



WELLFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST

Fall 2016 • www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org

CORTES DONATION OF FIELD ON GOSS LANE

In June, Henry and Barbara Cortes donated a 1.23 parcel of land on Goss Lane to the Wellfleet Conservation. The property, a field long held by the Goss-Cortes family, will be dedicated in memory of Henry Goss's mother Jane Goss Cortes, who loved conservation. The Trust is working with Mr. Cortes on a dedication sign to be placed on the site as soon as possible.

The lot, a field beside the Cortes's antique Cape home at 120 Goss Lane, will remain open space in perpetuity thanks to the Goss-Cortes family's commitment to preserving its natural beauty in the vicinity of Blackfish Creek. The Trust is grateful for this addition to conservation land in Wellfleet.

TENTH ANNUAL GUIDED WALK ON LIEUTENANT'S ISLAND DRAWS LARGE NUMBERS



Walkers on Lt. Island
September 2016

"I stayed just for the walk." Frequent summer visitor Deb Firtha had been to four previous Wellfleet Conservation Trust annual guided walks, so she knew it would be worth it to delay her return to Ohio and stay for the 10th annual walk on September 10.

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TALES & TRAILS PROGRAM ENTERS SECOND YEAR

The Wellfleet Conservation Trust is again cosponsoring Tales & Trails: Nature Walks for Young Explorers — programs of after-school walks through some of Wellfleet's conservation areas. The programs are led by Heidi Clemmer and Marisa Picariello, the author and the illustrator of a new series of nature books for children. This free program exposes kids and families to the beauty of Wellfleet's open space lands while teaching them about the habitats and wildlife of the Outer Cape. Each of the programs focuses on a different ecosystem and is paired with one of the books in Heidi and Marisa's series.

Fall offerings included Uncle Tim's Bridge and Boundbrook Island. In spring the program continues with The Walker Conservation Land and Trail on April 5, Gull Pond on May 10 and Newcomb Hollow Beach on June 7, 2017. Check back on our website closer to these dates.

The walks begin at 2:30PM and advance registration is required. Tales & Trails is the creation of Ms. Clemmer, who has developed the idea with the help of WCT, sponsoring the children's supplies and introducing the locations.

Both WCT and Tails and Trails are partially funded by grants from the Wellfleet Cultural Council, a local agency which receives funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. To register or inquire about the walks, email Heidi Clemmer at ecotales@aol.com. The walks have been great fun for participants of all ages – kids, parents, and grandparents alike. We hope to see you there!



Young explorers take to Duck Creek

TENTH ANNUAL GUIDED WALK, CONTINUED

She was not disappointed. Along with 101 others, she enjoyed one of the best walks yet. The weather was perfect: sunny skies, low 70's, and gentle sea breezes. The walk (open to the public and free as always) began at 9 a.m. at the Lieutenant's Island causeway in South Wellfleet. The walk was about 2.7 miles, with some soft sand and a few stairs. Walkers were offered the opportunity to leave the walk earlier if necessary. Much of the route was exposed to the wind, especially on the shore of Blackfish Creek, but the mild weather kept the walking pleasant.

Along the way, naturalists and other local experts shared their knowledge about the history, geology, and ecology of the area. Pam Tice, who writes the South Wellfleet history blog, explained why the island's name is spelled two different ways. She also talked about early settlers, about how Lt. Island was once an area for raising horses, and about how it later developed as a residential area. Fire Chief Rich Pauley related several anecdotes about the challenge of providing emergency services to an island, whose road is often impassable at high tide. Bob Prescott from Mass Audubon spoke about that organization's role in preserving habitat in the area, and especially about the terrapin gardens. Bill Huss spoke for the Lt. Island Association, sharing what it's like to live there. WCT Trustee Ginie Page talked about the problem of erosion and the revetments used to counter that. She also talked about how the shoreline has changed over the years. Trustee Dwight Estey filled in more of the history, especially about shellfishing and blackfish. WCT Vice-president Bill Iacuesa helped to connect many ideas throughout and to keep the balance between walking, exploring, and discussing.

