



2024

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Croll, <i>Chair</i>	Doug Crocker
Michael Huguenin, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Don Dufault
Chris Schade, <i>Treasurer</i>	Paul Elias
Melissa Haskell, <i>Clerk</i>	Neil Kamal Ganju
Mark Rasmussen, <i>President</i>	Peter Grauer
Michael Angelini	Emma Green-Beach
Kendra Bennett	Christopher Neill
Julius Britto	Christine Parks
Laura Brenninkmeyer Nielsen	Skylah Reis
Virginia Clark	Scott Zeien

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Chris Antao · Jay Austin · Chris Baldwin · Margie Baldwin · Rob Beams · Pam Beck · Jim Bevilacqua · Jono Billings · Simone Bourgeois · Peg Brandon · Gioia Browne · John Bullard · Lizanne Campbell · Guy Campinha · Stephen Canessa · Ken Cheitlin · Derek Christianson · Markie Clowes · Sarah Cogswell · Beth Colt · Cynthia Crocker · Gail Davidson · Bob Daylor · Chris Demakis · Drew Dimmick · Weatherly Dorris · Alison Durant · Deanna Elliott · Joanne Fallon · Laurell Farinon · John Farrington, PhD · Larry Fish · Allin Frawley · Jowaun Gamble · Tally Garfield · Seth Garfield · Anne Giblin, PhD · Kirby Gilmore · Sam Gray · Whit Griswold · Lara Harrington · Jessica Harris · Andy Herlihy · Lucius T. Hill · Jordan Hitch · Jonathan Howland · Gary Johnson · Russ Keeler · Morris Kellogg · Sam Knight, Esq. · Bob Kretschmar · Sarah Laird · Lloyd MacDonald · Paul Maeder · Fred Makrauer, M.D. · Chloe Mangold · Ted Martin · Brendan McCarthy · Mary McFadden, Esq. · Bob McLaughlin · David Modest · Gene Monteiro · Michael Moore, PhD · Sheila Morse · Susan Morse · Hugh Morton · Elizabeth Munro · Randy Parker · Jim Rathmann · Neal Ready, MD · Chris Reddy, PhD · John Ross · Tanja Ryden · Will Saltonstall · Heather Sawitsky · Narain Schroeder · Laura Ryan Shachoy · Ben Shattuck · Tim Shields · Lt. Elizabeth Simmons · Ben Singer · Dr. Jay Smith · Steve Smith · Jay Swent III · Rob Thieler · John Vasconcellos · Hilary Vineyard · Brad Wakeman · John Waterbury, PhD · Natalie White · Toffer Winslow · Sherbie Worthen · Stewart Young · Scott Zolkos

ON THE COVER *The junkyard on the edge of the Acushnet River in 2019 (front) and BBC's expanding Acushnet River Reserve conservation area and the North End of the City of New Bedford this past summer (back). Use the white smokestack for reference.*

STAFF

Mark Rasmussen, *President*

Bay Science

Rachel Jakuba, PhD., *Vice President, Bay Science*
Lilia Bartolotta, *Research Assistant*
Lara Gulmann, PhD., *Research Associate*
Kristin Huizenga, PhD., *Postdoctoral Fellow*
Callista MacPherson, *Research Assistant*
Tony Williams, *Director of Monitoring Programs*

Clean Water Advocacy

Korrin Petersen, Esq., *Vice President, Clean Water Advocacy*

Watershed Protection

Brendan Annett, *Vice President, Watershed Protection*
John Chester, *Real Estate Project Manager*
Allen Decker, Esq., *Director of Land Protection*
Mary Doucette, *Land Stewardship Manager*
Sara da Silva Quintal, *Senior Restoration Ecologist*
Evelyn Mortimer, *Watershed Restoration Coordinator*
Jack Sidar, *Land Stewardship Director*
Adam Seablom, *Land Stewardship Assistant*
Craig Willey, *Land Stewardship Manager (Cuttyhunk)*

Outdoor Exploration

Stuart Downie, *Vice President, Outdoor Exploration*
Vernon Baptista, *Bay Adventures Manager*
Carly Baumann, *Outdoor Learning Manager*
Angela Weldon, *Onset Bay Center Director*

