

It was a great summer for Bay protection! Your support makes it all possible.

Coalition begins long-term monitoring of salt marshes around the Bay, including Westport Town Farm, shown here. (see page 5)

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Read how your support is resulting in:

New protected lands on Cuttyhunk and Dartmouth's Dike Creek

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Understanding what makes a salt marsh more resilient to climate change

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Reaching a *Discover Buzzards Bay* milestone

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Sending thanks to the Elizabeth Islands

Gosnold town meeting voters unanimously approved funding to preserve the majority of Cuttyhunk's undeveloped lands.

In May, an important milestone was reached for the Coalition's Cuttyhunk Conservation Project. Gosnold town residents voted unanimously to contribute \$400,000 to the project and demonstrate the island's united support for placing 67 acres of the island's most precious landscapes under permanent protection.

This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity will protect parts of Bayberry Hill and Haps Hill (also known as Lookout Hill), the highest points on the island and an important rainwater recharge area for the town's public drinking water wells. Along the shoreline, Canapitsit Neck (also known as Barges Beach), Church's Beach, and Copicut Neck will be preserved for public access, ensuring they remain open to hiking, birdwatching, swimming, and fishing.

For more on the project or to help preserve Cuttyhunk's unparalleled beauty, please visit us at savebuzzardsbay.org.

Bayberry Hill provides spectacular views of Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound.



Coalition begins restoration of wetlands and streams at the Mattapoissett Bogs

The planned restoration will return natural water flow to Tripps Mill Brook, improving habitat for fish and wildlife.

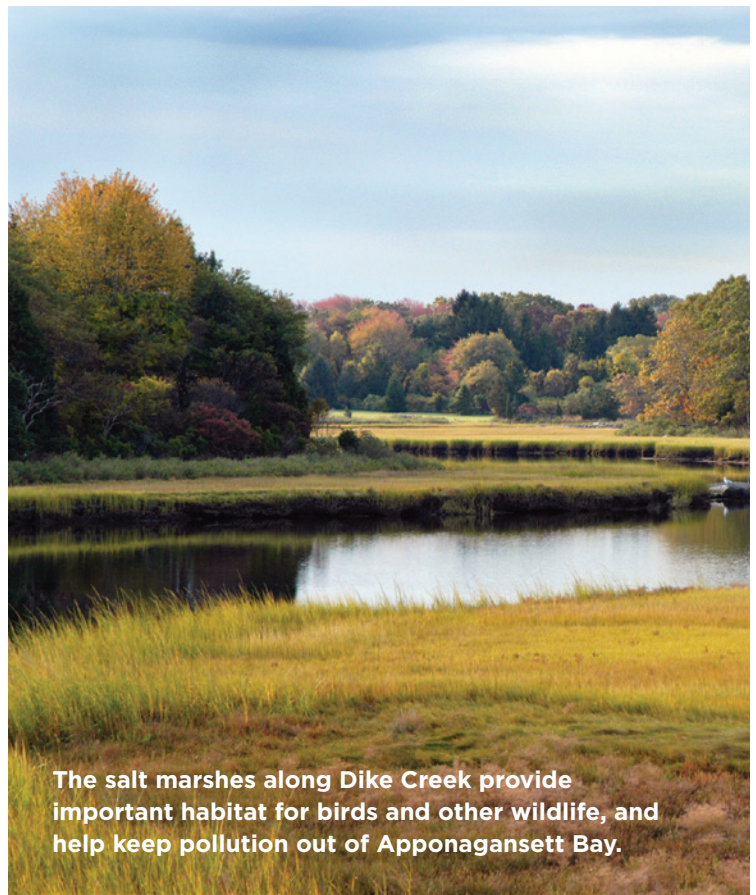
Covering 200 acres in central Mattapoissett, The Bogs is one of the most unique properties owned and managed by the Coalition. More than five miles of trails through fields and forests in the Mattapoissett River Reserve connect to paths circling 50 acres of former cranberry bog, fed by a freshwater stream. However, the flow of water in this stream — Tripps Mill Brook — is still altered by old, unused infrastructure that helped to grow cranberries here in the past. In the fall, we received permits to begin the process of improving water flow in this system. This change will help rejuvenate these wetlands, improving habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife, like box turtles, American eels, pollinators, and a variety of birds.

