

buzzards  
**BAY**

COALITION

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIR



*The Acushnet Sawmill restoration, Nasketucket Bay land preservation, and West Falmouth septic system program... each of these are models, not end points. They point the way to so much exciting work ahead.*

IT IS OUR GREAT PLEASURE TO SHARE THIS 2015 ANNUAL REPORT with you - our members and supporters – whose outstanding commitment to our success made possible such amazing achievements over the past year.

The accomplishments featured in this report are wonderful investments in the future of our Bay. And they point the way to so much exciting work ahead.

They are models, not end points.

The **Acushnet Sawmill** is not simply the best waterfront park created in Greater New Bedford in decades; it is a template we can use to restore fish and wetlands at dozens of similarly-damaged sites on all of the Bay's rivers. The protection of 411 coastal acres on **Nasketucket Bay** is not simply the biggest land preservation victory on Buzzards Bay in a generation; we can apply the public-private funding model we created to thousands of new acres of threatened land. The installation of 20 new septic systems on **West Falmouth Harbor** is not simply another step in the ongoing restoration of that degraded waterway; neighborhoods all along the Bay can apply this model to select technologies and engage homeowners to create workable solutions to local wastewater pollution.

These successes were built around the Coalition's unique approach: strong collaborations with towns, neighborhoods, and landowners; a commitment to seeking out new ways to solve tough problems; and unabashed doggedness.

The challenges facing our Bay require nothing less.

Coalition founder George Hampson's last day on the Bay last fall was spent on our boat, the *R/V Buzzards Baykeeper*®, teaching staff how to monitor the health of the tiny creatures that live in the Bay's bottom. Having tracked these "canaries in the coalmine" for more than half a century, George had become alarmed at the dramatic decline in both the total numbers but also diversity of these critters. As was his nature, George – marine scientist, local advocate, and beloved teacher – wanted to empower the Coalition to continue his work. And we will.

We hope you share our pride in the expanding impact and scale of the Coalition's accomplishments. None of it would have been possible without your strong support. Thank you!

Handwritten signatures of Mark Rasmussen and Laura Ryan Shachof. Mark's signature is on the left and Laura's is on the right.

Mark Rasmussen  
President / Buzzards Baykeeper

Laura Ryan Shachof  
Chair, Board of Directors

### ON THE COVER

Buzzards Bay's namesake ospreys have made a remarkable comeback in recent years due to a successful ban on the use of the toxic pesticide DDT.

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## REMEMBERING GEORGE HAMPSON

The Buzzards Bay Coalition was deeply saddened by the loss of George Hampson in October. George was a founder of the Coalition, an early chair of our Board of Directors, and a very close friend to us over the past three decades. As a lifelong marine biologist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, George's influence established the strong commitment to sound science that underpins all of the Coalition's work today.

Visit our website, [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org), to view a memorial video that celebrates George's role in the creation and life of this organization that meant so much to him.



# ON THE WATER

**WE ALL SHARE THE SAME VISION FOR BUZZARDS BAY: A SCENIC SHORELINE WITH** safe swimming beaches, open shellfish beds filled with quahogs, and healthy waters where fish and wildlife thrive. Our Bay is resilient; with sound science, the right laws, and proper enforcement, it can bounce back from the harmful effects of nitrogen and other pollution.

Through science and advocacy, the Buzzards Bay Coalition is leading the way to protect and restore our local waterways for fish, shellfish, wildlife, and most importantly, people.



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## CHALLENGE

By far, the most serious and difficult challenge facing Bay restoration is nitrogen pollution. It leaches from our septic systems, seeps from our streets, lawns, and cranberry bogs, and flows from aging sewer plants into the Bay's sensitive harbors and coves. The Bay also faces challenges from bacterial contamination, toxic pollution, and the constant threat of oil spills.

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## STRATEGY

For 25 years, the Coalition has kept a watchful eye on Buzzards Bay's health through our award-winning Baywatchers water quality monitoring program. But we don't just study the Bay; we put this science to work. Sound science forms the foundation of all of our advocacy efforts to restore and protect clean water.