Public Engagement

Marlissa Briggett, *Vice President, Public Engagement*
Hannah Haines, *Art Director*
Scott Lajoie, *Communications Director*
Coco Mandle, *Digital Media Specialist*
Kate Reilly, *Event Manager*

Advancement

Paul Belsito, *Interim Vice President, Advancement*
Amanda Dubrowski, *Development Associate*
Sarah Palestine, *Communications Manager*

Operations

Michael Kelly, *Vice President, Operations*
Stefanie Fournier, *Finance Director*
Patrick Igoe, *Boat Captain/Facilities Technician*
Anna Luckey, *Accounting Manager*
Sabrina Silverbrand, *Administrative Coordinator*



(508) 999-6363
info@savebuzzardsbay.org
www.savebuzzardsbay.org

Main Office

114 Front Street
New Bedford, MA
02740

Onset Bay Center

186 Onset Avenue
Wareham, MA
02532

Science Field Operations

173 Spring Street
Marion, MA
02738

Wheeler Forest Reserve

359 Woods Hole Road
Woods Hole, MA
02540

TO OUR FRIENDS

YOU MAY BE SURPRISED with our cover photo this year. We often feature the beautiful coastal scenes and landscapes that we work so hard to protect. Last year, we featured dolphins frolicking in the Bay. The cover is usually a vehicle for us to show you the results of your support of the Coalition's mission to protect, preserve and restore Buzzards Bay and its watershed.

We went with an unexpected cover this year because it's important to see that there is hard, tenacious work that precedes the beautiful photographs you're used to seeing from us.

If you go today to where the cover photo was taken, it's a peaceful scene at the edge of the Acushnet River. Some crushed clamshell is the only reminder of its former life as an auto junkyard. The Coalition bought this property in 2019 and just this year completed cleanup of contamination left behind. We're now working to make it accessible to the public, creating waterfront green space in a place along the river where that is hard to come by and connecting it to a trail system through the coastal forest.

It takes vision to see the opportunities inherent in an old junkyard and grit to take on its many challenges. But we're doing more than making things pretty here. We're removing sources of pollution, restoring salt marshes which will both increase water quality and provide protection from the threats of climate change, and opening up coastal access in a neighborhood where many residents lack any connection to the Bay.

Thank you for being part of this and the many other great projects and initiatives you'll read about inside. With your wonderful support, we can keep transforming and improving our region's water quality, natural lands, fish and wildlife for generations to come.



Mark Rasmussen
President

David Croll
Chair, Board of Directors



THE 2024 BUZZARDS BAY GUARDIAN AWARDS

On May 23, Coalition members gathered for our 36th Annual Meeting at the Onset Bay Center. The highlight of the evening was our annual Guardian Awards which were presented to...

Senator Michael J. Rodrigues of Westport, for his statewide leadership and for securing grant funds to design sewer infrastructure along Westport's Route 6 corridor.

Henri Renault, superintendent of the Town of Mattapoisett Water & Sewer Department, for his longtime leadership protecting drinking water lands in the Mattapoisett River Valley.

Wenley Ferguson, restoration director at Save the Bay in Rhode Island, for her cooperation on numerous projects, including the Coalition's pilot use of runneling as a salt marsh restoration technique.

THANK YOU, DEPARTING BOARD MEMBERS

In 2024, we saw a few board members leave us after many years of dedication. **Laura Ryan Shachoy** of Marion had served 15 years, six of those as Chair. **John Bullard** of New Bedford and Westport served two turns: from 1998-2012, four of those years as Chair, and 2018-2024. **Drew Dimmick** of Vineyard Haven and Cataumet, **Lloyd MacDonald** of Dartmouth, and **Kat Jones** of Onset had also left the Board having each served between 6-8 years. We thank them for their exceptional service.



USDA Certification Leads to Preservation of Three Dartmouth Farms

During the summer of 2024, Buzzards Bay Coalition became one of a select few organizations nationwide to receive “Certified Entity” status from the United States Department of Agriculture. This milestone is already yielding results.