In coordination with this restoration, a grant will fund improvements to the Bogs' trails, adding features like pedestrian bridges, a boardwalk, bog boards, and signage to provide better linkages throughout the reserve's multi-town trail network. The extensive trail system at The Bogs is already an excellent place to walk a dog, take a trail run, or

The Bogs' vibrant wetlands are a great place for explorers of all ages to discover the outdoors.



search for wildlife. As this project gets underway, we're excited to share our progress in making this distinctive property an even better place to get outside.



The salt marshes along Dike Creek provide important habitat for birds and other wildlife, and help keep pollution out of Apponagansett Bay.

Why We Give

**Peter Macdonald
of Dartmouth**



"Dartmouth is a special place, with clear water full of abundant life, surrounded by coastal forests and wetlands. A place where my family and I have created some of our fondest memories. I support the Coalition because of their dedication to the Bay's protection for all. We are very fortunate to have them working on our behalf."

New reserve on Dike Creek creates extraordinary sweep of protected land in Dartmouth

Strong support from the Dartmouth community is helping to preserve these farmlands, forests, and wetlands from development.

Over the past year, the Coalition and the Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust (DNRT) have worked together to protect Apponagansett Bay Farm, a stretch of land in South Dartmouth operated by the Webb family as a vineyard for the last 40 years. This mix of farmland and undeveloped forest lies along Dike Creek, a salt marsh-lined stream that flows into Apponagansett Bay. In September, the two organizations accomplished the first step in creating this preserve by acquiring the entire 128-acre property.

Now, DNRT will work to transform 75 acres of these lands into a public preserve, including a trail leading down to the stunning salt marshes along Dike Creek. Going forward, the Coalition will complete the protection of this farm by working to resell two existing residential properties on the land, both subject to a conservation restriction.



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

**buzzards
BAY**
COALITION

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.

Persistent effort leads to clean up of Marion sewage lagoons

Persistent advocacy by the Coalition has yielded a resolution to a chronic source of nitrogen pollution to the Bay. First in Town Hall, then with state and federal agencies, and finally in court, the Coalition employed a range of science and advocacy tools to end a now 49-year-old sewage leak.

Marion is unique among Buzzards Bay communities in the way it has managed wastewater for nearly five decades. The town utilizes 20 acres of unlined lagoons: shallow pits in the ground that allow waste to leach contaminants, including nitrogen, into the groundwater below — and eventually out to Sippican Harbor, the Sippican River, and Aucoot Cove.

In 2010, the Coalition conducted a study of the lagoons that confirmed the lagoons were contaminating the underlying groundwater and contributing to the declining health of Marion's coastal waters.

Frustrated by many years of Town resistance to cleaning up this pollution, the Coalition turned to the courts for help. Due to this multi-pronged science and advocacy effort, the town and MassDEP finally brokered a settlement that ends nitrogen pollution from these lagoons. With a solid solution now in hand, the Coalition dismissed its lawsuit against the town, but preserved the right to return to court should the agreement change.

With this issue now resolved, the Coalition is excited to work with the town on long-term, sustainable solutions to its wastewater infrastructure needs. One such opportunity is evaluating Marion's ability to join communities collaborating on regional solutions for sewer treatment in upper Buzzards Bay.

An aerial view of the leaking sewage lagoons at the Marion wastewater treatment plant, and nearby Sippican Harbor.



Why are we losing Bay salt marshes?

Coalition commits to tracking long-term salt marsh health to guide protection strategies.

Salt marshes are vital to the health of Buzzards Bay. These wetlands serve as a habitat for wildlife, a filter for pollution, and a coastal shield against storms and sea level rise. But many Bay residents are watching their salt marshes degrade and disappear. This summer, the Coalition began a new long-term monitoring program to track the health of a dozen marsh sites in nine Bay towns: Westport, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Mattapoisett, Marion, Wareham, Bourne, and Falmouth. Through this effort, we hope to develop a clearer picture of which marshes are declining, how fast, and how we can better respond to save them.