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## RESULTS

We pursue the restoration and protection of the Bay ecosystem at all levels of government: local, state, and federal. We've secured limits on nitrogen pollution, developed new laws to make the Bay safer from oil spills, and fought for a full cleanup of toxic pollution in New Bedford Harbor.

# Cleaning up nitrogen pollution in West Falmouth Harbor

## HOMEOWNERS INSTALLING NEW SEPTIC SYSTEMS TO SLOW ONE OF THE HARBOR'S BIGGEST SOURCES OF NITROGEN POLLUTION

When most people think of Cape Cod, the first thing that comes to mind is water. Swimming, boating, fishing – these are the reasons why thousands of people love visiting the Cape every summer.

But Cape Cod's coastal waters are suffering from too much nitrogen pollution – the greatest long-term threat to the health of Buzzards Bay. Perhaps no place is more aware of the nitrogen pollution problem than West Falmouth Harbor. For the past 20 years, the harbor's health has been in a slow, steady decline. Clumps of green algae often cover the shoreline, and eelgrass has vanished from many parts of the harbor.

Falmouth's wastewater treatment plant was upgraded in 2005 to reduce nitrogen loads to West Falmouth Harbor. Today, septic systems are one of the largest sources of nitrogen pollution. One hundred percent of the homes around the harbor are on septic systems and cesspools, which aren't designed to remove nitrogen at all.

Through an innovative pilot program coordinated by the Coalition in partnership with the town of Falmouth, 20 local homeowners are making a difference for the harbor's health by upgrading their septic systems. Each homeowner is receiving

a \$10,000 subsidy and technical support to upgrade to new technology that reduces nitrogen. By participating in this program, these homeowners are taking action to speed up the harbor's recovery and setting a strong example.

This successful pilot project is a model for dozens of other harbors and coves on Buzzards Bay that are polluted with nitrogen from septic systems. The Coalition will work to bring proactive solutions like this to a community near you.

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### West Falmouth Harbor septic system pilot program

**20** new septic systems are being installed

**2,740** pounds of nitrogen pollution reduced every year!

**4** different septic system technologies used out of 15 evaluated

**\$10,000** subsidy per home, funded by \$250,000 EPA grant

**LEFT** West Falmouth homeowner Bob Kretschmar's twin stepsons love swimming in the harbor outside their family cottage every summer. By upgrading his septic system to a nitrogen-reducing system, Bob is making a difference to speed up the harbor's recovery for future generations to enjoy. (Image: Bob Kretschmar)

In 2015, we continued our ongoing fight against nitrogen pollution in Buzzards Bay, defended the Bay against oil spills, and worked to prevent new pollution from fouling the Bay. You can learn more about our work to protect clean water through science and advocacy on our website, [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



### Analyzing the effects of a warming Bay on water quality

For the first time, the Coalition's Baywatchers monitoring data is being used to evaluate the effects of climate change on the Bay. Using 22 years of data, researchers from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program, and the Marine Biological Laboratory found that average summertime temperatures throughout the Bay have warmed by roughly 4°F since 1992. What's more, the study suggests that warmer water is fueling more algae growth, resulting in decreasing water quality.



### Stopping foam pollution in a Mattapoisett salt marsh

Brandt Island Cove has a brighter future now that owners of a local marina have replaced decaying foam floats that littered a nearby salt marsh with thousands of broken pieces of polystyrene. The Coalition supported the Mattapoisett Conservation Commission in its work to require the marina to remove these outdated floats and clean up the mess they made.



### Advocating for a full, safe cleanup of PCBs in New Bedford Harbor

New Bedford Harbor won a hard-fought battle in the fight to clean up toxic PCB pollution in 2015. With strong community input from the Coalition and others, the U.S. EPA abandoned its plans to bury contaminated sediment directly along the upper estuary's shoreline in large, bulkheaded cells called Confined Disposal Facilities (CDFs). Instead, the toxins will be shipped to a safe, secure disposal facility along with more than half a million cubic yards of contaminated mud from the harbor bottom over the next decade.