THIS PAGE The Tavares Farm with its hundred acre forest, Slocums River, and the Bay stretching out behind it

INSET The grass-fed cows of Jordan Farm (top) Farmers Tucker Manley and Bethany Costa, the new owners at Wainer Farm (bottom)



FARMS ARE an important part of the Buzzards Bay landscape. Preserving them not only helps local economies, particularly in the watershed’s western “Farm Coast” towns of Little Compton, Tiverton, Westport, and Dartmouth, but also keeps farming systems alive. What’s more, the land use of a farm is almost always more beneficial to our ecosystem than residential and commercial development, given that farmers keep many natural landscapes that surround their farmland intact.

USDA Certified Entity status allows eligible conservation organizations administrative flexibility that can streamline preservation projects as they move through application, funding, and closing.

As a result of our new status as a Certified Entity, the Coalition was able to close on the conservation of three farms—Tavares Farm, Jordan Farm, and Wainer Farm—in the fall of 2024.

The Tavares Farm conservation restriction (CR) protects 148 acres of land along Slades Corner Road, while allowing forestry and agricultural activities to continue. This large CR protects critical wildlife habitat and the Slocums River watershed while adding to the assemblage of protected land in the immediate area.

The CR at Jordan Farm, at the corner of Jordan and Allens Neck Roads, adds to the existing protected farmland in the area and protects the Allens Pond watershed. Farming of grass-fed beef cattle and habitat restoration are hallmarks of this property.

The Wainer Farm on Barneys Joy Road, contains prime agricultural soils, which will be protected by the CR due to the removal of the risk of development. This acquisition was done through a “Buy-Protect-Sell” transaction, in which the Coalition purchased the land, protected it with a CR, and resold the property to a local farmer with the restriction that it remains farmland.

What does the future hold? With this certification, we are positioned to attract even more federal dollars through the Farm Bill, embark on more projects, and ultimately protect more land.

IN THE WATERSHED

WATERSHED PROTECTION IS ABOUT CONSERVING ALL OF THE PARTS OF THE

Buzzards Bay ecosystem—forests, wetlands, rivers, streams, and groundwater, as well as harbors and coves. These critical areas provide important habitats, protect our drinking water sources, and act as natural pollution filters for the Bay.

Through watershed protection, the Coalition safeguards the region's forests, streams, and wetlands, and it works to restore damaged areas so the Bay ecosystem can thrive.



CHALLENGE

Nearly half of the land in the 432-square-mile Buzzards Bay watershed is undeveloped and unprotected. The fate of these lands is fundamental to our efforts to protect clean water. Without saving the most important forests, streams, and wetlands from poorly planned development, the Bay cannot survive.

STRATEGY

We pursue a Bay-focused land protection strategy to conserve the watershed's most vulnerable forests and streams—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 region.

RESULTS

The Coalition manages the largest land conservation program in southeastern Massachusetts. Since 1998, we've protected more than 11,000 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.

Waterfront Blueberry Farm Key Addition to Acushnet River Protected Land Network

The Acushnet River Reserve includes the Sawmill, LaPalme Farm, Hamlin Crossing, and Keating Woods, totaling approximately 100 acres. Another important 17 acres along the estuary was acquired and added to that network in 2024.

Conservation of the former Robichaud Blueberry Farm is part of a larger effort coordinated by the Coalition to protect the Town of Acushnet's only coastal shoreline. The Coalition acquired title to the property in December and removed structures on the site. The Coalition will record a permanent conservation restriction and develop a trail system through the coastal forest and along the saltmarsh that will connect with the existing Keating Woods portion of the reserve next door.

With the EPA cleanup of New Bedford Harbor's toxic PCBs inching closer to completion at this location, the site will create waterfront green space newly accessible to the public in a neighborhood where there have been few such opportunities. Ensuring green space

and coastal access for disadvantaged communities is important for promoting environmental justice and providing equitable opportunities for health, recreation, and economic benefits.

The property has a long history of agricultural use as a local farm, most recently producing blueberries. Since the blueberry bush orchard, albeit overgrown, still exists on the property, the Coalition hopes to continue that use after evaluating the possibilities. The property will also be used as a site for Bay Adventure outdoor programming with the help of an existing barn there. In the long term we see the potential for coordinated connections to abutting conservation land all along the waterfront and this site ultimately serving as an anchor for a greenway riverfront trail.



LEFT PAGE The Robichaud property is one of the last green spaces along the Acushnet River estuary. **ABOVE** With the land's protection, the salt marsh on the Robichaud property has the opportunity to expand inland as sea levels rise.

