



# WELLFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST

Fall 2018 • [www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org](http://www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org)

## 12TH ANNUAL GUIDED WALK AROUND INDIAN NECK DEDICATED TO MEMORY OF DON PALLADINO

About 90 people gathered at the Indian Neck breakwater for the start of our 12th Annual Guided Walk at 9 a.m. on Saturday, September 15th. Vice president Bill Iacuesa dedicated the 3.5-mile walk to the memory of the late Don Palladino, who introduced the walk as our signature event in 2006.

To kick off the walk, Dwight Estey, president of the Wellfleet Historical Society, discussed historic background and changes to the Wellfleet harbor front.

The group proceeded along Indian Neck beach to WCT land where erosion has revealed a Native American shell midden. South Wellfleet historian Pam Tice discussed the year-round community of Nausets in the vicinity.



**Nancy Civetta Speaking**

The walk continued along the open beach to just beyond the Town landing at Burton Baker Beach. There John Portnoy explained jetties, groins, and revetments — all attempted means of mitigating beach erosion, some now out of favor, others still used today.

Walkers enjoyed splendid views of Great Island across Wellfleet Bay. After crossing Sewell's Gutter, the group awaited Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta for her scheduled 10:30 talk. Since the walk had arrived ahead of time, Assistant Constable Johnny (Clam) Mankevetch pitched in until Ms. Civetta arrived. She discussed oyster propagation, as well as recent efforts to increase quahog production in Wellfleet.

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## GUIDED WALK, CONTINUED

The route continued along the beach to Field Point, where walkers turned into the Fox Island Marsh area. At WCT's Field Point turtle garden, Dr. Barbara Brennessel released terrapin hatchlings into the marsh with the help of her grandson, Sterling. Alice Iacussa spoke about Wise family's midcentury modern home designed by Marcel Breuer. Jeremy Wise, whose family donated the land which now includes the turtle garden, invited participants to walk around the home and explore the property.



**Alice Iacussa**

Some participants took advantage of a ride back to the breakwater parking lot, but a hardy group continued back on their own. It was a long but memorable morning's walk. After the walk, many gathered at a memorial event put on by Don Palladino's family. Thus,

the walk ended as it began, with a tribute to Don.

## "PLANNING TO KEEP WELLFLEET SPECIAL" AT WCT'S 34TH ANNUAL MEETING

Ms. Heather McElroy, the Natural Resources/Land Protection Specialist for the Cape Cod Commission, delivered the keynote address at the 34th Annual Meeting of the Wellfleet Conservation Trust. In a presentation entitled "Planning to Keep Wellfleet Special," Ms. McElroy described the work of the Commission, with a special focus on the Commission's work in Wellfleet.



**Heather McElroy**

Cape Cod's unique geography, 560 miles of coastline, 15 independent towns, population of 216,000 which more than doubles in the summer, and single freshwater aquifer are among the special features of our region which create distinctive challenges for the Commission's work. The Commission's mission, "... to protect the unique values and quality of life on

Cape Cod by balancing environmental protection and economic progress," proceeds in a context of sea level rise and changing climate.

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## IN MEMORY

### DONALD J. PALLADINO (1936 - 2018)

The Wellfleet Conservation Trust was profoundly saddened by the death of our friend, colleague, and fellow Trustee, Don Palladino on May 27, 2018. Don had been a Trustee since 2007 and our Treasurer since 2010. Don's enthusiasm, leadership and dedication will be sorely missed by the Board of Trustees and by our members. Our "Annual Walk in Wellfleet" was Don's suggestion. The walk has been well attended each September for the past 11 years, growing to the point where several of the most recent walks have included over 100 participants. Don was also a frequent participant in WCT trail maintenance activities, our Adopt-a-Highway program and our annual meetings.



**Don Palladino**

In addition to WCT activities, Don was a leader in the community's efforts to restore the Herring River estuary to its natural tidal flows. He was a founding member and President of the Friends of the Herring River, working with the Herring River Restoration Committee of the Cape Cod National Seashore, the town of Wellfleet, and the town of Truro. He was also a member of the Association to Preserve Cape Cod Board of Trustees, the Wellfleet Zoning Board of Appeals, and Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Wellfleet.

Don had a great appreciation for the natural beauty of Cape Cod, especially Wellfleet. He enjoyed leading walks in the various natural and historic locations in Wellfleet. He enjoyed kayaking throughout the salt and fresh waters. Don was predeceased by his wife, Martha, in 2009, and is survived by one son and three daughters, their spouses, and seven grandchildren.

