



Taunton River, Raynham

Wildlands Nears 50 as Plymouth Turns 400

“America’s Hometown” milestone inspires reflection on Wildlands’ place in Plymouth over the last 47 years.

As Plymouth celebrates its quatercentenary this year, we at Wildlands feel prompted to reflect on our organization’s (almost) half-century anniversary and relatively rapid evolution within that period. When Wildlands Trust was first formed in 1973 as the Plymouth County Wildlands Trust, we were the creation of a passionate cadre of volunteers motivated to action by profound changes occurring in Plymouth. These changes included the arrival of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station and intensive residential growth and its consequent environmental, infrastructural, and fiscal impacts. Our founders shared a deep conviction that these and other changes posed a significant threat to Plymouth’s ecology and quality of life. With much zeal and dedication, but little in the way of financial resources, our founders accomplished much as a volunteer-driven entity. With no staff to rely on, they had no choice but to assume complete responsibility for every component of a land trust’s operations, including administration, land protection, stewardship and fundraising.



Helen Philbrick and fellow Wildlands directors survey the land at Captain David Cushman, Jr. Preserve.

Eventually, it became apparent that in order for Wildlands to grow and take the next step toward realizing larger ambitions, it needed full-time staff. The hiring of our first executive director, Allan Leggett, in the early 1990’s was the beginning of our transformation from an all-volunteer organization to a staff-driven organization. That transformation subsequently included a name change, from

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Back to Basics

Protecting nature and open spaces for people and wildlife is the service Wildlands Trust has provided for you, your family and your community since 1973. Our world has changed a lot in those 47 years, but nature's power to enrich our lives has stayed constant. These days of social distancing highlight the importance of all people, regardless of their zip code, having access to the safe, no-cost, restorative therapy that nature delivers. The opposite of distancing is connecting. So, during these challenging days that require us to distance from people, make sure you get out and connect with nature. Take to the trails in these uncertain times and Wildlands Trust will be there for you, as we have for the past 47 years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Grey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Karen Grey
President

"In wildness is the preservation of the world."
~ Henry David Thoreau

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Acquisition Highlight

Ja-Mar Farm Pre-Acquisition, Middleborough

In January, Wildlands completed the pre-acquisition of Ja-Mar Farm in Middleborough. After acquiring the land in October 2018, Wildlands held the property until the town was ready to purchase it this year.

Encompassing 20 acres of scenic open fields along the Nemasket River, Ja-Mar Farm was a long-standing preservation priority for the town because of its commanding river views, prominent location along the lower Nemasket River corridor, high-quality agricultural soils and important habitat for multiple rare species.



Ja-Mar Farm
20 acres | Middleborough

- Rare Species Habitat
- River Frontage
- Watershed Protection



Meet Our Board: Sam Chapin

Sam Chapin has deep roots in the community and in Wildlands Trust, his ancestors having built the Davis-Douglas farm in the early 20th century. He served on Wildlands' board in the 1990s, then joined the board again

in 2012 (serving currently as its chair) and chaired on the Davis-Douglas Farm Building Committee. He is a civil engineer who works for a national environmental consulting company. Before embarking on his current career, he was a scuba diving instructor, a wildlife warden in Florida and a carpenter specializing in 17th century carpentry. He has been active in local government, neighborhood associations, is an amateur birder and enjoys preserving open space.



Meet Our Board: Sandy Olney

A recent addition to Wildlands' board of trustees, Sandy Olney is from Duxbury via Sausalito, California and Marblehead. A project manager at LandVest, Sandy has appraised conservation restrictions

and land acquisitions in which Wildlands served as the donee organization. An admirer of Wildlands' work, Sandy recognized the impact Wildlands has on land protection in the region and wanted to take part in our efforts. With an understanding of the unique, natural spaces of Southeastern Massachusetts, Sandy is looking forward to learning more about the natural history of the area and working with fellow board members and Wildlands staff.

Brockton Audubon Preserve Brockton

Give the Gift of Nature to a Healthcare Worker in Your Life.