### Honoring the guardians of Buzzards Bay

In 2015, the Coalition honored five individuals as Buzzards Bay Guardians, our highest award for outstanding service to Buzzards Bay:

- Paul Niedzwiecki of the Cape Cod Commission for leadership in development of the Cape 208 Water Quality Plan
- Jennifer Howard of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for the preservation of Nasketucket Bay State Reservation
- Massachusetts' Assistant Attorneys General Seth Schofield and Pierce Cray for defense of the Massachusetts Oil Spill Prevention Act
- Joe Costa of the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program for a lifetime of contributions to Bay science and management



*The Wareham wastewater treatment plant discharges its treated sewage into the Agawam River (at the spot seen here): a small, relatively shallow river that's far from Buzzards Bay's open waters. By moving this discharge pipe to a less sensitive location at Massachusetts Maritime Academy, neighborhoods in Wareham, Bourne, and Plymouth can connect to the Bay's best wastewater treatment plant and reduce a significant amount of nitrogen pollution to the upper Bay.*

**ON THE WATER** | *Looking Ahead*

## Expanding world-class wastewater treatment in upper Buzzards Bay

**FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND COLLABORATION BRINGS TOGETHER WAREHAM, BOURNE, PLYMOUTH, AND THE MASSACHUSETTS MARITIME ACADEMY TO REDUCE NITROGEN POLLUTION**

Buzzards Bay's nitrogen pollution problem is huge, and demands bold action from municipalities. Now, a unique regional partnership is bringing together three Buzzards Bay towns – Wareham, Bourne, and Plymouth – and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy to tackle nitrogen pollution in the upper portion of Buzzards Bay.

The project centers around the Wareham wastewater treatment plant – a highly advanced facility that removes far more nitrogen than any other plant in our region. If the Wareham sewer plant moves its discharge pipe out of the Agawam River to a less sensitive location near the Academy, the three towns could expand sewer lines to neighborhoods currently served by septic systems and cesspools. By coming together across town lines, these communities can take advantage of a system that treats wastewater to the best level possible.

These four partners are combining their resources to achieve a common goal: clean water in upper Buzzards Bay. Most importantly, this partnership will serve as a model for other communities grappling with the same nitrogen pollution problems.

The Coalition recently received a \$200,000 grant from the EPA-funded Southeast New England Program for this effort and is now pursuing additional funding to make this innovative project a reality.

*“It will be an opportunity to clean up the rivers in Wareham, to clean up other waterways in the region, and to clean up Buzzards Bay.”*

- Guy Campinha, Wareham Water Pollution Control Facility Director

## IN THE WATERSHED

**WATERSHED PROTECTION IS ABOUT CONSERVING ALL OF THE PARTS OF THE** Buzzards Bay ecosystem – not just its harbors and coves, but its forests, wetlands, rivers, streams, and groundwater. These critical areas provide important habitats, protect our drinking water sources, and act as natural filters for the Bay.

Through watershed protection, the Buzzards Bay Coalition is forever protecting the region’s valuable forests, streams, and wetlands and restoring damaged areas so the Bay ecosystem can thrive.



### CHALLENGE

Just about half of the land in the Buzzards Bay watershed – the 432-square-mile area that drains to the Bay – is undeveloped and unprotected. The fate of these lands is fundamental to our effort to protect clean water. Without saving the most important forests, streams, and wetlands, the Bay cannot survive the harmful effects of poorly planned sprawl development.

### STRATEGY

We pursue a Bay-focused land protection strategy that focuses on the watershed’s most vulnerable forests, streams, and salt marshes – natural areas that the Bay cannot afford to lose. We also restore damaged rivers, wetlands, and streambanks and help towns and land trusts preserve land in every corner of our watershed.

### RESULTS

The Coalition manages the largest land conservation program in southeastern Massachusetts. Since 1998, we’ve protected more than 7,000 acres throughout the Buzzards Bay watershed. We’re also restoring damaged streams, rebuilding wetlands, and creating better access for people to explore the outdoors in their community.