Other topics included the causeway and bridge, whale try works, salt haying, and aquaculture. Specific conservation properties were discussed, as well as how town and private organizations coordinate both to preserve these beautiful habitats and to make them accessible to the public. Potential acquisitions on Lt. Island which would further connect conservation lands and expand opportunities for enjoying nature were also discussed. Several of the participants were Lt. Island residents who were learning new things about their own neighborhood.

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TURTLE GARDEN UPDATE FOR 2016

WCT continues to provide habitat for terrapins to nest at the Head of Duck Creek. Terrapin researcher Dr. Barbara Brennessel reports that in 2016 at the Head of Duck Creek and Indian Neck turtle sites there were a total of 31 protected nests. At the Head of Duck Creek, one protected nest produced 17 hatchlings and one natural nest produced about 15 hatchlings.



Predator excluder showing the "emergence hole" from which the hatchlings emerge.

Four nests had their eggs dug up by predators at Duck Creek, but out of a total of 88 nests at the two sites, 279 hatchlings were released. That represents a 65% productivity rate for 2016.

On October 12th, five trustees and three volunteers from the Open Space Committee spent a morning pulling out invasive vines

and vegetation at the Head of Duck Creek in preparation for next year's nests.

Your support of WCT makes it possible for us to continue our efforts to help launch another generation of terrapins in Wellfleet. Thank you!



TENTH ANNUAL GUIDED WALK, CONTINUED

Deb Firtha wasn't the only repeat walker to experience the unique combination of outdoor fitness with learning about nature, history, and the community. But for many of the walkers, this was their first WCT guided walk. They were already asking where next year's walk, planned for the Saturday after Labor Day, would be. Wellfleet has so much natural beauty that the WCT has led ten of these walks so far, each to a different area. Wellfleet is full of hidden gems and breathtaking vistas. We hope it always stays that way. That's what we're working for.

PETER TRULL EXPLAINS “GREY CURTAIN” AT ANNUAL MEETING - AUGUST 20



Animated Peter Trull presents “Grey Curtain”

Mr. Peter Trull, Cape Cod naturalist, author, and educator, delivered the keynote address at the Wellfleet Conservation Trust Annual Meeting based on his recent book *The Gray Curtain – The Impact of Seals, Sharks and Commercial Fishing along the Northeast Coast*.

Through discussion and vivid photographs Mr. Trull showed the relationship between commercial fishing, expanding gray seal populations, and

great white sharks along the beaches and in the waters of Cape Cod. This “Gray Curtain” has resulted from geologic and environmental changes, as well as animal migrations and population increases. Although daily and seasonal changes are often accepted as normal, there are great transformations taking place that may go unnoticed or, in some cases, be unexplained.

Mr. Trull offered the dual perception of grey seals as marauders of the fishing industry and protected endangered marine mammals. He also discussed the increasing presence of great white sharks in local waters. Based on information from Greg Skomal, Marine Fisheries biologist and shark researcher, Mr. Trull believes there are close to 200 great white sharks in the waters of the Outer Cape moving up and down the coast from Race Point to Monomoy. “Mr. Trull’s presentation is of current interest, in light of the public’s adoration of seals, the recreational and commercial fishers’ frustrations with the seals, and the growing public awareness of increases in great white shark sightings in Wellfleet and other parts of the Cape,” says WCT President Dennis O’Connell.

Prior to Mr. Trull’s presentation, the Trust held its short annual business meeting. New trustees Chip Bruce and Mike Fisher were elected to the Board of Trustees. Treasurer Don Palladino gave the financial report, and President Dennis O’Connell gave an overview of the WCT’s actions and achievements during the year. These included new acquisitions, continued highway clean-up, geocaching on Conservation land, and the goal to acquire a desirable new property on Lieutenant’s Island. Meeting goers enjoyed refreshments before and after the meeting and got a chance to meet with Peter Trull as he signed his current book and offered some of his earlier publications. We look forward to seeing you at next year’s meeting!

