

**Great things are happening all
around the Bay, thanks to you.**

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Reduces nitrogen pollution

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Project significantly reduces nitrogen pollution to West Falmouth Harbor

Coalition finishes four-year effort to install nitrogen-reducing septic systems on 30 West Falmouth properties

The 30 nitrogen-reducing septic systems that the Coalition helped install on properties surrounding West Falmouth Harbor are making a difference for clean water. Initial monitoring shows that the systems collectively remove 70 percent of the nitrogen that previously would have flowed into the harbor.

In high concentrations, nitrogen clouds bay waters, fuels algae growth, and kills underwater eelgrass beds and fish and shellfish populations. And the problem, intensified by climate change, has been particularly acute in West Falmouth Harbor. Septic systems are the largest source of nitrogen pollution across all of Buzzards Bay.

To address the problem, the Coalition organized an effort to install nitrogen-reducing septic systems, partnering with town, county, state and federal agencies, as well as local property owners. The four-year effort installed systems on properties with a variety of different uses, including seasonal and year-round homes, a tennis club, a neighborhood fire station, and a nonprofit educational institution.

Much more remains to be done to restore West Falmouth Harbor water quality. Keep an eye out for more projects in the year ahead.

The success of the nitrogen-reducing septic systems installed around West Falmouth Harbor is inspiring more property owners to take action.



Applying science to tackle salt marsh decline

Research team lays groundwork for testing a promising approach to rescuing endangered salt marshes

The effort to stem the loss of Bay salt marshes generated a massive amount of data this summer: 69,000 water level measurements, 680 marsh elevation readings, 400 plots of vegetation surveyed, and 264 soil samples collected.

With the data in hand, the Coalition can begin testing a salt marsh restoration technique known as runneling. It involves creating a shallow groove in the surface of the marsh—a runnel—that will allow seawater to drain from the marsh, as it should normally.

Salt marshes are important because they filter out pollution from reaching the Bay, provide habitat for wildlife, and protect homes from flooding. However, increasing stress from pollution and sea level rise is leading to dramatic loss of many of these critical habitats.



Halting the decline of the Bay's salt marshes protects critical habitat for myriad fish and shellfish species that spawn, grow and live in these areas.



Despite pandemic, the Coalition completes its 29th season of water quality monitoring

The Baywatchers program overcame numerous challenges to record a successful year of water quality monitoring

The coronavirus proved no match for the Baywatchers. The Coalition's trained volunteers turned out in near-record numbers—164 members this year—to complete the full season of monitoring at 200 locations around Buzzards Bay.

The ability to complete the monitoring—without dropping locations or collection dates—sustains this critical resource for information on the Bay's health that local, state, and federal government decision-makers rely upon. The Coalition's new Science and Field Operations Facility in Marion also played a starring role in the success of this season, allowing for centralized and social distant interactions among volunteers and staff.

"The fact that we were able to get it done this year, despite all the challenges, is a real testament to our volunteers. Everyone's interest and commitment has been great," said Tony Williams, the Coalition's director of monitoring programs. "We're very grateful for their efforts, which really do make a difference."

Why We Give

**Chris Rhoads,
West Falmouth**

Growing up spending summers on the harbor, I can remember walking to the seawall with great anticipation, not knowing what I'd see in the water...blue crabs, fiddler crabs, mussels, snapper blues, maybe the occasional Striper. In recent decades, it's become impossible to see anything in the murky water. Our kids are missing out on that experience we had as kids. Marine life in the harbor has clearly suffered. It's been heartening to have such a dedicated team at the BBC working on fixing this problem. Progress is never as fast as we'd like, but we feel fortunate to have the best possible people on the job.



above: The next generation—George and Roscoe Rhoads—on Chapoquoit Beach in West Falmouth



Buzzards Bay Coalition is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance.

Cuttyhunk properties permanently protected from development

Deal ensures protection of public access to beaches, rare habitats, and unique sweeping views of Buzzards Bay.

Dramatic barrier beaches, coastal marsh, and upland habitats on Cuttyhunk Island are now secure from the threat of development, thanks to a deal that will ensure these unique lands remain natural and are accessible to the public.

This summer, the Buzzards Bay Coalition and its partners—the Town of Gosnold, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bouchard 120 Oil Spill Natural Resources Damages Trustee Council, and 198 private donors—completed a \$6.1 million acquisition of 68 acres, much of which had been placed on the market for potential development.

The land purchased by the Coalition and its partners includes Barges Beach, the scenic Tower and Bayberry Hills, a portion of Copicut Neck—all of which will be owned and managed by the Coalition—and Church's Beach, which will be owned by the Town of Gosnold. All will be managed as public lands, ensuring public access to these beautiful, ecologically unique environments. The Coalition reserve will formally open in the summer of 2021.

