

# HARWICH CONSERVATION TRUST

P.O. Box 205, Harwich Port, Massachusetts 02646  
(508) 432-3997

For the Land's Sake

SUMMER 2002 NEWSLETTER

www.HarwichConservationTrust.org

## SPECIAL TOWN MTG ON AUG. 26th: HARWICH COULD USE LAND BANK FUNDS TO BUY 13.32 ACRES LINKING HAWKSNEST STATE PARK WITH WALKER'S POND

At the August 26th Special Town Meeting, Harwich voters could have the chance to approve Land Bank funds to purchase 13.32 acres stretched between Hawksnest State Park and Walker's Pond in the Six Ponds District of Critical Planning Concern (DCPC). This particular property links to over 218 acres of Hawksnest conservation land, contains freshwater wetland, is located in a zone of contribution to public drinking water wells, and provides 600 feet of globally rare coastal plain pondshore habitat which is important for many wildflowers.



A water lily blooms in a sheltered cove surrounded by the 13.32 acres, including 600 feet of globally rare habitat.

"Cape Cod's ponds are the Gold Coast of the 21st century," summed up Mark Robinson, Executive Director of The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, a regional non-profit organization which assists local land trusts like HCT with open space protection. Ponds are under increasing development pressure since our saltwater coastline is already saturated with houses and subdivisions continue to sprawl, alluded Robinson.

The Compact is completing its Cape Cod Priority Ponds Project to evaluate the natural resource importance of the remaining pondfront parcels and prioritize properties for

protection. It is no surprise that this 13.32-acre property ranked as a high priority. A separate land analysis, the Harwich Priority Open Space Project conducted by HCT, found that this land ranked as the second highest priority in need of protection out of 200 parcels evaluated throughout Harwich.

Luckily, the separate 3% Land Bank tax provides a dedicated source of revenue for this Town open space acquisition and does not take money away from other budget items.

Will these 13.32 acres in the heart of the Six Ponds DCPC be purchased and preserved, or fall prey to bulldozers? Will Walker's Pond water quality be affected by nutrient-loading septic systems or be protected by Land Bank dollars? Time and the upcoming Town Meeting will tell. Get out and vote on August 26th.

Reprinted courtesy of Cape Cod Chronicle

Harwich voters could use Land Bank funds to buy 13.32 acres (far shore) on Walker's Pond in the Six Ponds DCPC.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: HCT HELPS PROTECT KATIE'S POND AND THE HERRING RIVER

You have a great Board of Trustees. I am proud to serve with these talented and dedicated people as well as those who have served previously. Since the HCT was formed in September of 1988 there have been over 30 different trustees. Isabel Smith (no relation) and I are the only remaining Trustees from the original group of eight that formed the HCT. The current group, with assistance from Michael Lach, our Land Protection Specialist from The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, has made great strides in the past two years. Of course, the funds provided by the bequests from William Hacker and others have been instrumental in enabling HCT to fulfill its mission of preserving forever the woods, wetlands and other natural areas throughout Harwich.

Since January 1, 2001 the HCT has helped to protect more than 100 acres of land. This land has been received by lifetime gifts, bequests, conservation easements and outright purchases. To date, HCT has secured over 240 acres of protected open space! The two most recent acquisitions mesh well with HCT's plan to protect our fragile water resources by preserving open space.

**CHARISMATIC MONTE SMITH LEAVES HIS HOME ON 2.63 ACRES TO HCT.** The first is a bequest by Lamont Eldridge Smith, III of his home on 2.63 acres next to wetland which drains to the Herring River in North Harwich. The bequest is subject to a life estate for the benefit of his partner, but we know the property is still in good, responsible and loving hands until it becomes ours outright.

Continued on page 2

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: PROTECTING KATIE'S POND AND THE HERRING RIVER (Cont'd)

Set back from Main Street, Monte's house and his beloved Pine Lawn gardens are shaded by tall trees. Many songbirds frequent the grounds and in the spring, one can hear the familiar Cape Cod cry of gulls searching for alewives migrating through the gently winding Herring River. By protecting this property from future development, HCT will help protect the water quality of the Herring River.

To get a sense of this generous man and the land's history, here's a quote from the playbill of the Cape Playhouse on Route 6A in Dennis where he served as business manager from 1967 to 1977:

"A gentleman always, he had a genuine unpretentious charm. He typified casual elegance long before the restaurant industry discovered the term. Always well liked and attractive in a preppy way with his suntans, suede Gucci loafers (never socks) and his little Mustang rag top, he projected a perfect image for the Playhouse. His little Cape house with its lovely gardens was the setting for many wonderful parties often on opening night in the years when the Playhouse Restaurant was closed. He passed away in late November, 2001. Cape Codder to the end, his ashes were scattered in his beloved gardens at Pine Lawn on May 11th."