SPOTLIGHT ON... GYPSY MOTHS



Female gypsy moths
laying egg masses

You couldn't miss them in early summer. The gypsy moths in their caterpillar phase ate their way through the trees near the Truro border and pond areas, defoliating trees as far south as the WCT Clover property. They were present on the west side of Route 6, but the highest concentration of moths stayed on the ocean side in Wellfleet.

Gypsy moth caterpillars are covered with stiff hairs and exhibit blue and red dots down their back. Before that they are tiny black larvae and travel by "ballooning." The caterpillar dangles in the air on a silk thread which will break away and carry it on a breeze for up to 150 yards.

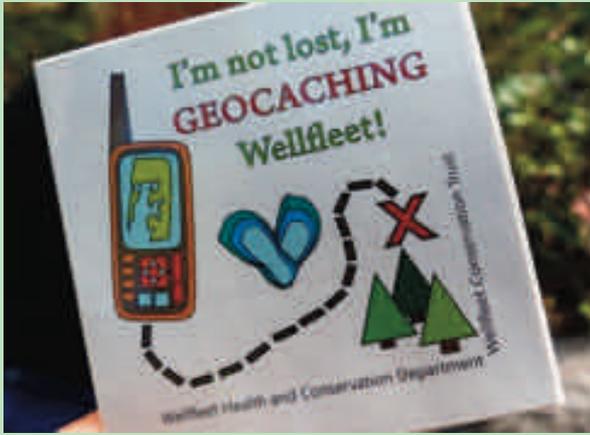
It's hard to believe, but all gypsy moths in this country can be traced back to escapees from one location in Medford, Mass. In the 1860's Etienne Leopold Trouvelot had brought egg masses from France to his home in Massachusetts. Trouvelot, an amateur entomologist, was interested in their potential for silk production. Larvae escaped from his experiment and kept traveling. Some year's conditions lead to bigger infestations of the moths. This was one of those years.

By midsummer, adult male moths had emerged from their weeks in a pupal stage and were flitting about in large numbers, no longer feeding, but searching for a mate. The larger, pale females, unable to take flight, received their suitors low to the ground and laid egg masses, each containing hundreds of future moths. These will winter over until spring when next year's moths emerge in their larval phase.

There is something you can do about limiting next year's numbers. Look for the tan egg masses, usually attached in close proximity to each other, at the base of tree trunks, fence posts and even outdoor furniture. You can easily scrape off and destroy the masses, which are protected from most predators by their hairy composition. Come mid-May when the gypsy moths eat their way out of the egg masses and return to the trees, there could be a few less of them out there.

GEOCACHING ALONG CONSERVATION TRAILS

**BY MAGGIE GARDNER,
AMERICORPS**



The Wellfleet Conservation Trust and the Wellfleet Health and Conservation Department have teamed up to bring more people out onto our trails through geocaching. Geocaching is a game of hide and seek

where people hide a “cache” and then post the GPS coordinates online at www.geocaching.com for others to find. Geocaching is played all over the world and can range from extreme (requiring diving equipment to find a cache) to relaxed (requiring a stroll through a park to find a cache).

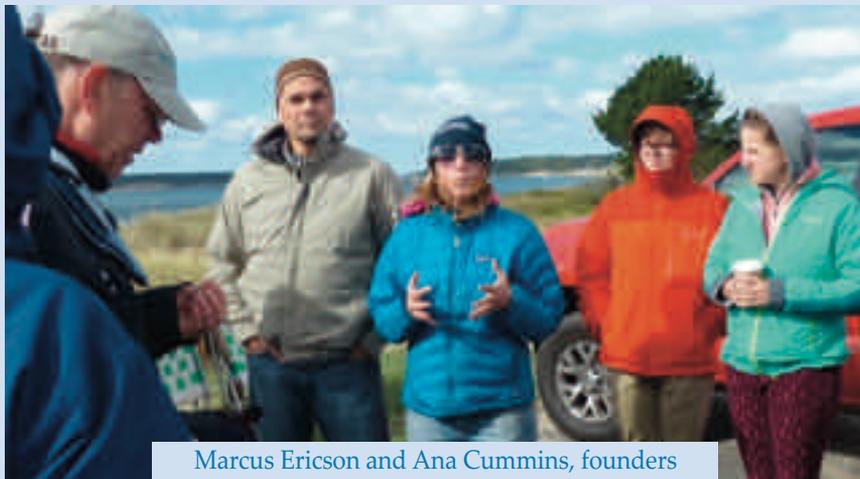
The geocaches WCT and the Health and Conservation Department have placed require a bit of a walk, but only because we want Geocachers to experience our amazing trails and conservation areas. By hiding caches deep in the trails, visitors must walk at least part of the trail in order to find the cache and sign the log book. So far, it has been a great success. The Geocachers who have found the caches have commented that they have enjoyed our scenic trails and that they were happy to have seen a new nook of Wellfleet.