It's no secret that spending time outdoors boosts your health and wellbeing. In fact, some doctors prescribe time in nature as a form of preventative medicine. Now, more than ever, strengthening our connection to nature is imperative to keep our communities healthy and to lessen the strain on our healthcare system.

Healthcare workers are there for us when we are at our best and our worst, and because they always have our health in mind, what better way to say "thank you", than by helping them stay healthy.

When you join or renew your Wildlands membership (before July 1, 2020), you will be able to gift a free 1-year membership to a healthcare worker you care about.

Whether it's decompressing on our trails after a long day at work or participating in one of our wellness-based programs, those who spend so much time caring for us can take time to care for themselves with Wildlands Trust.

Grant Funds Student Projects in Brockton

High school students tackle water quality and urban forests projects with Wildlands thanks to generous funding.

For nearly a decade, Wildlands Trust has collaborated with the city of Brockton to assist with open space conservation, environmental education and green infrastructure development. We are especially proud of our work with Brockton youth — coaching Brockton High School's (BHS) Envirothon team, leading many youth groups projects at Stone Farm Conservation Area and Brockton Audubon Preserve, and working on youth stewardship projects. In the fall of 2019, Wildlands sought to expand youth engagement efforts and now, with grant support from the Dorr Foundation, we are launching two new student-led projects.



Teachers participating in the Our Changing Forests Project gather around forester Fiona Jevon (far right) at their first training in Petersham, MA (August 2019).

The Urban Forest Watch study, a part of Harvard Forest's statewide Our Changing Forests Project, commenced in the fall of 2019 at Brockton Audubon Preserve and Stone Farm Conservation Area, where Wildlands staff set up study sites and BHS students recorded data. Local students will continue to monitor these sites and submit gathered data to Harvard Forest throughout this multi-year study, addressing these two questions:

1. How do forests grow and change over time in response to different environments and land use?
2. How will forest compositions and growth respond to future natural and human-caused disturbances?

Wildlands is also collaborating with the BHS science department to pilot a water-quality study at Flagg Pond on the school grounds. Following a two-pronged approach, this year's Envirothon team will sample and analyze pond water to determine its overall health, while an environmental science class will work on a vegetative analysis of the pond shoreline to identify invasive and native plant species, as well as examine the pond's buffer zone. Ultimately the work performed by the student cohort will yield a report outlining the state of Flagg Pond and suggested methods for potential restoration projects.

Hoyt-Hall Conservation Area, Plymouth

Wellness at Wildlands

With research showing the positive impact of green spaces on communities, the demand for wellness-based activities is growing and Wildlands is here to meet it.

Wellness is everywhere these days, both as a buzzword for healthy living and as a focus of scientific research. Often used in place of “healthiness”, “wellness” encompasses a broader sense of health and includes both the body and the mind, with a focus on effort and intention. Countless studies have shown that access to and time spent in nature can improve the wellness of individuals and communities. In the 2013 study

Improving Health and Wellness through Access to Nature, the American Public Health Association found that “people of all ages and abilities enjoy higher levels of health and well-being when they have nature nearby.”



Kayakers enjoy the sights along the Indian Head River during the Solstice Sunset Paddle (June 2018).

At the heart of the conservation movement is the idea that all people should be able to enjoy nature regardless of their ability to own land. This is why all Wildlands Trust properties are free to visit and open to all, and why Wildlands offers programming aimed at connecting our communities to our shared landscapes to practice wellness while connecting with nature. Members and nonmembers can join a variety of yoga and meditation workshops at Wildlands Trust all year long, as well as guided hikes and other recreational programming offered.



Grace Junek leads a packed vinyasa flow class in the Community Conservation Barn.

John Muir once said, “In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.” A few summers ago as a group was practicing meditation atop Big Point at Halfway Pond, a bald eagle swooped down in front of them, just feet away from the bluff’s edge. When you go into nature to practice wellness, you may be surprised by what you find both outside and within. To check out upcoming wellness programs at Wildlands, visit wildlandstrust.org/events.