Beyond public access, the acquisition also will preserve water quality—both of the Bay and of the island's only public drinking water supply—as well as protect unique maritime island vegetation and a variety of birds, fish and wildlife, including the Common Eider.

Cuttyhunk Island sits seven miles from the mainland, the southern-most point of the Elizabeth Islands chain, and serves as a gateway to Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound.



Important Westport coldwater trout streams protected

Major step in protecting water quality and fish habitat while opening new reserve to the public

The new Lyons Brook Reserve contains one of the state's last remaining coldwater streams supporting sea-run Eastern Brook Trout. Coldwater streams possess exceptionally high water quality and remain cold enough throughout the year to support coldwater fish such as brook trout. While historically widespread, development and climate change threaten these critical habitats.

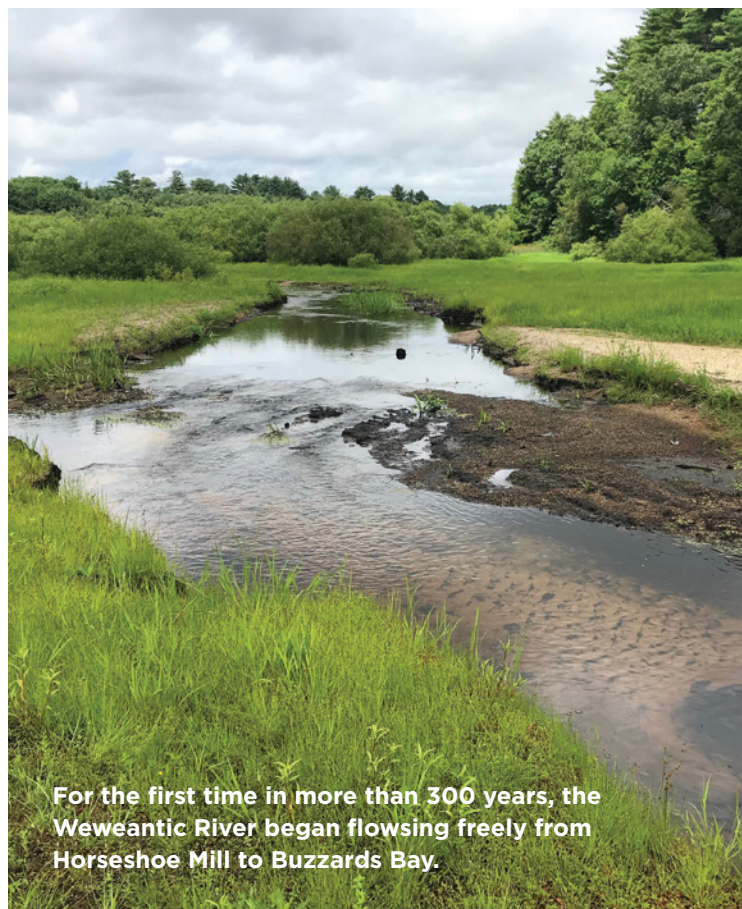
The Coalition acquired the 50-acre Lyons Brook parcel this summer as well as a conservation restriction on a 25-acre private property off Main Road along lower Angeline Brook, another coldwater stream.

The Coalition plans to maintain the Lyons Brook Reserve to allow public access to the site. The property already harbors



Angeline Brook (pictured above) flows to the West Branch of the Westport River; Lyon's Brook empties into the East Branch.

several well-maintained trails, ideal for bird-watching, hiking, trail running, and exploring the forest. The Coalition expects to formally open the reserve later this year.



For the first time in more than 300 years, the Weweantic River began flowing freely from Horseshoe Mill to Buzzards Bay.

Nature taking over on the Weweantic River

Coalition's restoration at Horseshoe Mill sets the stage for the river to recreate natural habitats for animals, plants, and people

The Weweantic River is reasserting itself at Horseshoe Mill. Since the removal of the dam, which took place over the winter, the river has erased the former impoundment with a free-flowing stream that is making space for nature to take over. Yellow pond lilies are re-colonizing the area; threatened rainbow smelt and other fish are finding new habitat in which to spawn.

The removal of the dam and restoration of the site will also create new opportunities for people to access the Weweantic, which is the largest river flowing into Buzzards Bay. Next year, the Coalition will open new canoe launch ramps and improved trails at the property, which adjoins the Town of Wareham's Birch Island Conservation Area.