Ryan Kappel and Heather Gaughan, 2019 salt marsh interns, lay a transect along which researchers will monitor marsh plants and animals year after year.



Year after year, Coalition staff will return to the same marshes to check elevations as well as density and diversity of plants and animals. Studying these marshes over many years will help explain what makes some marshes hardier than others, and help predict how they might fare as sea level continues to rise due to climate change.



Menemsha and Squibnocket Ponds are connected by a herring run on the Wampanoag Tribe lands.



Lessons from Vineyard Sound's salt ponds

The Coalition began monitoring water quality in Vineyard Sound in 2012, recently adding Menemsha and Squibnocket Ponds, James Pond, and Lake Tashmoo. Here's what we've learned so far.

Three years ago, in partnership with the Martha's Vineyard Commission and the Wampanoag Tribe of Aquinnah, the Coalition expanded our Baywatchers monitoring program to four salt ponds on Vineyard Sound. Even though these ponds have different characteristics, they have one critical similarity: All four ponds are sensitive to the effects of nitrogen pollution. The number one threat facing Buzzards Bay, nitrogen pollution causes algae blooms, murky waters, and low oxygen levels that can't support underwater life.

Water quality is best in the largest ponds: Menemsha and Lake Tashmoo, where clean water flushing from Vineyard Sound on each tide gives them Bay Health Index scores of 89 and 73, respectively. In contrast, monitoring has found much higher nitrogen levels in Squibnocket and James Pond. Squibnocket, the freshest pond and an important herring run in the spring, has fair water quality, with a Bay Health score of 46. Shallow James Pond has a score of 31, and has the highest level of algae.

In all, the data collected so far lays the foundation for understanding what impacts the ponds' health, setting restoration goals into the future. Only by continued monitoring can the Coalition provide consistent data that gives citizens and local town officials, from Tisbury to Aquinnah, information they need to better respond to changing waters.

Why We Give

Chris Parks of Fairhaven

"I give time and money to the Coalition because I live on the Acushnet River and support the Coalition's efforts to acquire, restore, and preserve habitat along this much-abused river. I love rowing and kayaking throughout the Buzzards Bay watershed and believe that it's my responsibility to invest in its continued well-being."



We're making progress, but there's still more to do. Please join us by donating today at savebuzzardsbay.org/annualfund.



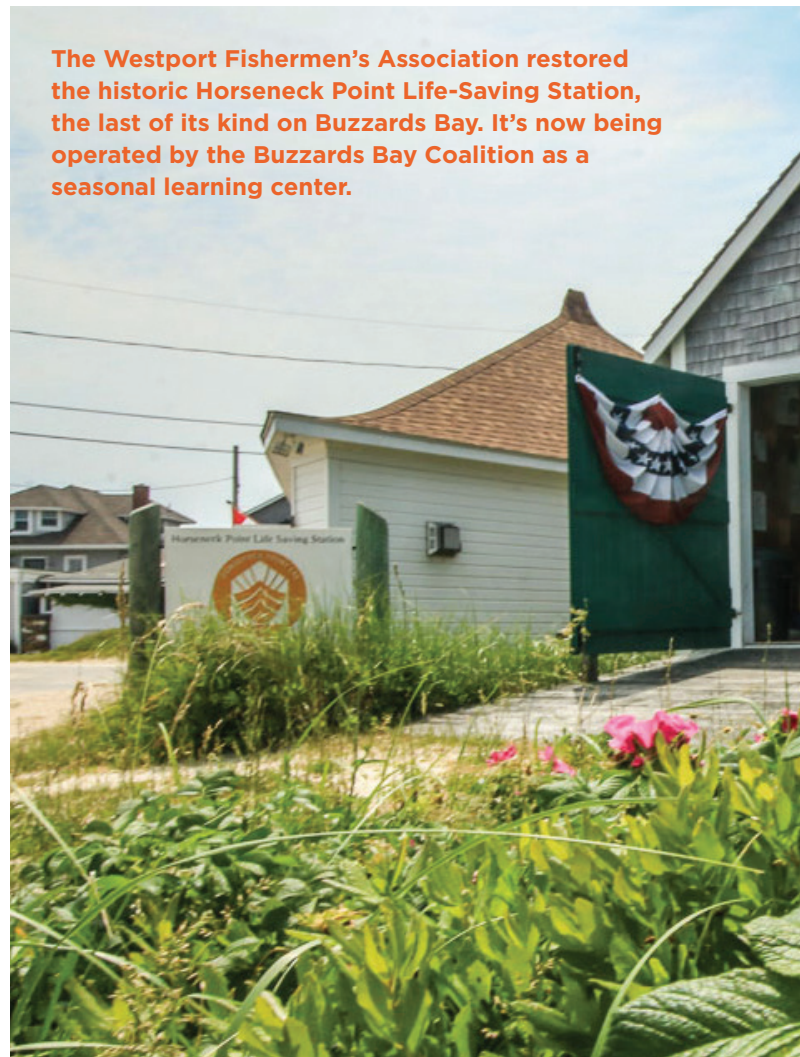
Buzzards Bay Coalition is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance.