IN THE WATERSHED | *Highlights of 2024*

In 2024, we actively pursued new opportunities to protect and restore the Bay's most important forests, streams, and wetlands—the natural filters that support clean water. You can learn more about these projects and all our work to conserve land and restore damaged natural areas at www.savebuzzardsbay.org.



Mattapoisett Bogs Re-Open After a Year of Restoration

Closed to visitors while heavy machinery excavated sand and removed man-made irrigation structures, the former cranberry bog site along Acushnet Road was formally re-opened in November 2024. Partners from the US Department of Agriculture, the MA Division of Ecological Restoration, and the Town of Mattapoisett joined Buzzards Bay Coalition staff and supporters to celebrate this comprehensive community improvement. This restoration of bog to native wetlands will benefit natural vegetation, fish and wildlife passage and habitat, and floodplain connectivity. Most importantly, it will help protect the adjacent public drinking water supply for Marion, Mattapoisett, Fairhaven and Rochester.



Land on Bourne Cove Protected in Partnership with Neighbors

The Coalition partnered with neighbors to raise more than a \$1 million at the beginning of 2024 and worked with the Indian Neck Common Lands Trust to purchase the 12-acre Birch Family forest on Wareham's Indian Neck and forever protect it as open space. This upland forest and open meadow is now owned and managed by the Trust, while the Coalition retains a permanent conservation restriction on the property.



Jack's Marsh Wetland Restoration

The Crooked River, a coastal marsh on Wareham's Great Neck, has been damaged by tidally restrictive infrastructure and former cranberry growing at the site. The Coalition, in partnership with the Town and Wildlands Trust, has retained an environmental engineering firm with a grant of \$300,000 from the state to begin data collection and engineering studies, and explore design alternatives. Through restoration of tidal exchange and aquatic connectivity with the adjacent coastal wetland, this project will serve to facilitate pathways for inland salt marsh migration in response to rising sea levels, restore natural coastal stream processes, and promote natural wetland biodiversity.



Salt Winds Trail Debuts

The Coalition acquired the nine-acre Salt Winds Farm on Sconticut Neck in Fairhaven in 2022 to protect important local farmland, and open up a new point of access to New Bedford Harbor. In the fall of 2024, with funding help from the Fairhaven Community Preservation Act, the Coalition opened a short but scenic path through diverse landscapes. Starting in an open grass field, the trail passes through a section of maritime forest and a salt marsh, and ends at the beach on New Bedford Harbor.



IN THE WATERSHED | *Looking Ahead*

Bog-to-Native Wetland Work Continues in Rochester

Last farmed in 2019, the 60-acre Stuart Bogs was acquired by the Coalition in 2021 from the Decas Cranberry Co. as they were retiring low-performing bogs. We are now working to restore the property back to freshwater wetlands that connect to Snipatuit Pond and the west branch of the Sippican River.

Cranberry growing is changing in our watershed, and many growers are looking for opportunities to retire low production bogs. These same places are often also high priorities for wetland restoration.

The Stuart Bogs project is part of this trend to retire a variety of farmed bogs and return them to their original wetland ecosystem. In 2024, design began, and Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration announced that it would fund the construction at \$1,640,000, which will include the removal of two feet of sand and the unique opportunity to restore a rare Atlantic White Cedar swamp.

The Coalition is again working with partners USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), MassDER, the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation's Trails Program. Given these collaborations,

we hope to follow the success of the similar Mattapoisett Bogs project, but also learn from their differences. This project will also inform future projects.

Permitting will take place in 2025 and construction should begin later that year for a hopeful late 2026 re-opening, which will include an improved trail system to ensure all enjoy the landscape.



TOP The historic cranberry screen house at Stuart Bog will be preserved. **INSET** An aerial of Stuart Bogs

ON THE WATER

WE ALL SHARE THE SAME VISION FOR BUZZARDS BAY: A SCENIC SHORELINE WITH safe swimming beaches, clean 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 pollution.

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

CHALLENGE

The most serious and difficult challenge facing the Bay is nitrogen pollution: the vast majority of which leaches from our home septic systems into sensitive harbors and coves. The Bay is also threatened by bacterial contamination, oil spills, toxic pollution, and increasingly by climate change.

