

Helping people discover and protect Buzzards Bay!

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West Falmouth residents step up to stop nitrogen pollution

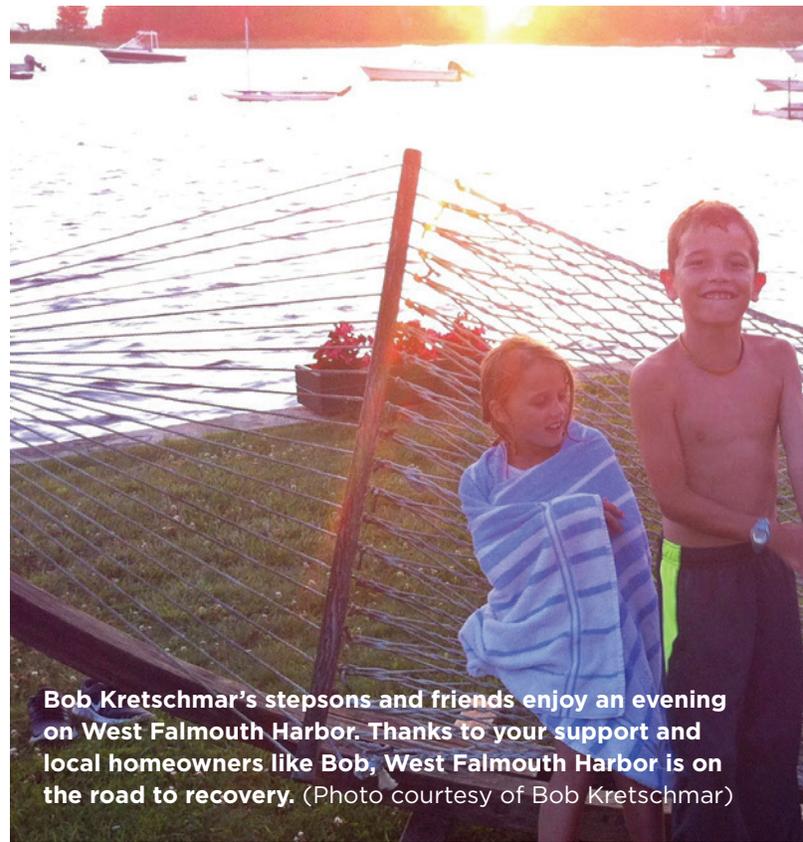
Bob Kretschmar didn't give a lot of thought to the cesspool at his family's summer cottage on West Falmouth Harbor. But he did notice when the harbor's health started to fail more than 10 years ago.

Eelgrass began to die. In its place grew algae that Kretschmar had never seen before. "It's a nasty green slime that attaches to the bottom," he described. "You can see it at low tide covering the beach."

The algae was caused by nitrogen pollution coming from the Falmouth wastewater treatment plant and home septic systems — just like the one at Kretschmar's cottage.

This was a problem. West Falmouth Harbor is important to the Kretschmar family. His daughters spent summers at the cottage growing up, and today still visit with their children. Bob himself continues to summer there with his wife and twin stepsons.

When Kretschmar heard about a pilot project to upgrade local septic systems to reduce nitrogen pollution, he decided to take action. The project is coordinated by the



Bob Kretschmar's stepsons and friends enjoy an evening on West Falmouth Harbor. Thanks to your support and local homeowners like Bob, West Falmouth Harbor is on the road to recovery. (Photo courtesy of Bob Kretschmar)

Coalition and the town of Falmouth and funded with a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. It is also the latest step in our efforts to restore West Falmouth Harbor. Three years ago, we helped set firm nitrogen limits for the wastewater plant. Now we're speeding up the harbor's recovery by offering a subsidy and support to homeowners who want to upgrade their septic systems.

Understanding the impacts of a warming Bay

Every summer for the last 24 years, a team of over 100 volunteers has measured Buzzards Bay's vital signs including oxygen, water clarity, salinity, and algae. This unique data set is now providing important insight into the impacts of climate change.

Through a collaborative research project, the Coalition, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Marine Biological Laboratory, and the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program are reviewing this data and expanding the monitoring season to uncover relationships between warmer water and nitrogen pollution. This project is funded by the MacArthur Foundation.

Baywatchers data shows that in some harbors around Buzzards Bay, the average water temperature has risen more than 3°F in the last quarter century.





“We were looking for the impetus to upgrade our system,” he said. “The grant has been an incentive, but even more important has been all the advice and help I’ve gotten from Coalition staff.” So far, 17 of Bob’s neighbors have signed up to upgrade their septic systems under the program. The results will produce important pollution reductions to help restore the harbor and provide a model for dozens of similar areas all along Buzzards Bay.