# Celebrating land conservation in Fairhaven and Mattapoisett

## COALITION CAPS FOUR-YEAR NASKETUCKET BAY PROJECT WITH PUBLIC OPENING OF SHAW FARM TRAIL

2015 was a year to celebrate land conservation on Buzzards Bay. And for thousands of people who love the outdoors in our region, 2015 was also a year to share in these celebrations by opening brand new places on the Acushnet River (see page 14) and Nasketucket Bay to get outside and explore.

In July, the Coalition welcomed local, state, and federal officials and community members to stunning views of Nasketucket Bay to mark the completion of the Nasketucket Bay Land Conservation Project. This extraordinary four-year, \$6.25 million initiative has forever protected 416 acres of forests, fields, and coastal farmland in Fairhaven and Mattapoisett – the largest land conservation project on Buzzards Bay’s shores in a generation.

Few coastal bays in Massachusetts have such plentiful natural resources as Nasketucket Bay. That’s due in large part to land conservation. Preserving forests, meadows, and salt marshes around Nasketucket Bay protects the bay’s clean water: its sparkling blue shores, its dense eelgrass meadows, its abundant fish, shellfish, and wildlife populations. Without conservation, this beautiful place could have been lost forever to development.

As part of this project, the Coalition doubled the size of Nasketucket Bay State Reservation and created

a new public trail called Shaw Farm Trail. This mile-long trail created a missing link between the state reservation and the popular bike path that runs through Fairhaven and Mattapoisett. Thousands of local residents can now walk from their homes all the way to the shores of Nasketucket Bay.

By protecting this land, we’re continuing a legacy of conservation on Nasketucket Bay that everybody can celebrate.

### BY THE NUMBERS Nasketucket Bay Land Conservation Project

**226** acres of woods, fields, and streams opened for public recreation

**190** acres of active farmland protected

**5** miles of trails through Nasketucket Bay State Reservation

**\$6.25 million** raised for conservation

**LEFT** Officials from Fairhaven, Mattapoisett, the federal and state governments, and the Coalition celebrated the opening of Shaw Farm Trail at a public ribbon-cutting ceremony in July. Pictured (L-R): Christine Clark (USDA-NRCS, obscured), Mike Gagne (Mattapoisett Town Administrator), Mark Rasmussen, Bob Espindola (Fairhaven Selectman), Philip Denormandie (obscured), Congressman Bill Keating, State Rep. Bill Straus, Matthew Sisk (DCR), and Brendan Annett.

## IN THE WATERSHED | *Highlights of 2015*

In 2015, we continued our role as a regional leader in land conservation by protecting and restoring more of the Bay's special places. You can learn more about our work to conserve land and restore damaged natural areas on our website, [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



### Protecting a landmark island for people in Wareham

Wickets Island is the centerpiece of scenic Onset Bay, a place treasured for its natural shorelines and rich outdoor recreation. In 2015, Wareham residents helped save Wickets Island forever by approving funding for the Coalition to purchase the island. Wickets Island will soon be open to all for swimming, paddling, fishing, quahogging, and exploration.



### Saving a salter stream in Westport

The Coalition is working with the Westport Land Conservation Trust to protect 102 acres of forested land along Angeline Brook. This unique coldwater stream, which flows to the West Branch of the Westport River, is one of the few remaining habitats in southern New England for native sea-run brook trout, or “salters.”



### Supporting barrier beach protection in Westport

At the entrance to Westport Harbor lies a barrier beach that leads out to the dramatic Point of Rocks, or “the Knubble.” This sensitive barrier beach protects the Westport River inlet and provides outstanding views of the Bay. The Coalition has been working to support the town of Westport in restoring the beach's fragile dunes and provide environmentally responsible access for all Westport residents.