Want to join the hunt? To Geocache, all you need is an email and a password to start an account on www.geocaching.com - really easy! Next, pick a Geocache you want to find and load the coordinates into a GPS device or your phone and, as the saying goes, “You are ready to use multi-million dollar satellites to find a piece of Tupperware in the woods!” If you want to find the caches WCT and the Health and Conservation Department have hidden on the Geocaching website, look for caches hidden by WfltConservation. All of our caches are on the existing trails or within just a few feet of the trail. You can get our trail information from the QR codes at the trail heads or from the pages on:

<http://www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org/landtrails.html>

Happy Geocaching!

COASTSWEEP CLEANUP DURING WELLFLEET OCEAN WEEK



Marcus Ericson and Ana Cummins, founders
of 5 Gyres participate in Coast Sweep

The brisk wind coming from the north onto Wellfleet Harbor on the morning of the Columbus Holiday Monday, October 10 was enough to blow off hats and knock down the unwary walker, but 37 adults and 3 children braved that wind and the chilly temperature to clean up Wellfleet beaches. The volunteers mostly hailed from Wellfleet and other towns on Cape Cod, but some were from as far away as western Massachusetts, Washington DC, and California.

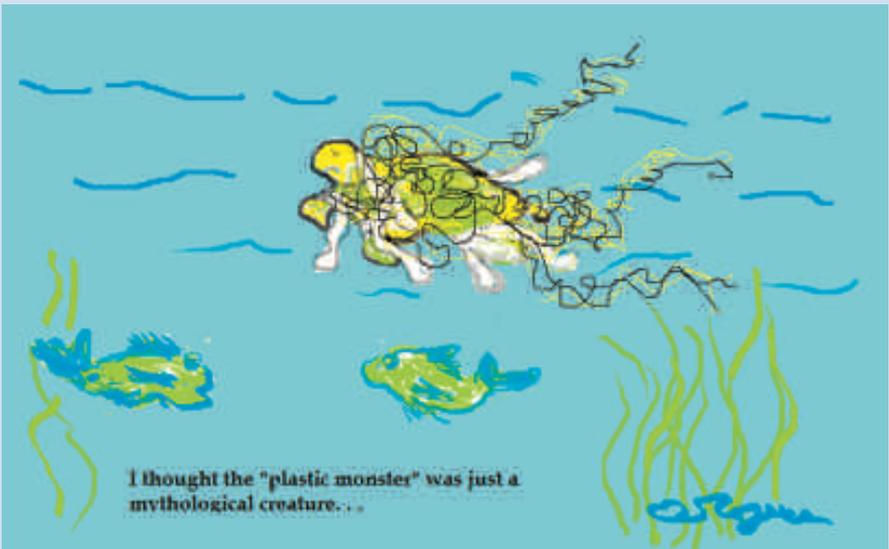
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Check out the "Wellfleet Open Space and Conservation Lands" map on our website to see what your support of WCT has preserved. Click on the map under the "Conservation Land and Trails" tab and then expand the map on your browser.

COASTSWEEP CLEANUP, CONTINUED

Volunteers broke up into 11 teams, each assigned to a different area of beach around Wellfleet Harbor. After a couple of hours, 7 miles of beach had been cleaned and 25 bags of debris weighing 197 pounds had been collected. In addition to cleaning up the trash, volunteers completed forms cataloging and counting the debris. The volunteers also identified, but did not retrieve, 3 dead gulls, 3 dead eiders, and shellfishing gear that was too heavy to carry.

