalition.org/content/Gallery/.

The best way to discuss Wellfleet shellfishermens' concerns is to speak directly to presenter Barbara Austin or any local fisherman about the interlocking interests and obligations needed to sustain shellfishing.

Focusing his talk on the shellfish disease Dermo, which attacks Wellfleet oysters, Ethan Estey, who practices aquaculture in the harbor and is a PhD candidate at URI, can be contacted at EthanEstey@comast.net.

Carrie Phillips, Chief of Natural Resource Management for the Cape Cod National Seashore can be reached at carrie_phillips@nps.gov to keep up to date with the Seashore's efforts to monitor the health of our ecosystems and develop strategies for dealing with resource problems.

Gary Joseph, Chair of the Herring River Restoration Committee, and Don Palladino, president of the newly formed "Friends of the Herring River," gave updates on the project which can be followed at the website: www.FriendsofHerringRiver.org.

Natural Resources Advisory Board Chair John Riehl spoke on the other salt marshes of Wellfleet. NRAB information may be obtained through links at the Wellfleet Town website www.wellfleetma.org. 

Fourth Graders' View of Wellfleet

Many poster exhibits added to the information offered at the State of the Harbor Conference held November 15, but the fourth graders' creative output displayed on the hallway bulletin board of Wellfleet Elementary School captured the Trust's attention. Students from Mrs. Kautz's and Mr. Miller's classes had created acrostic poems on Wellfleet and its oysters that spell out what we love about this special place. Although all the student poems were lively and imaginative, there was only space for one in this newsletter, so Trudy Cox's poem printed below was selected to represent the sentiments that her fourth grade classmates share.

**Wonderful waves roll at the beaches
Every bit of food is tasty
Lively trees grow green every spring
Luscious beach grass scattered in the sand
Flying seagulls glide in the sky
Lovely sounds of crickets surround the house
Excellent sunsets cover the water
Exquisite summers so hot and breezy
Touching the railing of Uncle Tim's Bridge**

By Trudy Cox

Happy Holidays!

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December 2008

Dear WCT Members,

The economic world is changing quickly, and materially – as most of us have never seen before. We also know that the economy impacts nearly everything we do and given that we have no experience with such conditions, we have apprehensions. However, it will not change the mission of WCT – that being to preserve Wellfleet for the enjoyment of current and future generations. We do not know the full range of economy's impacts on WCT, but we can see some upsides – property values may go down, and are therefore more “acquirable”. Obviously we are concerned with our ability to raise funding for projects. We rely on you, our private donors, with great thanks. We also have been successful on institutional grants and State funding. Bargain sales and donations of land and Conservation Restriction are key elements in our success, too. It also takes a committed group of volunteers to undertake the tasks of the Trust and to work with other groups. Thank you to all.

Special thanks to Gary Joseph, a founding, and still, WCT Trustee for his efforts for leading the Wellfleet participation in the Herring River Restoration project. It is a wide ranging job. And thanks to Trustee Don Palladino as he is heading up the newly formed “Friends of the Herring River” (See the associated article).

As WCT comes up to our 25th Anniversary (September 2009), we are proud of our more than 300 acres that have been preserved on our own. It has been gratifying to have all the cooperative efforts of other similarly minded groups such as the Town Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission, Mass Audubon, and the National Seashore.

I wish you and your families all the best as we enter the exciting new and changed world.

Sincerely,

R. Dennis O'Connell, President
dennyoc@comcast.net • 508-349-2162