*The crumbling remains of a dam sit at the head of tide on the Weweantic River. This structure blocks migration and limits spawning habitat for fish. The Coalition has kicked off a project to restore the river at Horseshoe Mill in Wareham for fish, wildlife, and people.*

**IN THE WATERSHED** | *Looking Ahead*

## Restoring a river for migratory fish in Wareham

**COALITION AIMS TO BRING BACK WEWEANTIC RIVER'S RICH FISH POPULATIONS**

What happens when migratory fish like river herring, eels, and white perch reach the crumbling remains of a dam at the head of tide on the Weweantic River? It's like hitting a wall – and most of these fish just can't get past.

Because of this blockage, fish populations on the Weweantic have been falling for decades. With its rocky riffles and rare tidal mix of fresh and salt water, this spot on the river is critical for spawning fish.

Still, the Weweantic River is home to the most diverse community of migratory fish that exists anywhere on Buzzards Bay. Historically, we know that even Atlantic salmon, shad, and sturgeon lived in this river. There's an opportunity to restore fish communities here on the Bay's largest freshwater river that have been lost everywhere else.

The Coalition has begun a process to restore the river at Horseshoe Mill, where the dam is located. Our vision here is similar to The Sawmill on the Acushnet River (see page 14): restoring critical habitat for fish by reopening both the river and a former industrial site for all.

In December, we kicked off a feasibility study with a public meeting in Wareham. An engineering firm is now developing and examining a variety of restoration alternatives, which we'll present back to the community this year.

*"It's not just that fish love to use this spot – fish need to use this spot, but it's deteriorating and it's limited."*

*- Brendan Annett, Vice President of Watershed Protection*

## WITH PEOPLE

### THE KEY TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY BUZZARDS BAY IS AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY THAT

understands the threats the Bay faces and their role in protecting it. The long-term health of our local environment depends on people knowing, loving, and valuing the Bay as important to their lives.

Through community engagement, the Buzzards Bay Coalition is creating a new generation of Bay stewards: People who understand their place in the Bay ecosystem and support its protection for decades to come.



### CHALLENGE

Buzzards Bay faces a crisis of disengagement. Fewer people today know the Bay, and most children grow up in front of screens instead of on sandy shores. Without connections to the natural world, people have turned a blind eye to the Bay's decline. If we don't address this disengagement, our work will ultimately fail.

### STRATEGY

Connecting people to the Bay is a fundamental part of the Coalition's work. We tackle this crisis of disengagement head-on through outdoor programming, engaging events and workshops, and vibrant print and digital communications. These efforts build stronger connections to our local environment to support the long-term stewardship of Buzzards Bay.

### RESULTS

Every year, thousands discover the Bay as part of our outdoor exploration programs. We're expanding a network of Bay discovery sites where all people can get outside, and giving local decision makers solutions to pressing pollution problems. Through annual events like the Swim and Watershed Ride, we're rebuilding connections to our irreplaceable Bay.

# Increasing outdoor exploration across our region

## THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE GET OUTSIDE AND DISCOVER BUZZARDS BAY WITH THE COALITION

Over the past five years, the Coalition has invested deeply in outdoor exploration programs for youth and adults in our region. And in 2015, more people than ever got outside and discovered forests, beaches, streams, wetlands, and waters on dozens of Bay Adventures and field programs.

Our focus is simple (and fun!): connect more people to the vibrant natural world that lives here on Buzzards Bay and across our watershed through hands-on outdoor exploration.

Last year, we led over 4,000 students on field programs at schools from New Bedford to Falmouth. Kids got muddy in marshes, found frog eggs in vernal pools, and splashed paddles through the water on kayaks. At Minot Forest Elementary School in Wareham, all third- and fourth-graders discovered the forest behind their school on programs with our partners at the Wareham Land Trust. For many, it was the first time they'd ever ventured into these woods.

For adults and families looking to get outside and explore, the Coalition also leads weekly Bay Adventures. These programs are exciting, engaging

outdoor experiences for people of all ages – like “Build Your Own Fishing Pole,” where participants use sticks from the forest to build fishing poles, and then cast their line into a local river. Other popular Bay Adventures include stand-up paddleboarding, seal and seabird watches, and Itty Bitty Bay Explorers, a series for families with young children.

