



# WELLFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST

Fall 2017 • [www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org](http://www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org)

## JAKE PUFFER JOINS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wellfleet native, Jacob (Jake) Puffer, has a number of superlatives that come with him as he joins the Wellfleet Conservation Trust Board of Trustees: newest, youngest, and fastest (read on). We are happy to introduce you to Jake.



Jake Puffer

After growing up in Wellfleet, Jake earned his BA from Emmanuel College in 2010 with a major in communication focusing on business and psychology. After graduating college, he moved back to Wellfleet and picked wild oysters while also working with his father, Irving Puffer. They went into business together and now grow oysters and clams on a grant off Mayo beach.

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## 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GUIDED WALK EXPLORES NORTH EAST CORNER OF WELLFLEET

It was a perfect day for exploring the most northeasterly corner of Wellfleet, and that is exactly what 100 stalwart walkers did on September 9th for the Eleventh Annual Guided Walk by the Wellfleet Conservation Trust.

At 9 o'clock, WCT President Dennis O'Connell welcomed the crowd gathered at Gull Pond Landing, and Bill Iacuesa introduced the route which would include two antique homes, a mid-century modern house and studio, viewing of five ponds, the site of the first schoolhouse in Wellfleet and a number of uphill climbs on the sand roads.

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## JAKE PUFFER JOINS THE TRUST, CONTINUED

Jake reflects on returning to Wellfleet, “I think moving back to a place and settling down where you grew up changes the way you view it. In a lot of ways Wellfleet has become a different place to me. I appreciate the beauty and pristineness more but also realize that it takes hard work and management by dedicated volunteers and the town to keep it that way and fix the mistakes of the past. I’m very fortunate to grow up in a great community and have a way to support myself and my family here. Wellfleet and the harbor in particular has given me so much.”

Jake provided some exciting personal information. Jake and his wife Jacqueline, a 6th grade English teacher at Nauset Middle School own a house together in Wellfleet and are expecting their first baby in January. Jake is a marathon and ultramarathon runner. He has run many races and is the two-time reigning champion of the Nantucket Rock Run — a quarter mile swim followed by a 50-mile race on the beaches around the perimeter of the island.

“I first became aware of the Conservation Trust when I was still in high school, after the land behind my parent’s, where I grew up playing, and later walking my dogs and hiking around, was not going to be developed. I never considered joining until Gary [Joseph] approached me, and I was immediately interested... I have enjoyed many conservation lands all over and I think it has made my appreciation for Wellfleet’s beauty grow, along with my desire to protect it.”

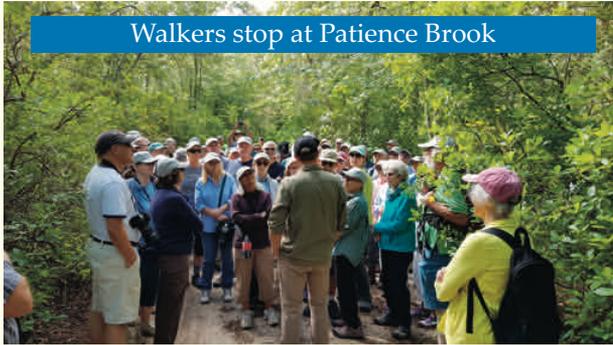
Being an oyster farmer and an avid runner of the coast, Jake finds that preserving access to and along the coast has become very important to him. A healthy harbor is a vital part of growing shellfish. “Conservation and restoration of wetlands is one of the best things we can do locally to keep it that way,” he says. Jake is a SPAT board member, a member of the Shellfish Advisory Committee and Mayo Creek Restoration Committee.

Unlike many of our Trustees, who join us after a long career elsewhere, Jake brings his bright future and energy with his home town perspective to us. We are excited to have him join the Board.

To read our full interview with Jake, please visit our website: [www.wellfleetpreservationtrust.org](http://www.wellfleetpreservationtrust.org) and select the “Blog” tab.

## 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GUIDED WALK, CONTINUED

Surveyor Chet Lay, newly retired from his long career at Slade Associates, presented



Walkers stop at Patience Brook

information on the 19th and 20th century development of the lands that are now part of the Cape Cod National Seashore. Pat and Randy Bartlett gave the history of their lovely home on Gull Pond built by the Higgins family in 1770. Dr. John Portnoy explained the Cape's formation by the

glaciers. At Patience Brook, which connects Higgins Pond to Herring Pond, Herring Warden, Dr. Ethan Estey, discussed the herring count and some of the other denizens of the Herring River such as the snapping turtles who lurk in the culverts and the eel population.