We take this opportunity to express our great appreciation to Monte Smith, Steve Little and their North Harwich friends for understanding our mission and the faith they have placed in us.

**8.7 ACRES ON KATIE'S POND.** The second parcel of land preserved forever is 8.7 acres bordered by nearly 600 feet of Katie's Pond on the east and about 600 feet of Cape Cod Rail Trail (bikepath) on the west. This land was among the top 10 priority properties out of 200 parcels evaluated for natural resource importance in HCT's Priority Open Space Project. The land lies north of 34 acres of town conservation land known as Island Pond on which HCT also holds a conservation restriction. HCT may have a chance to connect foot paths in the Island Pond area with the Katie's Pond property as well as the bikepath to create a larger walking loop.

By preserving this land, HCT has helped protect about 25% of the coastal plain pondshore, which is considered a globally rare habitat. The pond offers shelter for winter-

ing waterfowl like bufflehead ducks while its high wooded hillside hosts white-tailed deer, songbirds and raptors. A great blue heron has been seen poking around the property's small freshwater wetland, which eventually drains to Coy's Brook. This property not only has high wildlife habitat value, but is also significant for protecting the water quality of Coy's Brook, which is the major tributary to the Cape's second largest river system, namely Harwich's very own Herring River.

This property was acquired by purchase from the estate of Dorothy Rose. We appreciate that the Rose family approached us relative to this property rather than have it developed into house lots. They, and we, believe it is too important a parcel to have been developed and HCT's ownership will help protect Katie's Pond.

We are making a difference. And we no longer figuratively feel like Don Quixote tilting at those windmills... thanks to all of you who continue to support our efforts. Keep up the good work!

R.S.



The 8.7-acre purchase on Katie's Pond includes nearly 600 feet of coastal plain pondshore, a globally rare habitat.

HCT recently preserved 8.7 acres bordered on the west by 600 feet of Cape Cod Rail Trail.



## SAVE MONOMOY RIVER CAMPAIGN UPDATE

On July 21st, Barbara and Charles Birdsey hosted a cocktail reception at their home on Pleasant Bay to benefit HCT's Save Monomoy River campaign. A great time was shared by all gathered for an even greater cause. As you know, the campaign goal is to purchase and preserve forever 42.5 acres of rolling woodland stretched along a half-mile of the Monomoy River, which flows into Pleasant Bay.

HCT is hoping to raise \$3.5 million to match the Town of Harwich Land Bank contribution of \$3.5 million, for a combined total of \$7 million. So far, thanks to HCT funds and citizen donations, \$650,000 has been raised. We have \$2.85 million to go, and we can do it with your help!

The Trust is still searching for that Open Space Angel who is willing to take a leadership role by pledging or donating anywhere from \$250,000 to \$1 million, so we can really leapfrog to our \$3.5 million goal. Maybe it's you or someone you know. Maybe the Angel will wish to remain anonymous or be featured on Larry King Live (we can't promise the latter).

But we can promise that preserving this 42.5-acre property will help safeguard public drinking water, link together 107 acres of open space, save scenic views along Route 28, and protect Pleasant Bay's water quality. Let's make it happen!

## NOW VISIT US ONLINE!

See nifty photos of HCT's protected open space,  
Learn more about the Save Monomoy River campaign,  
Learn how a conservation restriction can help you save land & taxes  
at

**[www.HarwichConservationTrust.org](http://www.HarwichConservationTrust.org)**

Designed and maintained by Doug Walker at Cape Cod Recreation, the site features lots of information on our current projects, the land we protect, who we are, photos, and technical information such as how a Conservation Restriction works. We are grateful to Doug for his donation of time and expertise to get our site launched!

Since our founding in 1988, HCT has purchased and received donations of land, as well as secured conservation restrictions to protect over 240 acres in Harwich. As a private, non-profit (501-C-3) organization we are not affiliated with the Town, but we have participated in a number of joint ventures to protect valuable open space.

There are links on the site for: making donations; ordering Lee W. Baldwin's wonderful collection of nature writings titled *Cape Cod at Three Miles an Hour*; and information about the tax-saving and land protection benefits of conservation restrictions. To receive on-line open space updates, send HCT your email address using the web site's handy email link: [ContactHCT@attbi.com](mailto:ContactHCT@attbi.com).