With each person who digs up their first quahog, holds a jumping frog in their hand, and finds a new favorite forest trail to the shore, we're reconnecting our communities to the Bay we cherish.

### BY THE NUMBERS Community Engagement

**1,300** Bay Adventure participants

**4,178** children attended a hands-on field exploration program with their school

**7** school districts where we provided programs for fourth-graders

**8,000** people visited a learning center in New Bedford, Acushnet, or Woods Hole

**LEFT** At The Sawmill in Acushnet, children and adults of all ages are discovering a new side of Buzzards Bay. Since The Sawmill opened in November (see page 14), the Coalition has already led several programs for local schoolchildren, families, birders, and hikers. Here, students from Jireh Swift Elementary School in New Bedford see a crayfish from the Acushnet River for the first time.

## WITH PEOPLE | *Highlights of 2015*

Throughout 2015, people like you took action to protect clean water and support the Coalition's work in communities across our region. You can learn more about these opportunities to swim, ride, volunteer, or attend an event on our website, [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



### Swimming the Bay to celebrate clean water

What do you get when you combine 248 swimmers, 80 dedicated volunteers, and a beautiful day on the Bay? A successful 2015 Buzzards Bay Swim! On June 20, swimmers dove into outer New Bedford Harbor to celebrate clean water and raise \$100,000 for our work. The 23rd annual Buzzards Bay Swim will take place on June 25, 2016.



### Biking for clean water in Buzzards Bay

120 cyclists pedaled across southeastern Massachusetts on October 4, 2015 to show their support for clean water during the ninth annual Buzzards Bay Watershed Ride. The Ride raised more than \$90,000 for the Coalition's work. Don't miss the 10th anniversary Ride on October 2, 2016, which will feature a new 100-mile route and 10-mile family ride.



### Volunteering to keep a watchful eye on the Coalition's trails

With the opening of new Bay discovery sites across the region, the Coalition is enlisting the help of dedicated volunteers who love these places and want to make a difference. Volunteers can "adopt a reserve" at places like The Sawmill, The Bogs, and LaPalme Farm, giving us more eyes on the ground at these popular outdoor destinations.



### Training local decision makers on solutions to pollution

2015 marked the fifth year of our successful Decision Makers Workshops series, designed for local leaders in government, business, and agriculture whose daily decisions affect the health of the Bay and our local environment. Last year, these free workshops provided real-world tested strategies to reduce nitrogen from cranberry bogs and septic systems.

Ever wanted to try quahogging? With the Coalition's new Discover Buzzards Bay website, you can find places where you can dig for clams, an easy how-to that shows you what to do, and even upcoming "learn to quahog" events. Whether you want to go shellfishing, fishing, hiking, cycling, paddling, or boating, Discover Buzzards Bay is your portal to outdoor exploration.



**WITH PEOPLE** | *Looking Ahead*

## Making it simple to Discover Buzzards Bay

**THE COALITION IS YOUR SOURCE FOR INFORMATION AND IDEAS TO GET OUTSIDE AND EXPLORE**

“Discover Buzzards Bay” is an idea that’s much bigger than Bay Adventures and field trips for youth. It’s about giving people like you the tools to find new trails to walk, routes to cycle, waterways to paddle, and shellfish beds to dig. And it’s about creating the means and motivation for people to get outside and explore woods, wetlands, and waterways.

That’s why we’re investing deeply in our mission to become a constant, energetic source of information that everybody can use to get outside and explore.

Our new website at [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org) (launching this May) is a portal to hundreds of places, activities, and adventures across Buzzards Bay. Want to find an outdoor event to attend this weekend? We’ve got your calendar covered.

Looking for different ideas and activities to try? Our featured adventures offer fresh places to go and things to do in your community.

We’re also expanding a network of Bay discovery sites in all corners of the watershed. It’s only been open for a few short months, but The Sawmill in Acushnet has already become a destination for discovery. We’re now working to create and expand outdoor exploration sites in Wareham on Onset Bay and the Weweantic River.

With all these great opportunities to get outside and explore, we can’t wait to see what fun days on Buzzards Bay 2016 will bring!

