



Cuttyhunk Conservation Project & the Buzzards Bay Coalition

Some Frequently Asked Questions

What are the BBC's qualifications to own and manage these lands?

The Buzzards Bay Coalition is a well-established institution in our region with Total Assets of \$23 Million and its Land Stewardship activities are specifically supported by a \$1 million Endowment Fund and a Field Operations and maintenance facility in Marion. On Cuttyhunk, BBC is also raising an additional \$700,000 to create an additional Endowment dedicated exclusively to the care of these unique island lands. Such a fund will yield ~\$30,000/year that will be invested toward the care of conservation land on Cuttyhunk at no expense to the town.

The Buzzards Bay Coalition currently owns 750 acres that it manages as publicly-accessible Bay Reserves and protects another 2,300 acres through conservation restrictions. These properties span 11 towns around the Bay from Westport to Falmouth and include beaches, wetlands, forests, farmland and miles of walking trails. In 2007, BBC was honored with the first-ever National Land Trust Excellence Award and in 2014 was accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission signifying compliance with the highest standards of ethical nonprofit and conservation management.

Will it ever be possible for the land being purchased by BBC to be developed?

No. All of the 68 acres being acquired by BBC will be subject to perpetual Conservation Restrictions (MGL Ch.184 ss31-33) held by the Town of Gosnold Conservation Commission. So, not only will the land be owned by a conservation organization, the Buzzards Bay Coalition, it will be further protected by CRs held by the town and recorded against the property deeds. This 'Double-Protection' strategy prevents the lands from being developed in the future.

The CR's also give the Gosnold Conservation Commission rights of enforcement over the BBC to prevent any development or misuse of the land. CR's can only be removed through an extremely rare process requiring a vote of both the Gosnold Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission, a vote of the Massachusetts Legislature, and the signature of the Governor. It is the strongest, most permanent form of conservation protection available and puts considerable control in the hands of the town.

Could the Buzzards Bay Coalition sell the Cuttyhunk land they are acquiring?

BBC has no intention of giving away or selling the land and has never sold any of the conservation properties under its care.

Even if BBC chose sometime in the future to give or sell the property, what it cannot do is remove the Conservation Restriction on the land that is controlled by the Gosnold Conservation Commission. The CR ensures that any hypothetical future owner would be prevented from developing the land just as BBC is.

Will everyone still be able to walk, fish, hunt and go swimming on the lands purchased by BBC?

Yes, absolutely. Securing everyone's ability to access and enjoy these lands is a primary reason for BBC's acquisition. Clearly marked, regularly-mowed walking paths will be created and maintained by BBC staff.

Does this mean that there is going to be a network of trails all across people's private property?

No. If any of the publicly-accessible trails on BBC's land connect to adjacent trails on private land, it would only be with the express permission of the landowner. In all places where such permission is not granted, BBC will post and maintain 'Private Property' boundary signage to prevent trespassing.

Will additional fencing be installed or golf cart access restricted to prevent islanders from using beaches in order to protect birds?

Barges and Churchs beach have each hosted populations of nesting shorebirds in years past and there is no reason to think that that won't continue in years to come. The Massachusetts Audubon Society monitors these birds and installs the fencing we all see each summer to prevent destruction of nests and fledglings as required by law. That activity will continue and BBC's ownership brings with it no additional legal restrictions on use of the beach. The laws that protect these birds are the same regardless of who owns the property.

How well will this land be cared for?

BBC's professional land stewardship staff will manage the Cuttyhunk lands including the development and implementation of land management plans for each property. This will include activities such as regular trail mowing on upland areas, trash and debris removal, prevention of erosion, cutting of invasive species and possible prescribed burns to maintain areas of grassland and control pests. Equipment will be stored and maintained on island. All of this effort will be supported by funding from BBC's Land Stewardship Endowment ensuring sustainable land management that doesn't require any town expenditures.

Will the vista/view be maintained at the top of Tower Road?

Yes. The view from Hap's (aka Lookout) Hill at the top of the Tower Road is one of the most stunning scenic views of Buzzards Bay, Vineyard Sound and the Elizabeth Islands that exists. BBC will manage vegetation on the top of Lookout and Bayberry Hills to maintain these views for everyone and support a diversity of habitat types on the island.

Does the Cuttyhunk Land Conservation project mean that there will be no future home building on island?

No. Recent estimates of available lands for development on Cuttyhunk suggest that there could be as many as 100 house sites remaining on island even after the Buzzards Bay Coalition land deal is completed. Most of these lots are in, or adjacent to, the existing village meaning that they would be more affordable than expensive 'Estate Lots' on the Neck or Hills making them more available to potential year-round residents and people making a living on the island.

*For additional questions,
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