A Generous Donor By Any Other Name

As Shakespeare teaches us, the significance of a person or an action should be taken at face value with little bearing on the name we put upon it. That being said, Wildlands’ Development Committee has decided to move to a gender-neutral identity for our circle of generous donors. What we have heretofore referred to as the Chairman’s Council will now be known as the “Wildlands Leadership Council.”

What has not changed? As a member of the Leadership Council you are the backbone of Wildlands Trust. We have built our organizational capacity and broad community impact through your generosity. Today, Wildlands protects over 275 parcels of conservation land across the region because you invest in what matters to you. As we are learning today in these challenging times, the lands you and others have protected have immense societal value and meaning. What we are also learning is that there is still much to be done to meet the protected land needs of our communities. We value your partnership and hope you will continue to invest in our work.

Thank you for your extraordinary foresight and generosity.

the Plymouth County Wildlands Trust to Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts, as well as an expansion of our geographic focus. Formerly focused on Plymouth County, we expanded our coverage area to include Bristol County and Norfolk County. (As you probably have noted, we changed our name again in 2011 to the simplified "Wildlands Trust").



Wildlands' newly renovated office in Plymouth with the foundation of the Community Conservation Barn in the background (2014).

The presence of full-time staff also proved transformative for the scope of our land protection work. Initially focused primarily on accepting land donations, that scope has broadened to encompass just about every other tool in the land protection "toolbox", including Conservation Restrictions, "bargain sales" (wherein land is sold at less than its market value), pre-acquisitions and bequests. Although our ambitions have expanded, we are always aware of the reality that we can best enhance our effectiveness through strategic partnerships. We count numerous state agencies among our partners, including the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Game, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, as well as other nonprofit organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and Mass Audubon.

Perhaps our most consistent and active partners are the many towns in our region that have adopted the Community

Preservation Act (CPA). Passed by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2000, the CPA has been the most significant catalyst to locally driven land preservation in Massachusetts in decades, possibly ever. Dozens of outstanding properties would have been lost to development without the resources the CPA provides. One of many examples that come to mind is Plymouth's Center Hill Preserve, which includes 28 acres of beachfront on Cape Cod Bay. Although the town successfully leveraged federal and state funding for the project, it first had to put up all of the funds needed to purchase the land, and no other entity was willing or able to stand in that role. The CPA, adopted by Plymouth in 2002, provided the town with the necessary funding.

In no small part due to our range of successful partnerships, Wildlands' protected lands portfolio now encompasses over 9,000 acres in 36 towns throughout Southeastern Massachusetts. Our core mission of land protection remains intact and as vital as ever; however, our move to Davis-Douglas Farm (DDF) in 2014 ushered in a new and exciting era that has allowed us to expand our profile and our ability to serve the Plymouth community and beyond. In addition to the refurbished farmhouse that is now our office headquarters in Plymouth, DDF also includes the Community Conservation Barn, a 100-person capacity building that is the epicenter of our on-site programming. With the welcoming space provided by the Barn, we have become a destination in a way not possible with our former Duxbury location.

With three-to-four offerings per week, our programming now encompasses everything from lectures to yoga to a

wide variety of hikes and walks for all ages and abilities. We also pursue a range of outreach initiatives beyond our doorstep. Following our acquisition of Brockton Audubon Preserve in 2012, we have gradually become more active in our coverage area's most populous city. Our outreach and engagement efforts in Brockton include the Greening the Gateway Cities Program, a successful tree-planting program in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and a thriving partnership with Brockton High School on several student-centered learning programs and projects.

In conjunction with our ongoing land protection, programming, educational and stewardship efforts, we are also working to promote Wildlands' future viability. We are fortunate to have an energetic, dedicated and resourceful board of directors who hail from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds while sharing the common interest in the betterment of Wildlands Trust. Our board members work closely with our president, Karen Grey, and donor relations manager, Sue Chamberlain, toward ensuring that our financial resources will always be commensurate with our responsibilities and ambitions.



The Community Conservation Barn at Davis-Douglas Farm in Plymouth serves as a gathering place for community members during programs and events.

So, how will the next half-century unfold? We are practical optimists by nature, but realize that many challenges lay ahead.