Why We Give

**Nancy and David
Twichell, Cuttyhunk**

The solitude of Cuttyhunk has been a draw to the two of us since the first time each of us set foot on the island. This unique opportunity to acquire open space, spearheaded by the Buzzards Bay Coalition, ensures the island community and visitors the continued opportunity to enjoy Cuttyhunk's solitude.



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 accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Local residents now have a new place to go for on-the-water activity

Onset Bay Center “opens” with programs for adults, children, and families despite challenges posed by coronavirus.

Hundreds of children, adults, and families immersed themselves in the wonders of Buzzards Bay this year through activities organized by the Onset Bay Center, the Coalition’s newly- completed hub for programs that help residents get connected to the natural resources of the Bay.

Kayaking, rowing, quahogging, yoga, and art are just a few of the many activities that the Onset Bay Center has offered since the Coalition completed restoration of the Onset Bathhouse in early June. (Public use of the bathhouse has been prevented by the pandemic. We look forward to a proper opening next year.) The bathhouse serves as headquarters for the center’s array of diverse lands on Onset Bay—Wickets Island, Burgess Point, and Shell Point Marshes—that provide the space for outdoors explorations.

In its first months of operation, the center offered a full weekly schedule of programs that fit current social distancing guidelines set by state and federal public officials. The center also has engaged community partners, such as the Wareham Boys and Girls Club and the Wareham Public School’s CARE program, to reach underserved members of our community.

The momentum has continued through the fall with a new slate of free and low-cost programs for all ages as well as developing activities for the winter season.

The Onset Bay Center offers a wide variety of programs, from kayaking and rowing to explorations of coastal habitats.



The 14th Buzzards Bay Watershed Ride rolls on to victory

Nearly 300 cyclists signed up to ride for clean water at an event adapted to meet social distancing requirements

Pedaling beneath sunny skies, cyclists recorded impressive fundraising and participation totals at the 14th annual Buzzards Bay Watershed Ride on Sunday, Oct. 4. The 291 registered participants, supported by 58 volunteers, raised more than \$200,000 for clean water.

This year’s ride differed from past events to facilitate social distancing. But it still cheered cyclists spirits and raised funds to support the Coalition’s work.

“This was one of the most memorable Watershed Rides that we’ve hosted. It was perfect—enthusiastic participation,

The Buzzards Bay Watershed Ride features stunning views of the coastline, such as this stretch of beachfront in Acoaxet.



a stunning route, and beautiful weather,” said Coalition President Mark Rasmussen. “Everyone needed the kind of celebration of the Bay that we had with the ride.”



The call of the outdoors has grown louder as an antidote to the stress of life in a pandemic. Your support of the Coalition plays a vital role in helping to protect these special places.

Public interest and need for nature is on the rise

Coalition sees increase in visitors at reserves, partly inspired by the pandemic

Nature heals. The number of people discovering the restorative effects of spending time in the outdoors has been on the increase in the past year.

The reserves managed by the Buzzards Bay Coalition and our partner land trusts are welcoming new friends and families to the outdoors—from Westport to Wareham and Woods Hole. The state's Department of Conservation and Recreation has observed a 300 percent increase in visitorship at some parks and conservation areas.

Over the past 20 years, the Buzzards Bay Coalition has been directly involved in preserving more than 8,000 acres and land conservation remains a critical component of our work today. That's good for the Bay, its rivers, our drinking water, and wildlife. And it's good for people, too.

Why We Give

Julius Britto, Rochester

We support the Buzzards Bay Coalition to provide opportunities to all children to have fun Experiencing and Learning about the beautiful Onset Bay. When we were growing up Onset Beach was the only beach we children of color were welcomed at.



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



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.

New effort launched to reverse declining water quality in Vineyard pond

Something's not right in West Tisbury's James Pond

The Coalition, working with local property owners, has launched a study of James Pond, a shallow salt pond that connects to Vineyard Sound through a single inlet at Lambert's Cove in West Tisbury.

The Coalition, in partnership with the Martha's Vineyard Commission, has been monitoring water quality at James Pond since 2017 and has documented high temperatures, low salinity and water clarity, and high

nitrogen and algae levels. The conditions endanger the fish and plants that live there and mar the pond's beauty.

Reduced flushing of the pond through its inlet is part of the problem. Any solution will require close study to identify sustainable options that might stabilize the inlet and maintain adequate flushing (and therefore good water quality) in the pond. Highly-regarded coastal geology experts at the Woods Hole Group will lead the study.

The project marks the start of a new phase in the Coalition's work on the Vineyard. Four salt ponds and Vineyard Sound itself have been monitored for the past three years, and data from the monitoring effort is captured in the Coalition's Bay Health Index. The James Pond project represents the first remediation project on the Island.