*Discover your Buzzards Bay at*  
[www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org)

# Bringing the Acushnet River back to health

**AT THE EDGE OF NEW BEDFORD'S URBAN NORTH** end sits The Sawmill: a 19-acre former lumber yard on the Acushnet River. The river flows gently through The Sawmill from its headwaters in Freetown to New Bedford Harbor and Buzzards Bay.

The river here has experienced centuries of industrial use. For nearly 300 years, a dam blocked migrating fish from reaching their freshwater spawning grounds. Four acres of pavement and buildings covered the ground, sending pollution directly into the river with every rain storm.

Now, all that has changed.

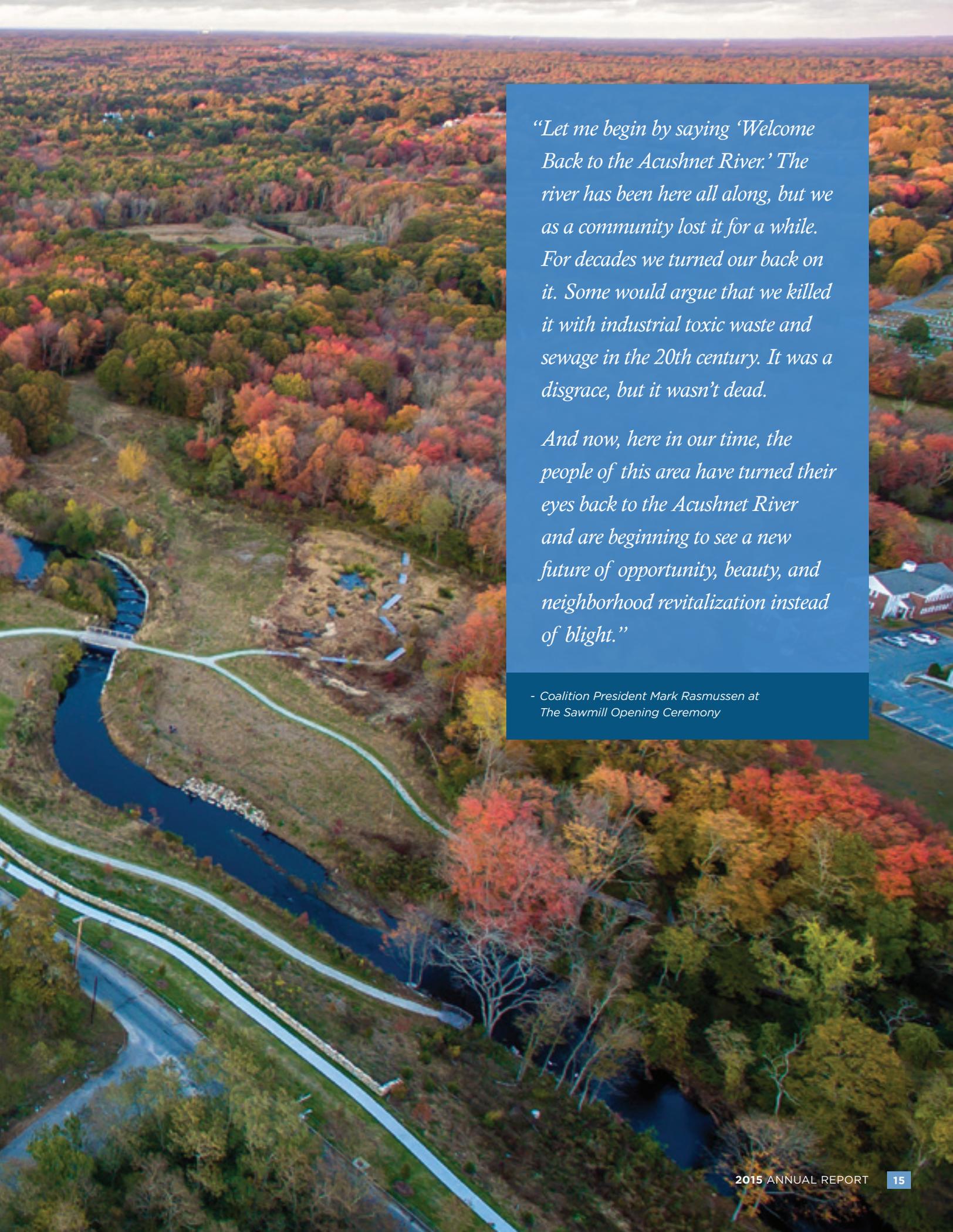
Over a two-year period that began in 2013, the Coalition restored The Sawmill to bring back natural swamps, meadows, and riverbanks that once grew here many years ago. The Sawmill you see today protects clean water, provides better habitat for fish and wildlife, and offers people like you a beautiful place to explore the outdoors.