The group stopped again to visit the outside of the Fromboluti's modern style home designed by Charles Zehnder and looked into the house interior through the glass wall on the Williams Pond side. Near the town-line, everyone stopped to get a better look at Slough Pond in Truro. The walk proceeded westerly along Black Pond Road, providing another full view of Herring Pond and a roof top look at the Saarinen modern home, designed by Olav Hammarstom.

At the junction of Old King's Highway, walkers headed up the hill towards Truro on that road to the site of Wellfleet's first schoolhouse. There Dwight Estey, former WCT trustee and current President of the Wellfleet Historical Society and Museum, enlightened us on the early days of schooling when Wellfleet was still a part of Eastham. Chet Lay spoke again on the route of the Old King's Highway when it was the main road traversing the town. He reminded everyone that to see the original Wellfleet layout of the road, one would have to look in Eastham maps because Wellfleet was not incorporated as a separate town until 1763.

Heading back towards Wellfleet on the Old King's Highway, the walkers crossed the Herring River (stream) at the location of the official town herring count. Next, Peter Matson and his friendly black Lab welcomed the group to the front yard of his three-quarter Cape house from the 1800's. Peter's father had purchased in derelict state in the 1930's for \$400. By that time, it was one of the few remaining homesteads from a settlement that bordered the Herring River.

The walk resumed going uphill on Old King's Highway to the intersection of Old Hay Road. There we turned east back towards Gull Pond and eventually took a path that completed the nearly three-mile loop and brought the walkers right back to Gull Pond Landing where the trek began three hours earlier.

# WCT Mourns the Loss of Rit Wallace

Sad news – Richard (Rit) Wallace who was one of our founding Trustees back in 1984, died on Sunday June 24. Rit would have turned 101 years old on August 3. He was a very talented and nice person with a wonderful mischievous twinkle on his smile. In 1998, Rit was the guy who knew each of the WCT properties and had developed the early notebook system on each property. WCT President Dennis O'Connell said when Rit introduced him around to the Trust sites, WCT had about 65 fee properties and 5 CR's. That seemed like a lot then. We now have about 115 fee properties and 33 CR's.



Richard (Rit) Wallace

Rit attended our 30th Annual Meeting in 2014 – he would have been 96 at the time. Rit was the person credited with preparing the first Open Space Plan and starting the Open Space Committee in Wellfleet. Rit's daughters, Nancy Tidrick and Janet Buckley along with their husbands are supporters of WCT. WCT received many memorial donations in honor of Rit, and previously for Rit's wife Louise, who predeceased him a few

years ago. Both wanted to see WCT succeed and to help Wellfleet to be protected.

Long-serving trustee Gary Joseph recalls Rit as one of his mentors. "We have lost truly dedicated supporter and former trustee. Rit and his compadre [Robert] Hankey were the Wellfleet Conservation Trust A team. When something had to be done, they were on it, very dedicated to seeing the Trust succeed. They put up the first Wellfleet Conservation Trust sign. I helped. Wellfleet owes a great deal of gratitude to Rit Wallace."

## TURTLE JOURNALS 2017

For the past five years, WCT has been playing host to nesting Diamondback Terrapins at our Head of Duck Creek conservation site. The Diamondbacks are threatened species and are protected under state laws. Each year has had some success, but the final count of turtles at our Head of Duck Creek property for the 2017 was a record 96 hatchlings. They emerged from the eight protected nests and two natural nests. But let us take you back through the season mainly with the messages of Barbara Brennessel, Ph.D., Professor Emerita from Wheaton College, who oversees this project.

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## TURTLE JOURNALS 2017, CONTINUED



Diamondback Terrapin  
Hatchlings

### August 24 e-mail from Barbara Brennessel:

A nest hatched today. It was a nest of 15 eggs relocated from a driveway on Chequessett Neck Road to Head of Duck Creek. 14 of the 15 eggs produced lively hatchlings. The other egg was inundated by plant roots. I will release these babies near the Chequessett Neck Dike on Sunday around 10:30-11 a.m.

### August 26 e-mail from Dennis O'Connell:

I received a text from Barbara Brennessel today announcing 11 more hatchlings today were released at HoDC today.

### September 14 e-mail from Barbara Brennessel:

Another nest hatched this morning. These 12 hatchlings originated as eggs which were relocated from a sandy vehicle turn-around just past the Herring River Dike.



Adult Diamondback Terrapin

What a great turtle garden at HoDC!