Coalition splashes into first summer as steward of Horseneck Point Life-Saving Station

Kids and adults alike made new connections with their local environment at this historic station and learning center.

When the Buzzards Bay Coalition merged with the Westport Fishermen's Association (WFA) last year, we also took over curatorship of the Horseneck Point Life-Saving Station, a fascinating piece of local history. This station protected sailors passing this rocky coastline from 1888 until decommissioning in 1913. The WFA restored the station in 2009 into a place for visitors to learn about the Bay's fascinating and often dangerous maritime legacy, as well as about the urgent water quality issues facing the region.

This summer, the Coalition renewed this mission for the station by welcoming close to 600 visitors between June and August. Visitors viewed the station's lifeboat, got up-close and personal with Bay creatures in our touch tank, and read about the history of oil spills and accidents that have driven recent successes in environmental protection. Though the station closed for the season on August 31, the Coalition will continue to host programs out of the learning center throughout the fall and winter, and continue the WFA's legacy of advocacy.



The Westport Fishermen's Association restored the historic Horseneck Point Life-Saving Station, the last of its kind on Buzzards Bay. It's now being operated by the Buzzards Bay Coalition as a seasonal learning center.

Onset Bay Center: creating connections that last a lifetime

With your help, the Coalition is creating a gateway for Bay exploration and discovery

Onset is the home of the Coalition's developing Onset Bay Center, soon to be a destination for outdoor exploration and adventures such as sailing, paddling, shellfishing, coastal ecology, and exploration. This summer, we welcomed more than 100 kids for a second year of pilot programs, offering a preview of the rich slate of outdoor adventure and fun that the center will provide this vibrant community.

Though construction on the Onset Bathhouse paused during our summer of exploration, we're once more eagerly moving forward to complete its rehabilitation. Over the spring our builder, The Valle Group, completed the challenge of strengthening the foundation and structure to make it resilient to flooding from storms and sea level rise. In September, they returned to fit the bathhouse with walls and flooring, and to complete the interior. We plan to officially open the Onset Bay Center to all for programming in Spring 2020.



Kids from Wareham CARE and the Boys and Girls Club of Wareham learned to sail in Onset Bay during 2019 summer programs.



The Coalition is transforming the Onset Bathhouse into the Onset Bay Center, helping a new generation of families build connections to our Bay.



By connecting everyone to the beautiful places around Buzzards Bay, we aim to inspire individuals to care for the Bay they love.

“Discover Buzzards Bay” hits milestone of 250 Places to Go

This incredible resource helps you find somewhere new to explore around your Buzzards Bay.

When you love something, you’ll do everything you can to protect it. That’s the idea that inspired us to create Discover Buzzards Bay, an online resource that connects people to things to do and places to go outdoors. Whether you’re looking for a short walk with the dog or a long hike to stretch your legs, angling for a new favorite fishing spot, in search of new waters to paddle, or seeking that perfect secluded beach day, Discover Buzzards Bay has somewhere perfect for you to explore.

At the end of September, Discover Buzzards Bay reached an exciting goal when we added our 250th place to the website. We now feature somewhere to explore in every town in the Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound Watersheds, from Sakonnet Point to Aquinnah. Our hope is that through Discover Buzzards Bay, we can introduce more people to something new to love in the outdoors, creating a new wave of stewards to care for these incredible places.