On November 6, 2015, the Coalition unveiled The Sawmill to the public at an opening ceremony attended by hundreds of officials and local residents. Since then, thousands of people have visited The Sawmill for hands-on field education programs, family hikes, and quiet reflections along the banks of the beautiful Acushnet River.

The children who walk, fish, and paddle here today will only ever know a thriving river where they can discover their Buzzards Bay.

*RIGHT The Buzzards Bay Coalition restored native meadows, a red maple swamp, and natural riverbanks along the Acushnet River at The Sawmill. This public park is now open, inviting visitors like you to walk the trails and paddle the river's scenic waters. (Image: Paul Curado)*





*“Let me begin by saying ‘Welcome Back to the Acushnet River.’ The river has been here all along, but we as a community lost it for a while. For decades we turned our back on it. Some would argue that we killed it with industrial toxic waste and sewage in the 20th century. It was a disgrace, but it wasn’t dead.*

*And now, here in our time, the people of this area have turned their eyes back to the Acushnet River and are beginning to see a new future of opportunity, beauty, and neighborhood revitalization instead of blight.”*

- Coalition President Mark Rasmussen at  
The Sawmill Opening Ceremony

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## WHY I SUPPORT THE COALITION

More than 8,000 members form the foundation of our work to protect clean water, conserve watershed lands, and engage people in communities across Buzzards Bay. To become a Coalition member and support our work, visit [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



*“Growing up around and on the Bay gave me an appreciation and love for the ocean. Now, I live by the Bay with my husband and young son. We have to restore, respect, and care for this body of water to ensure a clean and healthy environment for our families and everyone else who values it as much as we do.”*

- Hilary and Sam Vineyard, Mattapoisett



*“The Coalition plays a vital role in quarterbacking the communities of our watershed in a collective effort to protect and improve the health of the Bay, continuously monitoring status and measuring impact.”*

- Sherbie and Tom Worthen, Wareham



*“Buzzards Bay is where we have created some of our fondest memories, including our wedding. Our ceremony overlooked Buzzards Bay and our reception overlooked West Falmouth Harbor. We plan to support the Buzzards Bay Coalition and enjoy the Bay’s beauty for years to come.”*

- Ed and Nina Fish, West Falmouth

## SUPPORTING CLEAN WATER WITH SOW & PIGS ALE

In May 2015, Buzzards Bay Brewing launched Sow & Pigs Ale, named for the striper-filled reef at the Bay’s entrance off Cuttyhunk Island. Long an advocate of clean water, Buzzards Bay Brewing generously donated a portion of profits to support the Coalition’s work. A light, easy drinking beer, Sow & Pigs was a hit with both beer aficionados and lovers of Buzzards Bay. Sow & Pigs is now an annual tradition. It can be found at restaurants and package stores from May until July.





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

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Printed with vegetable-based inks on process chlorine-free, recycled paper.



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## OUR VISION

- **A Bay shoreline defined by safe swimming beaches, open shellfish beds, and stretches of scenic natural areas for all to enjoy.**
- **Healthy waters that support abundant fish, shellfish, and wildlife populations.**
- **A Bay safe from the threats of oil spills, industrial and sewer discharges, and ocean dumping.**
- **A watershed where rivers, streams, inland forests, and wetlands that buffer the Bay are protected.**