## GIVE TAX FREE FROM YOUR IRA TO HELP WCT

If you are 70½ years old or older and have required minimum distributions (RMD's), you can transfer funds from your tax deferred Individual Retirement Account (IRA) as a gift to the non-profit Wellfleet Conservation Trust (WCT) and pay zero tax on the IRA withdrawal. You may donate up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to qualified charitable groups, including WCT. The charitable gift counts as part of your required IRA minimum distributions. The Funds must be transferred directly from your IRA institution to WCT. The gift does not generate taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize on your tax return. Contact the financial institution that manages your IRA and ask to make a gift to the Wellfleet Conservation Trust.

To learn more, check with your financial/tax advisor. This would make a nice tax break for you, and WCT would be most grateful for your support of the Trust's conservation work.

## SPOTLIGHT ON... JEWELWEED (TOUCH-ME-NOT)

After passing by flourishing poison ivy along the Annual Guided Walk's route all morning on September 9th, a number of people were pleased to find its antidote, Jewelweed, growing in a healthy patch along the Herring River stream beside the Old King's Highway. Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) displays bright,



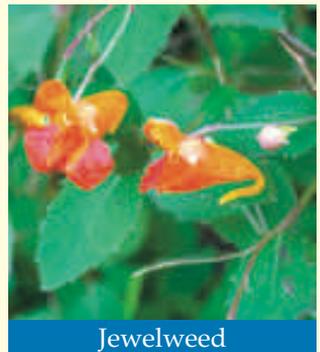
spotted orange flowers from July till October or the first frost. Its other name, Touch-Me-Not, is derived from the slipper shaped seed pods it produces late in the season. If you touch one, it will burst explosively with a loud snap, dispersing the seeds. Open the seeds further and you will find they are a beautiful sky-blue color.

Besides the highly visible orange blossoms ending in a closed tail, Jewelweed produces

small, self-pollinating (cleistogamus) flowers that never open. Take a closer look, and you will see the tiny green cleistogamus flowers in the leaf axils of the plant.

Jewelweed actually is effective on poison ivy and other rashes for most people if they break off a stem and rub its juice directly on exposed areas of the skin. Happily, no one on our walk needed to take advantage of these properties. It can also reduce irritation from mosquito bites and is said to relieve Athlete's Foot itch. By propitious coincidence, Jewelweed is often found in wet habitats in proximity to poison ivy.

The jewel may be the brilliant orange flowers or the pretty blue inner seed, but it also describes the leaves which become a translucent silver if you submerge them in water. You decide.



Jewelweed

# ANNUAL MEETING FEATURES

## JACK CLARKE OF MASS AUDUBON

Mr. Jack Clarke, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations for Mass Audubon, was the keynote speaker at the 33rd

Annual Meeting of the Wellfleet Conservation Trust, held Saturday, August 19, 2017 at the Wellfleet Senior Center.



Jack Clarke

Mr. Clarke addressed "Conservation Challenges Facing our State and Nation." Mr. Clarke has a

particular interest in fostering public activism to protect Massachusetts's natural resources and to promote the improved quality of life which results from preserving and protecting our environment. He discussed the impact of recent changes to federal and state laws, policies, regulations and practices. He encouraged citizens to pick up the telephone and communicate directly with legislators and government officials to advocate for the protection and preservation of our fragile natural resources both here on the Cape and beyond.

His presentation was preceded by the Trust's Annual Meeting and Operations report which included the financial report by Treasurer, Don Palladino; the election of new Trustees and reappointments of Trustees; and a review of WCT's holdings and other activities. Those attending the meeting enjoyed the other Annual Meeting tradition, a large assortment of home baked goods with their coffee, tea or juice.

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We appreciate your donation using the enclosed envelope.

# COASTSWEEP 2017

## WHERE DOES ALL THIS STUFF COME FROM?

This year's COASTSWEEP's clean-up efforts around much of Wellfleet Harbor was again sponsored by the Wellfleet Conservation Trust along with Wellfleet Recycling Committee, the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary of the Mass Audubon Society, the Wellfleet Conservation Commission, the Open Space Committee, and the Friends of the Herring River. Due the threatening weather on the Columbus Day holiday (October 9th) the Sweep had to be rescheduled to Sunday, October 22nd. COASTSWEEP is part of the International Coastal Cleanup organized by the Ocean Conservancy to clean the oceans of marine debris, including trash, fishing line and another human-made debris. There is a focus on plastics that eventually enter the food stream. The Wellfleet effort is one of many that take place around the Massachusetts coast.



recovered items in last year's COASTSWEEP.