STRATEGY

For 32 years, the Coalition has kept a watchful eye on the Bay's health through our nationally recognized Baywatchers 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.

RESULTS

We pursue Bay restoration and protection at all levels of government—local, state, and federal—and in court when necessary. Through strong advocacy, we're securing limits on nitrogen pollution, working with towns to update wastewater treatment, and always defending laws to make the Bay safer from oil spills.



Buttonwood-to-Bay Project Attracts \$6.5 Million in Grants to Restore Degraded Stream

The Coalition is actively partnering with local municipalities, state and federal agencies, and other non-profits to restore Buttonwood Brook and Apponagansett Bay through several grant funded projects to improve water quality, habitat, and community resilience.

Buttonwood Brook winds its way through New Bedford and Dartmouth before emptying into Apponagansett Bay in Dartmouth. One of the most degraded streams feeding into the Bay, it has long been plagued by contaminated runoff and sediment from urban streets, parking lots, and lawns, combined with aging sewer and drainage infrastructure. These development-related impacts lead to high nitrogen pollution and bacteria levels, increase the risk of flash flooding, and negatively impact local wildlife. The water quality in Apponagansett Bay has consistently ranked in the bottom 10% of all of the major harbors and coves in the Buzzards Bay Watershed.

Led by the Buzzards Bay Coalition, Buttonwood-to-Bay is a five-year EPA funded project designed to bring together local communities, non-profits, and municipalities to tackle longstanding issues that impact local water quality and community resilience. Now in its third year, Buttonwood-to-Bay represents a once in a generation opportunity to holistically assess the watershed, identify underlying issues, and mobilize the resources required to implement solutions.

The Coalition has leveraged the EPA's initial grant of \$750,000 to attract more than eight times that amount and is embarking on an exciting array of projects to save Buttonwood Brook. For example, green drainage and street tree projects will reduce stormwater pollution along the Kempton Street Corridor, in Buttonwood Park, and in the Buttonwood Park Zoo. On the lowest segment of Buttonwood Brook, ecological restoration

projects will modify several aging dams and culverts, reconnect floodplains, and restore stream habitat. In Dartmouth, the Coalition is working together with the Town on a project called “Connect to Protect” to make it easier for residents in areas served by municipal sewer systems to connect their homes and abandon aging septic systems that leach harmful levels of nitrogen into the Bay.

These projects will reduce harmful pollutants in local waterways, lower the potential for beach and shellfish closures and increase community resilience to extreme weather events.

The Coalition was awarded the Multiplier Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for leveraging an initial \$750,000 grant into over \$6.5 million (and counting) for the projects in the Buttonwood-to-Bay Project:

Connect to Protect		Kempton Street Corridor	
FEDERAL	\$100,000	FEDERAL	\$3,356,027
LOCAL	\$40,000	STATE	\$350,750
Buttonwood Park Zoo		Dam Modification	
FEDERAL	\$615,000	FEDERAL	\$1,301,844
LOCAL	\$20,000	STATE	\$58,000
PRIVATE	\$10,000	PRIVATE	\$728,000

LEFT PAGE Hidden in this photo, Buttonwood Brook weaves through neighborhoods of homes, roads, driveways and lawns on its way to Apponagansett Bay.

In 2024, we continued our ongoing fight against nitrogen pollution in Buzzards Bay, defended the Bay against threats and worked to prevent new sources of pollution from fouling our waters. You can learn more about these projects and all our work to protect clean water through science and advocacy at www.savebuzzardsbay.org.



Salt Marsh Plant Cover Triples at Marsh Island

The Coalition has worked to restore the largest remaining stretch of undeveloped land along the New Bedford Inner Harbor, 11 acres of salt marsh in Fairhaven, lost since the 1930s. Over the last couple of years, we have removed sandy fill and re-created a system of tidal creeks that provide saltwater to newly planted marsh plants. At our permanent vegetation survey points, we tracked a tripling in the salt marsh plant cover only one year after that re-planting. We're looking forward to opening the trails at Marsh Island to the public in the fall of 2025.