This summer, you made it possible for the Coalition to tackle water pollution problems in communities across the region, including:

- Celebrating a **legal victory to protect Buzzards Bay from oil spills** when the Coast Guard withdrew its challenge to the Massachusetts Oil Spill Prevention Act.
- Advocating for a Mattapoisett marina to **clean up Styrofoam pollution** littering Brandt Island Cove marsh.
- Leading **in-depth research on nitrogen pollution** from cranberry bogs.
- Pushing the Mattapoisett Conservation Commission to **take action against wetland violations** near Eel Pond.



Buzzards Bay Coalition is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance.

Why we give to the Annual Fund

Tim and Robin Shields from Marion value how the Coalition is helping to foster a love of the Bay and local environment in their children. Says Tim, “Our family values and supports the Coalition because they protect something that is so special to us, and they also provide numerous opportunities for us to connect our children with the outdoors. Their great staff does this in a way that makes learning about the environment fun and empowers the future keepers of the Bay.”

Your gift to the Annual Fund ensures that together we’ll continue the fight to protect and restore Buzzards Bay. Give today at www.savebuzzardsbay.org/annualfund



The Shields family enjoying a day on Buzzards Bay.
(Photo courtesy of Tim Shields)

Shaw Farm Trail creates a new gateway to Buzzards Bay

Last December, the Coalition completed the Nasketucket Bay Land Conservation Project, the largest coastal land conservation project on Buzzards Bay in a generation. The project protected 416 acres of forests, fields and farmland near Nasketucket Bay in Fairhaven and Mattapoisett. It also doubled the size of the Nasketucket Bay State Reservation.

This July, the Coalition opened Shaw Farm Trail, a one-mile walking path that connects the state reservation to the popular Phoenix/Mattapoisett bike trail.

The trail begins through a break in the split rail fence at the Mattapoisett/Fairhaven town line. From there, it winds through forests, across streams, and alongside working farm fields. After a mile it connects with the Bridle Path, the state reservation's main trail, which stretches down to the shores of Nasketucket Bay.

All together, the Nasketucket Bay Land Conservation Project and the creation of Shaw Farm Trail are one of the landmark achievements in the Coalition's 28-year history.

Thank you for making this possible!



Two communities come together to celebrate the opening of Shaw Farm Trail. (Photo by Elizabeth Mullaney)

Coalition science, conservation, restoration, and advocacy come together in Westport

In many ways, Westport is a microcosm of the entire Buzzards Bay region: a coastline with beautiful beaches, dunes, and marshes behind which you find rivers, streams, forests, and farmlands. Likewise, the Coalition's work in this community is a great example of our multi-faceted approach to saving Buzzards Bay.

With over 25 water quality sampling sites around Westport, the Coalition has documented the Westport Rivers' growing nitrogen pollution problem. This fall, that data helped the state issue a nitrogen reduction target, called a TMDL, to clean up the Rivers.



Your support helps protect rare species like the sea-run eastern Brook trout. (Photo by Robert Golder)

In addition, we are helping to conserve over 100 acres of land including the coldwater streams that support sea-run brook trout. We're also working with the community to restore the dunes along Beach Avenue and improve public access so all Westport residents can enjoy this special place.



Together, we are protecting the special places in your community, including:

- The **newly restored Acushnet Sawmill** is now open to the public with walking trails, a learning center, and restored wetlands and river banks.
- The plan to **restore the Weweantic River** is under development with a grant from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust.
- A **wild oyster restoration project** is underway in Nasketucket Bay in partnership with the Nature Conservancy.
- We hired **the Coalition's first-ever land stewardship director** as part of our commitment to ongoing management and improvement of lands under our direct care.

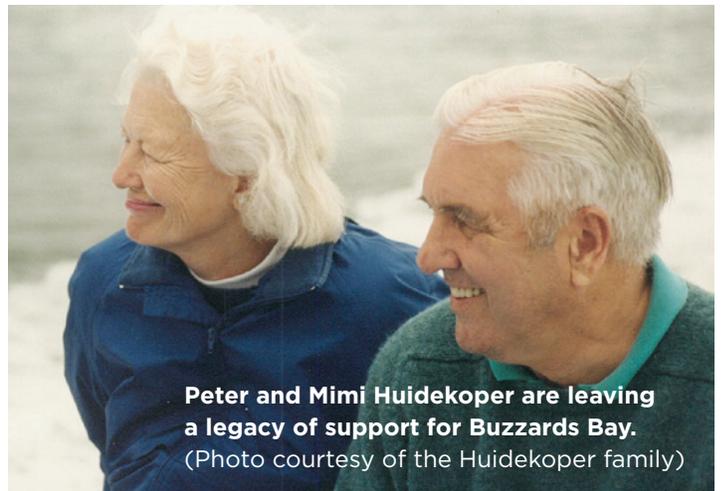


Buzzards Bay Coalition is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Dartmouth family leaves a legacy for Buzzards Bay