**Check it out and tell your friends!**

## OPEN SPACE TRIVIA

- ✦ *Each of the Cape's fifteen towns has its own private, non-profit land trust.*
- ✦ *The Cape's land trusts have permanently preserved a combined total of over 5,000 acres of open space on our fragile peninsula.*
- ✦ *Founded in 1988, the Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT) is the Cape's youngest land trust.*
- ✦ *Since 1988, HCT has secured over 240 acres of protected open space throughout the town of Harwich.*
- ✦ *In 2001, the Harwich Conservation Trust preserved over 96 acres of open space, more than any other Cape land trust during the same year.*
- ✦ *Since 1998, over 2,500 acres have been acquired on Cape Cod with nearly \$65 million in Town Land Bank funds.*
- ✦ *As of 1997, there were less than 12,000 vacant upland acres remaining on the Cape.*
- ✦ *Remaining Town Land Bank funds could buy less than 10% of the remaining vacant upland.*
- ✦ *Over time, protecting open space will depend more and more on evolving land acquisition partnerships between land trusts, towns, state and federal agencies, and most importantly, conservation-minded landowners.*
- ✦ *Land acquisition funds could also be stretched through bargain sales, conservation restrictions and land donations from property owners.*

(Sources: Cape Cod Commission and  
The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc.)

## HCT WINETASTING DINNER

The Harwich Conservation Trust will hold its EIGHTH ANNUAL GALA WINETASTING DINNER, 5:30 to 8:30 pm on **Saturday, November 16, 2002 at the 400 East Restaurant**, in the Harwich East Plaza on the corner of Routes 39 & 137 in East Harwich.

Once again, the challenge will be to equal or surpass the great quality of food, wine and good times that everyone has enjoyed in the past. Can we do it? We think so! The menu will be developed in the months ahead, with several changes and improvements to the format being contemplated. Advance payment will be requested to avoid congestion at the door, and we are planning a change to the food presentation and courses. We hope to have a menu available by early October so be sure to check it out!

As usual, the excellent food prepared by the chefs at the 400 East, the interesting and unusual wine selections, presentation and commentary by Bruce Gibson of Harwich Spirits Shoppe, and this year's orchestrated fun, cheer and prize drawings, all promise to make for yet another memorable dinner.

Soon we'll be sampling the wines, tweaking the menu and collecting the door prizes. Come enjoy them all with a wonderful group of people, your friends and neighbors! Learn a little about wine and its lingo, as well as HCT's Save Monomoy River campaign to preserve 42.5 acres of beautiful woodland stretched along the Monomoy River, which flows into Pleasant Bay. Take home one of the many free raffle prizes, and support a great cause while having a great time!

The price this year will be \$65 per person, payable in advance, with all funds going to support the HCT's efforts to conserve open space especially the 42.5-acre Monomoy River property in East Harwich. **THERE ARE ONLY 75 SEATS AVAILABLE.** Seating will be reserved on a first-come-first-served basis.

For reservations and information,  
call 508-432-3997.



## WATCH FOR HCT'S NEW SIGNS!

Watch for the Trust's brand new snazzy sign on Lothrop Avenue highlighting the Coy's Brook Woodlands, 30 acres of protected open space with trails offering distant marsh views from tranquil pine woods. If you would like a trail guide to the scenic area's walking paths, just look for a free trail guide at the Brooks Free Library, Harwich Community Center, Harwich Town Offices, or call Michael Lach at 508-362-3422.

Look for HCT's sign on the east side of Bank Street by the historic Bank Street Bogs, over 60 acres of open space protected in June 2001. There's also a new sign near the southern end of Lothrop Avenue at



HCT's Lee Baldwin Nature Walk where AmeriCorps volunteers are busy completing a wheelchair accessible boardwalk. And, of course, keep an eye out for HCT's other smaller signs, adorned with the pine cone logo in the middle, which mark the location of more lands preserved forever throughout Harwich.

## Volunteers needed for the HARWICH CRANBERRY HARVEST FESTIVAL to staff the gates on behalf of HCT on SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2002

from 12:30 pm - 4 pm

Please call Nancy Jennings at 508-432-4476 for details.

*For its help in past festivals HCT has received up to \$1,000!*

### HARWICH CONSERVATION TRUST BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Marilyn Barry  
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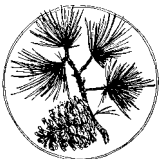
### HARWICH CONSERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER STAFF

(508) 432-3997

Virginia Iannini, Michael Lach, Hugh Millar, Edward Rubel, Isabel Smith, Robert Smith

*New contributors always welcome!*

*Meets every third Thursday at  
Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank in Harwich Port.*



*For the Land's Sake*

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P.O. Box 205  
Harwich Port, Massachusetts 02646

*Return Service Requested*

**Winetasting Dinner:  
November 16th  
(see page 3)**

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