The local crew of 29 volunteers met at Mayo Beach parking lot at 9 a.m. and got their beach assignments. This year ten teams collected 400 pounds of debris from approximately 8 miles of beaches. The enthusiastic participants considered the sweep a success, especially since it surpassed the 200 pounds of

The Conservation Trust sent the report on the recovered trash to the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management with a note that we expect to help in the volunteer collection again next fall on the Columbus Day holiday. Look for the 2018 announcements for the annual COASTSWEEP and think about joining our group of dedicated volunteers.



# WCT PRESIDENT RECEIVES ANSEL B. CHAPLIN AWARD

The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts held its 31st annual meeting at a joint annual meeting with the Orleans Conservation Trust at the Orleans Yacht Club on Monday, August 28, 2017. Perfect weather, with a



Dennis O'Connell receives award

splendid view of Town Cove was further enhanced by delicious hors d'oeuvres. The Compact is the principal advisor to most land trusts on the Cape and has been nationally recognized for its excellence in service by the wider national land trust community. There were several excellent presentations on the Compact, the Orleans Trust, and the role of AmeriCorps. Mark Robinson, the Executive Director of The Compact delivered the keynote speech in which he spoke of "what keeps me awake at night." One issue was

what he fears is a loss of fervor in the environmental movement. A second is the responsibility inherent in the word "perpetuity": How can we ensure that conservation efforts have truly long-lasting effects?

However, the highlight for most of the audience from Wellfleet was that Dennis O'Connell, Wellfleet Conservation Trust President, received The Compact's Ansel B. Chaplin Award for excellence in open space protection on Cape Cod. The award was presented by last year's winner, Peter Johnson, Trustee of the Brewster Conservation Trust and Mark Robinson of The Compact. In addition, a commendation from the Massachusetts legislature was delivered by Representative Sarah Peake and Senator Julian Cyr.



Dennis O'Connell, Representative Sarah Peake, and Senator Julian Cyr

# TEN THINGS TO DO IN THE WINTER WOODS



Susan Bruce enjoys the winter woods

Here are 10 fun things to do in the winter woods. Don't just stay indoors all winter. Bundle up and go for walks on our conservation areas to answer some or all of the accompanying questions.

## 1. FOLLOW ANIMAL TRACKS

Who was there? Where were they headed?

## 2. WATCH AND LISTEN FOR BIRDS

What birds are about? What are they doing?

## 3. IDENTIFY TREES

How many trees can you identify without their leaves?

## 4. HUG A TREE - (SERIOUSLY!)

What does it feel like?

## 5. WATCH SUNSET OR SUNRISE

Does the old sailors' red skies prediction true?

## 6. LOOK AT THE NIGHT SKY

What constellations are high in the winter sky.  
What planets are out?

## 7. WRITE A POEM

How do you portray winter?

## 8. CROSS COUNTRY SKI

How does this compare with winter walking?

## 9. SNOW SHOE

What new territory can you explore?

## 10. TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS

How many changes do you find in a familiar location?



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER - FALL 2017

Dear Members and Friends,

The mission of WCT is to preserve land. We have now preserved nearly 380 acres in our own name and have partnered with the Town on more. Our collection of conservation lands is well dispersed throughout Wellfleet. The benefits of conservation land have been widely realized as including preserving habitat, protecting ground water, protecting surface waters, protecting diversity of wildlife and providing access to much needed passive recreation.

How does WCT choose the land it wants to preserve? I wish I could say that all our actions are planned out, but the fact is that most of our actions are reactions. All land is owned by someone, and land cannot be acquired unless the owner wants to let the change occur. So it behooves WCT to know the land in Wellfleet and be ready to act when an opportunity arises, perhaps with even a little stimulation by us. Whether a parcel is on the market or not, we look at it from the point of view of how compelling is it to preserve that land – what conservation attributes are being preserved – does it enhance what we are already doing. We then evaluate how feasible is it that we can attain the ownership. We have been very fortunate to have many contributors donate land, but acquisitions involve some form of purchase and for that we need cash – your donations. There still are conservation land opportunities in Wellfleet, but we cannot make offers that we cannot fulfill. It has been a challenge for us to be ready with cash resources, so we have let some opportunities go, sadly. We appreciate your past support and as always seek new sources of revenue, including grants, but we appeal to you for your contributions.

Again, I thank all who enabled my receipt of the Ansel B. Chapman award. As I reported in the last Newsletter, it was a real thrill to receive word of it. I can tell you that the actual ceremony was a real honor and reward that I was able to share with so many friends and family.

I hope you enjoy this Newsletter and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank you for your past support and wish you the best for the holiday season and new year.

Sincerely,

Dennis (Denny) O'Connell, President, Board of Trustees  
508-349-2162 or [dennyoc@comcast.net](mailto:dennyoc@comcast.net)



# WELLFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST

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