Thank You for Your Contribution

Wildlands Trust relies on private philanthropy to fund our work to save land throughout the region. We would like to thank those who have recently given in honor or memory of a loved one. Your gifts help us permanently protect the natural beauty of Southeastern Massachusetts.

In Memory Of:

MARGARET BERGERON

- LeAnne Atwood | *Buzzards Bay*

PAUL S. & VIVIAN BOWEN

- Paul Bowen | *Rockland*

MARTHA BRAMHALL

- Anne Bramhall (Bramhall Family) | *Boston*

STAN BRIGGS

- William & Janet Fairbanks | *Scituate*

KATHERINE COADY

- LeAnne Atwood | *Buzzards Bay*

LYDIA G. COCHRANE

- John Cochrane & Elizabeth Fama | *Palo Alto, CA*

DEBORAH WOOD DAVIS

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- William Bell | *Saco, ME*

THE RIPLEY SISTERS

- Susanne Lucas & Walter Morrison | *Plymouth*

DAVE WECHTER

- Jacqueline Perkins | *Plymouth*

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We are increasingly aware that climate change is occurring, but exactly how it will affect and possibly reshape the ecology, economy and culture of Plymouth and our region remains yet unknown. That reality acknowledged, we do know this: we look forward to serving the region's open space and conservation needs for at least the next 400 years and intend to be around for that celebration, whatever it may be called.



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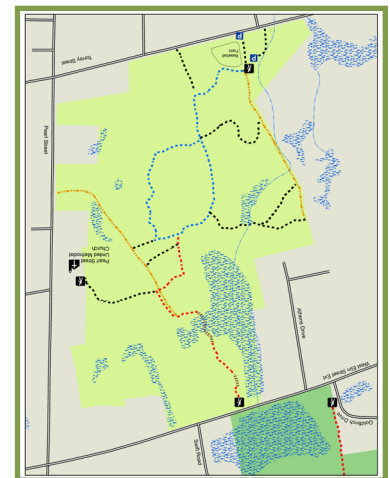


Property Highlight

Stone Farm Conservation Area | Brockton

Faced with a need to adapt to climate change, communities are striving for resiliency under the threat of higher temperatures, more rain and frequent droughts. Urban areas, often with a larger percentage of impervious surfaces and less open space, are at a greater disadvantage when it comes to climate resilience. Fortunately, many cities have started to adopt green infrastructure projects as a solution to these challenges and as an avenue to maintaining healthy populations. For Brockton, the effort to implement green infrastructure through open space conservation is alive and well, with city-owned Stone Farm Conservation Area serving as a shining example.

For the past three years, Wildlands has led a complete restoration of Stone Farm, providing significant clean-up and tree work, trail improvements, new amenities and the necessary outreach to raise awareness of this incredible natural resource. The preserve's 105 acres contains over 2 miles of trails, traversing woody uplands and beech tree groves, while following along old fieldstone walls harkening back to the farm that once occupied the land. With assistance from a private foundation and a MassTrails grant, Wildlands constructed over 300 feet of boardwalk to lead visitors through sections of wetlands, as well as designed and erected interpretive signs to educate hikers on wetland ecosystems and their importance in protecting biodiversity and ground water.



Land Stewardship Coordinator Eamon Horrigan leads the way through Stone Farm Conservation Area during Brockton Nature Festival (October 2019).

Why was it so important for Wildlands to take on the Stone Farm restoration? Stone Farm Conservation Area and Wildlands' Brockton Audubon Preserve make up a 231-acre block of urban forest and wetlands. Together, these parcels comprise the second largest parcel of open space in this environmental justice community of nearly 100,000 people. Today, this land makes a vital contribution to the surrounding neighborhoods, helping to regulate temperatures, manage storm water runoff and provide habitat for wildlife. Equally as important, these protected spaces serve to connect the surrounding community to nature. If you have yet to explore Brockton's urban sanctuaries, please join Wildlands on a guided hike or hit the trails on your own. For more information and to check on upcoming hikes and programs, visit wildlandstrust.org.