Logger Network Grows with Generous NSF Grant

For more than 30 years, volunteers have been essential to monitoring the health of the bay. But because water quality declines can be missed by human monitors who only sample once every 5 days, the Coalition deployed continuously-recording water quality sensors called HOBOT Loggers in strategic locations to better understand water quality dynamics. The number of loggers has grown from three to twenty in the last five years with the help of grants and a partnership with the Woodwell Climate Research Center. And the National Science Foundation has invested nearly \$2 million in 2024 to understand how best to automate the processing of this wealth of data, how volunteers can continue to help, and how to improve overall data quality.



Gooseberry Causeway Study Completes Final Year of Field Science

Our three-year Gooseberry Causeway study assembled a renowned group of scientists to use new advances in oceanography to study how water and sand move along the coast surrounding the causeway, stretching from Little Compton through Westport to Dartmouth. The area has seen dramatic changes over the last few decades, including severe erosion at Westport's East Beach and increased sand shoaling at the mouths of the Westport and Slocums Rivers. Severe damage from recent storm surges have really increased the need for this science. Full results will be released in 2025.



MassDEP Issues Pollution Limits on Wareham River and New Bedford Inner Harbor

MassDEP is required by the federal Clean Water Act to develop a "pollution budget" designed to restore the health of an impaired waterbody. This budget, generally referred to as a Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, identifies sources of the pollutant, determines the maximum amount of the discharge to meet water quality standards, and develops a plan to meet that goal. The Coalition has long advocated for these TMDLs and the state issued them for the Wareham River and New Bedford's Inner Harbor this year.



ON THE WATER | *Looking Ahead*

Financing Sewers to Address Wastewater Pollution

You can see it in the algae blooms, the disappearance of shellfish and in the murkiness of the water. More than half of the Bay's harbors, coves, and tidal rivers suffer from the effects of nitrogen pollution.

Residential septic systems are the largest single source of nitrogen pollution to Buzzards Bay and strong wastewater systems are the best way to reduce the nitrogen load in our waters. But our towns need more than \$3 billion to renovate and build the necessary sewer infrastructure.

This year, the Coalition worked with local legislators to file legislation to establish a commission to study and recommend new funding avenues for wastewater treatment for municipalities along the South Coast. Massachusetts State Sen. Mark C. Montigny of New Bedford and Representative Chris Markey of Dartmouth filed their legislation at the beginning of the 2025 session to create the commission.

On Cape Cod, towns came together to create the Cape Cod Water Protection Fund which utilizes an excise tax on short-term rental fees. The fund has raised more than \$100 million since it was devised in 2018 and today covers 25% of eligible wastewater cleanup projects for all Cape towns. Proposing a state fund, like Cape Cod's, from which South Coast towns could draw, is one of the many ideas that the Commission may explore as part of its work.

The Coalition looks forward to participating on this newly established commission in order to find creative solutions to the funding barriers that are impeding cleaner waters in the Bay.

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 upon people knowing, loving and valuing the Bay as important to their lives.

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

CHALLENGE

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

STRATEGY

Connecting people to the Bay is a fundamental part of our work. We tackle 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 long-term stewardship.

RESULTS

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

Students Thrilled to Learn Aboard Schooner *Ernestina-Morrissey*

The *Ernestina-Morrissey* made scientific expeditions and helped survey the Arctic for the United States Government during World War II. She transported thousands of immigrants to America from Cape Verde. Today, she is a designated National Historic Landmark and official tallship of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

What better way to learn about and appreciate maritime science and cultural awareness than to experience educational activities on a vessel that embodies it? Local students now have access to the *Ernestina* through the Coalition.

In 2024, we completed two successful weeks of pilot school programs aboard *Schooner Ernestina-Morrissey* in partnership with the ship's steward, the Massachusetts Maritime Academy—the first such programs aboard the Schooner in 21 years. In total, 376 New Bedford kids grades 3 to 12 explored the Bay with us and learned about the Schooner's rich history.

Over an immersive five-hour tour, students worked together to hoist and drop the sails and rotated through experiential learning stations aboard the sailing schooner. Students pulled buckets from the bay for water quality testing, imagined life aboard the ship crossing the Atlantic from Cape Verde to the US, investigated the fascinating many “lives” of *Ernestina*'s history, and engaged in navigation-plotting and forward watch lookout positions with crew members.

Following the success of this pilot program, Buzzards Bay Coalition is again partnering with Mass Maritime to extend these field experiences for New Bedford Public School students to 15 days of trips in 2025 and 20 days in 2026 and 2027.