Peter and Mimi Huidekoper loved Buzzards Bay. They met on the shores of the Bay in the 1940s and spent every summer in Dartmouth through 66 years of marriage. To show their commitment to a healthy Bay, they chose to include the Coalition in their will. Peter and Mimi both passed away recently, but their forethought is helping preserve the Bay for their children and grandchildren.

To join Peter, Mimi, and many others who have included the Coalition in their will or estate plan, visit www.savebuzzardsbay.org/legacygiving or contact Marc Bellanger at (508) 999-6363 ext. 202.



Peter and Mimi Huidekoper are leaving a legacy of support for Buzzards Bay.
(Photo courtesy of the Huidekoper family)

Protecting land and expanding discovery in Onset

On any summer weekend, there are few places around Buzzards Bay that are busier than Onset Village in Wareham. People flock to the beach, head out on the water on fishing charters and canal cruises, or walk among the Victorian homes and storefronts. In coming years, local residents will have another reason to head down to Onset.

With your help, the Coalition is exploring the creation of an Onset Bay Discovery Center: a gateway for exploring and discovering the Bay.

Through the center, the Coalition and partners would offer a wide range of activities including sailing, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, shellfishing, swimming, ecology explorations, and more.

The Onset Bay Discovery Center plan took a major step forward this fall. The residents of Wareham voted to fund the acquisition and permanent conservation of Wickets Island: a picturesque, undeveloped island right in the middle of the Bay. In addition, the Coalition is moving forward to acquire 21 acres of coastal land at Burgess Point, directly across the Bay from Onset Pier.

Stay tuned for more information about how you can help make this vision a reality.



Coalition Outdoor Educator Cassie Lawson leads a Learn to Quahog Bay Adventure on the beach at Burgess Point. Wickets Island is in the background.

Program feature: Buzzards Bay Blueways

In the Buzzards Bay region, water connects us all, from salty coastal areas to the rivers and streams that flow toward the Bay. Now, in partnership with the National Park Service, the Coalition is helping even more people get out on the water by creating a water trail called Buzzards Bay Blueways.

The initiative shares kayak access points and recommended routes for local paddlers from Westport to Woods Hole. Through Buzzards Bay Blueways, we also provide free paddling expeditions to help kids and adults get out on the water.



With your support, more people are getting on the water and exploring our amazing Buzzards Bay.



Family swims and pedals for a healthy Bay

For one family, supporting clean water has become a family affair. In June, 13-year-old Mia Eberstadt participated in the Buzzards Bay Swim with her swim team and raised nearly \$1,000 for clean water. Her family had such a good time at the Swim that her parents, Dorothea and Matthias, formed a team for the Watershed Ride on October 2, pedaling 75 miles from Westport to Woods Hole.

Dorothea says, “As a family, we have a strong commitment to preserve our environment. We were happy to find an organization that keeps the Bay clean and offers ways for us to involve our whole family.”

In 2016, you can join over 500 people who will participate in the Buzzards Bay Swim on June 25 and the Watershed Ride on October 2, along with hundreds more who will cheer them on. Discounted registration for the 2016 Swim is now open at www.savebuzzardsbay.org/swim.



“The Buzzards Bay Swim was a great bonding experience for my swim team,” said Mia, at left with Ava Sirignano. “I’m sure we will make this a yearly event.”

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Dedicated to the restoration, protection and sustainable use and enjoyment of our irreplaceable Bay and its watershed. The Coalition works to improve the health of the Bay ecosystem for all through education, conservation, research and advocacy.



Working to protect and restore coastal, river, and drinking water quality for the people of Westport, Dartmouth, New Bedford, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Rochester, Mattapoissett, Marion, Wareham, Carver, Middleborough, Plymouth, Bourne, Falmouth, and Gosnold.



Restoration Ecologist Sara Quintal leads a tour of the newly opened Acushnet Sawmill. Come see for yourself! Visit www.savebuzzardsbay.org/AcushnetSawmill for details.



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