Don was a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point. He had a successful and decorated career in the US Army, rising to the rank of Brigadier General before retiring to the business sector. He was a long-standing Board member and the Chief Operating Officer of the world-wide Save the Children foundation.

Don Palladino was a fine, caring, and exemplary gentleman who left us with wonderful legacies. We will dearly miss him.

## ANNUAL MEETING, CONTINUED

Ms. McElroy described the various strategies that the Commission uses to address these challenges, including helping to develop adaptation strategies



and providing decision support tools. In Wellfleet, the Commission has worked on affordable housing and historical preservation. The Commission also has Cape-wide initiatives, such as the Outer Cape Bike Plan. Their website features many interesting Commission projects, for example, see “Buy Fresh, Buy Local,” an award-winning story map.

There was a lively Q/A session, in which the audience asked about the Commission’s work in detail, discussed

political resources and constraints, and explored the relationship of the Commission to other organizations including the WCT.

In addition to Ms. McElroy’s speech, the annual meeting included a social hour and our annual business meeting. The events began at 9:30 a.m., with coffee and a spread of delicious pastries. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. President Dennis O’Connell presented a historical overview of the WCT’s actions and achievements. A key point was that our all-volunteer Trust now has 385 acres in Wellfleet under its protection. There was also a Treasurer’s report, an invitation to the upcoming Annual Walk, the election of new Trustees, and a tribute to the late Don Palladino.

Annual Meetings are open to the public. We hope to see you at our Annual Meeting in August 2019!

## 46 BABY TERRAPINS EMERGE FROM PROTECTED NESTS

Barbara Brennessel, Ph.D., Professor Emerita from Wheaton College, monitors the turtle garden located on WCT property at the Head of Duck Creek. She reports that this year diamond back terrapins nested there from June 14 to July 8. Hatching occurred from August 17 to August 29. Dr. Brennessel and her team checked the site twice each day, in the early morning and in mid to late afternoon. This year there were 5 protected nests, yielding a total of 46 baby terrapins. The last of the hatchlings were released by Dr. Brennessel’s grandchildren.

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## TERRAPINS EMERGE, CONTINUED

The Wellfleet Conservation Trust maintains the turtle garden by controlling vegetation, especially invasive plants, on the sandy nesting site. Happily, the turtle garden was very successful this year in attracting females to dig their nests and lay their eggs in the garden, thus preventing the terrapins from roaming over to Main Street or Route 6. There were no turtle road mortalities in that area in 2018.

### Brennessel Grandchildren



Diamond back terrapins are protected and monitored at predator excluder cages at several other locations in Wellfleet, including on other WCT properties. The success of the Head of Duck Creek turtle garden is thanks to the continued guidance of Dr. Brennessel and to your continued support of the WCT.

## COASTSWEEP 2018 COUNTED AS SUCCESS

For the past four years the WCT has coordinated the efforts of the Wellfleet groups sponsoring the annual COASTSWEEP of Wellfleet Harbor. This year the groups included the WCT, the Recycling Committee, the Open Space Committee, and the Conservation Commission. COASTSWEEP is the statewide coastal cleanup sponsored each fall by Coastal Zone Management and powered by volunteers across the state. COASTSWEEP is part of the International Coastal Cleanup organized by the Ocean Conservancy in Washington, DC. Volunteers from all over the world collect marine debris—trash, fishing line, and any other human-made items—and record what they find. This information is then analyzed and used to identify sources of marine debris and develop education and policy initiatives to help reduce it.

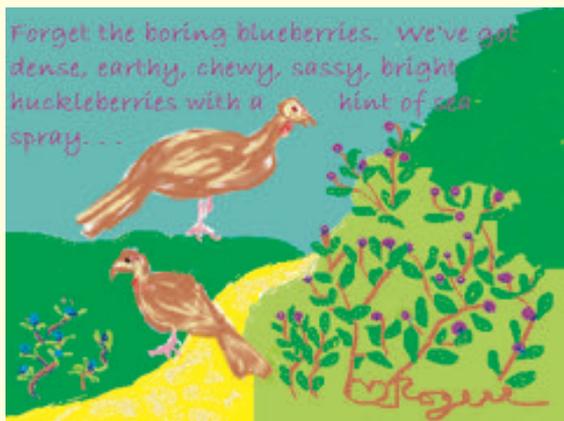
On September 29 our SWEEP efforts focused on Wellfleet Harbor, where twenty-four volunteers covered approximately

eight miles of coastline. The weather was perfect, and it was a beautiful day to be out on the shore. We collected approximately 160 pounds of trash; a total weight buoyed by a few extremely heavy objects, like iron pipes. Volunteers collected 15 bags of trash, but the reaction of all was that happily the beaches were surprisingly clean. We did find plenty of plastic from picnics, boating debris, construction materials, and fish netting. We were surprised that only 3 cigarette butts were found.