The cleanup was held during Wellfleet Ocean Week, with events at the Library, at Oysterfest, and other venues. Co-sponsors of the second fall CoastSweep with the WCT included the Wellfleet Recycling Committee, Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, the Wellfleet Conservation Commission, the Open Space Committee, and the Friends of the Herring River.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We appreciate your donation using the enclosed envelope.

WELLFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST ANNOUNCES ITS NEWEST TRUSTEE - MICHAEL FISHER



Michael Fisher has a deep and long-standing commitment to Wellfleet, to conservation, and to the WCT. His wife's family ran Wellfleet's Camp MarVen and retired to homes here in the 1970s. So, for four decades, Michael has been visiting Wellfleet for increasingly long periods during the summer. During the last dozen years Michael has been a member of the WCT. He recently retired from Oberlin College, and this May he and his wife moved to Wellfleet full-time to live in their newly solarized and winterized family home.

His 35-year professional career was devoted to teaching at the college and university levels, and to conducting research in archives on three continents, with the histories of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the British empire, and global environmentalism as his special subjects. He has published numerous books and articles on these topics, with his most recent book *Environmental History of India*, commissioned by Cambridge University Press, nearing completion. He is now able to increase his commitment to the Wellfleet Conservation Trust by becoming a member of the Board of Trustees. Welcome, Michael!

A CLOSER BOND



Last year we instituted two new ways to communicate better with you. We opened a Facebook page so you can connect with fellow members and stay on top of WCT news and activities.

We also started to email invitations to our events and programs. If you're not fully connected yet, check us out on Facebook and sign up for our emails!

Of course, there is also always our website:
www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER - FALL 2016

Dear Members and Friends,

Another year-end approaches and the work of the Wellfleet Conservation Trust goes on continuously. At this time last year, I was saying thanks for your support for our Drummer Cove Link Lot acquisition. We closed on that property on the last day of the year, December 31, 2015. We were successful in receiving grants from the State, the Bafflin Foundation, the Fields Pond Foundation and the Cape Cod Five Foundation, but it was the strong community support from you that was so exhilarating and that made all the difference. Our latest significant acquisition focus is on a property on Lieutenant's Island. This purchase is contingent upon receiving a State Partnership grant, and we will learn near year's end if our grant application has been successful. But again, it is the very strong community support that many of you have pledged that has enabled this project to move forward. We rely on you, our members, to make it possible for us to fulfill our mission to preserve and protect this special place we all cherish.

This year, we received a lovely gift of 1.23 acres of land on Goss Lane from Henry and Barbara Cortes. The land was given in memory of Henry's mother, Jane Goss Cortes, who loved Wellfleet and the conservation of land. We thank the Cortes family.

This year we welcomed two new Trustees. Newcomers to the Board, but long-term supporters of WCT, are Chip Bruce and Michael Fisher. Sadly, we are also saying goodbye to three trustees. Mark Gabriele and Curt Felix are both stepping down due to other pressing activities. Peter Hall and his wife, Marieke, are moving from Wellfleet to take up residency on the mainland in a retirement community. Peter has been a trustee several decades— we thank him for all he has done for the WCT over so many years of service. He will be greatly missed by all of us at the WCT and, we know, by the entire community of Wellfleet as well.

Another person deserving of mention and thanks is Maggie Gardner, our AmeriCorps member for the past year. Maggie did wonders for our land stewardship program and also initiated geo - caching on Wellfleet conservation lands. (See her geocaching article in this issue.) Maggie's year with AmeriCorps has ended and she has moved on to other conservation and education activities in the private sector. We wish her all the best.

Finally, I thank you, our supporters. It is only with your continued support that the WCT is able to preserve land in Wellfleet for present and future generation to enjoy.

Thank you so much and best wishes for the holiday season.

Sincerely,

Dennis O'Connell, President/Trustee
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WELFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST

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The Wellfleet Conservation Trust is an IRS qualified 501(c) (3) non-profit land trust.