Check it out at: www.savebuzzardsbay.org/discover

Why We Give

IN MEMORIAM:
Richard Wheeler,
Wareham

Longtime environmental advocate, Wareham resident, and 1990 Time Magazine Hero of the Planet, Dick Wheeler dedicated his life to advancing our understanding of marine habitats, the interconnectedness of all life, and our responsibility to protect it. Dick also participated for years in the Buzzards Bay Swim, bringing his years of training as a U.S. Navy frogman to the 1.2-mile open-water crossing of outer New Bedford Harbor. The event’s Wheeler Watershed Challenge Cup, awarded to the fastest team, is named in his honor.

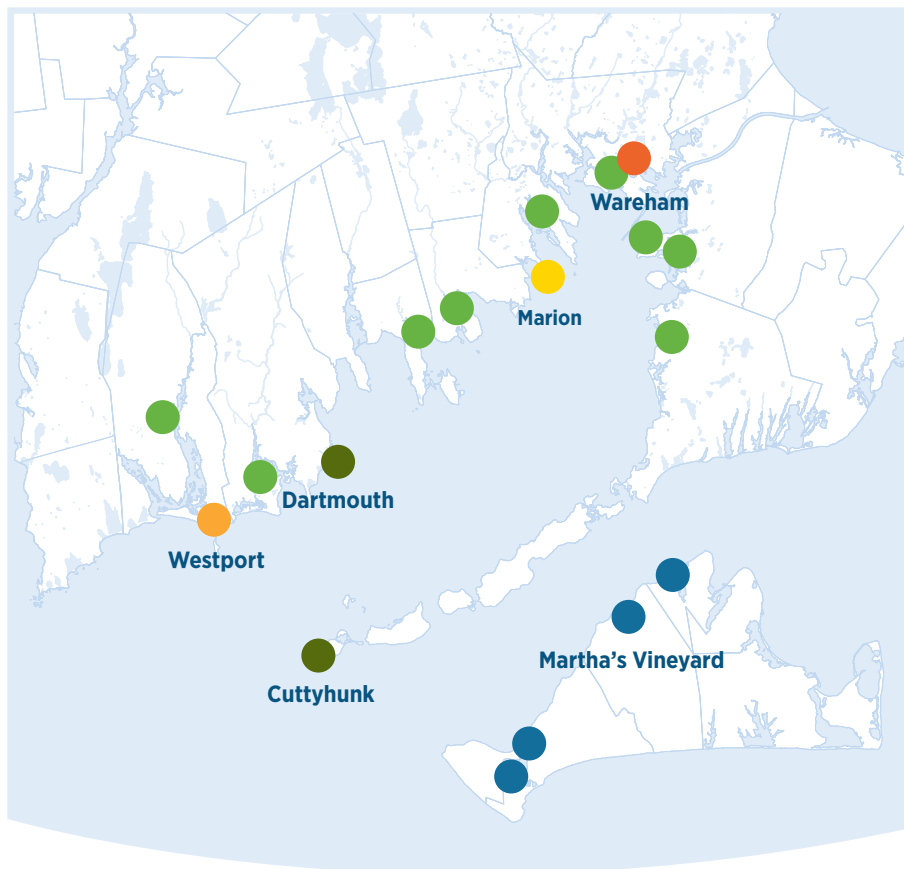


We will miss Dick’s passion, energy and ability to engage people in the protection of Buzzards Bay.



The Buzzards Bay Coalition’s engagement programming is supported in part by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Working to protect clean water for the people of Little Compton, Tiverton, Westport, Dartmouth, New Bedford, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Rochester, Mattapoisett, Marion, Wareham, Carver, Middleborough, Plymouth, Bourne, Falmouth, Gosnold, and Vineyard Sound.



Inside

Read about the latest projects happening in your community and around the region:

- Advocacy leads to resolution
- Vineyard Sound ponds
- Protecting land for all
- Creating a destination for outdoor exploration
- Making new connections
- Tracking salt marsh health