“Marine debris presents a serious threat to Massachusetts wildlife, water quality, and to the beaches that so many people enjoy every summer,” says Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton. Thanks to the Wellfleet volunteers who helped clean up marine debris by walking our beaches on a beautiful day for good purposes. Look for information on COASTSWEEP in fall of 2019 and come join us.

## SPOTLIGHT ON... HUCKLEBERRY

You almost smile just hearing the name with associations to Huckleberry Finn, Huckleberry Hound or Moon River as “huckleberry friend.” Ripening during the summer, huckleberries were abundant and plump this year. Sometimes confused with wild blueberries, huckleberries bear a deep purple-black fruit, containing ten seeds. Some people consider them tastier than blueberries. They



are enjoyed in the same way, eaten freshly picked, baked into muffins and pies, and preserved as jelly or jam. Just be aware that they are a different, tarter berry, and they will have more crunch because of their nut-like seeds. Blueberries contain numerous soft seeds. Huckleberry skins are thicker than those of blueberries.

*Gaylussacia baccata* or black huckleberry, the common huckleberry found on Cape Cod is distinct from huckleberries of the west of the genus *Vaccinium*, which are related to the blueberry. Huckleberries are shrubs that grow up to two or three feet tall and are found in colonies. When you locate a good patch of huckleberries, fellow foragers might be wild turkeys, mourning doves, box turtles and deer. They too have an appetite for huckleberries.

Huckleberry blooms in the spring. Greenish, urn-shaped flowers grow in one-sided clusters. Huckleberry plants resemble blueberry plants, but if you check the leaves closely, you will find tiny yellow resin dots that make huckleberry leaves a bit stickier. Blueberry leaves are shiny and dark with very fine teeth; huckleberry leaves are toothless. Blueberry plants have a rougher bark while huckleberry bark is dark and smooth right down to the ground. Huckleberries grow in a variety of habitats including sandy scrub, woodlands, bogs, clearings and thickets.

During berry season, cut a freshly picked huckleberry in half and count the seeds. Look at a leaf under a magnifier to get a clearer view of the resin dots or try pressing the leaf on the back of your hand to see if the yellow dots will rub off. Don't be surprised if you start dreaming of rafting on the Mississippi, imagining a blue cartoon dog or humming “Moon River.”

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER - FALL 2018

Dear Members and Friends,

As another year-end approaches, I thank you for your continued support of our local conservation land trust. We focus on preserving open space in Wellfleet for the benefit of flora and fauna, as well as for the well-being and enjoyment of current and future generations. We have a dedicated all volunteer Board of Trustees working hard to preserve and protect this special place that we all love.

The feature presentation at our annual meeting by Heather McElroy of the Cape Cod Commission was aptly titled “Keeping Wellfleet Special.” I know that WCT members support this quest, and it does not happen without directed efforts. Your support of the Wellfleet Conservation Trust is one of many ways you can help to keep Wellfleet special. Open space is a diminishing commodity in Wellfleet and serves the vital purpose of improving air and water quality, as well as providing space for our health and habitat for the creatures that do make Wellfleet special.

This spring we mourned the death of our friend and fellow Trustee, Don Palladino. I remember the Board meeting when Don said, “We need a signature event,” and then suggested a guided walk through parts of Wellfleet. Don was a very busy and productive person who did much for all. We are thankful for Don’s impact on WCT and for his impact on the Wellfleet community now and in the future.

Tightening budgets at the state level and changes to federal environmental actions and tax laws mean that those of us who love this beautiful place will need to band together in support of issues and actions that do “Keep Wellfleet Special.” WCT is grateful for the support of land owners who have donated land and conservation restrictions. We are also deeply grateful for your financial support as more and more we find that we must purchase land in order to protect it. Your contribution makes our work possible—we can’t do it without you. Thank you for your continued support.

My best wishes to all for the coming holidays and the new year.

Thank you,  
Dennis (Denny) O’Connell, President, Board of Trustees  
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# WELLFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST

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