Students rotate through experiential learning stations onboard the Ernestina-Morrissey.

LEFT PAGE Our two weeks of pilot programs on the Schooner *Ernestina-Morrissey* exploring the Bay were the first such programs in 21 years.

Throughout 2024, people like you took action to get outside and support the Coalition's work in communities throughout our region. You can learn more about all our opportunities to swim, ride, volunteer, or attend an event at www.savebuzzardsbay.org.



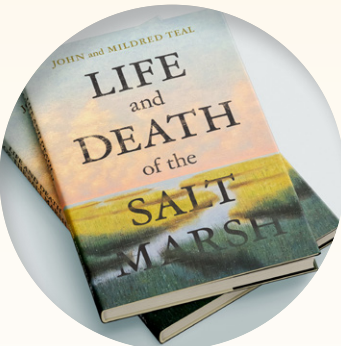
Swim Cancellation Leads to Call for Federal Action on CSOs

A downpour on the night before the 31st Annual Buzzards Bay Swim, scheduled for June 22, triggered discharges of raw sewage from New Bedford's combined sewer overflow (CSO) pipes into the Outer Harbor, where the swim was set to take place. Though disappointing for the swimmers, volunteers, and staff, a decision was made to cancel the event to ensure the safety of all participants. Emphasizing the need to upgrade New Bedford's wastewater infrastructure, the Coalition and 388 swimmers sent a letter to the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, calling for increased federal funding to address CSOs, and Buzzards Bay Swim participants are ready to help advocate for solutions.



Our Activities' Glow-Up

Bay Adventures and Onset Bay Center Programs offered a Glow Hike, Glow Bike and Glow Paddle, bringing hundreds of people into our programs. 2,249 individuals took part in our Activity Programming; another 1,583 took advantage of our Community Programming. More than 600 kids participated in our Summer Youth Programs, 83 of whom were scholarship recipients, totaling 138 free and discounted weeks. The center has also become a destination in the area for events: 6,950 guests celebrating private events in 2024 and 29 community and nonprofit partners utilized our space and equipment for 154 community events.



Re-Release of Landmark Environmental Book

Fifty-five years ago, *Life and Death of the Salt Marsh* motivated a generation of coastal citizens and lawmakers to advocate for arguably the most important ecosystem on the Atlantic seaboard. The Coalition has re-released the breakthrough text as the salt marsh's worst threat—climate change—looms large. This hardcover edition boasts a foreword by Coalition president Mark Rasmussen and a new cover visual designed by Coalition designer Hannah Haines; paintings for the cover were donated by artist Peter Stone of Marion. Copies of the book are being sold at book stores throughout our watershed towns and by the Coalition at www.savebuzzardsbay.org/books.



Coalition Brings South Coast Almanac On Board

For the past eight years, the premier regional magazine *South Coast Almanac* has covered all that makes the South Coast communities in the Buzzards Bay watershed the unique places that they are. In the fall of 2024, the Coalition assumed ownership of *South Coast Almanac* and hired its editorial team to continue building a community of residents willing to protect the watershed. "*South Coast Almanac* will continue to encourage people to explore our region beyond their own backyards," says Coalition president Mark Rasmussen. "They will continue to do that just as they have done since 2016."



WITH PEOPLE | *Looking Ahead*

Douglass Farm Finds New Life in Summer and Holidays

The Coalition piloted a new kids camp site and is continuing Christmas tree sales at the famed Fairhaven Christmas tree farm. Conservation of the land expands on the Coalition's significant investment in preserving this unique peninsula.

In late 2023, the Buzzards Bay Coalition purchased 26 acres of land on Sconticut Neck in Fairhaven that will safeguard water quality and coastal habitats in the face of sea level rise, preserve the scenic beauty of “The Neck,” and protect farmland.

The waterfront property had been with the Douglass family for decades, and Richard and Vivian Douglass began conserving part of the land by recording a conservation restriction with the Coalition on a portion of the farm nearly 20 years ago.

The Nasketucket Bay Explorers camp pilot was held in the middle of August 2024 for a full week of summer programs. Kids aged 10 to 14 joined us for kayaking, sailing, fishing and shoreline hikes. They also participated in field activities made possible from equipment loaned to the camp from the Coalition's Onset Bay Center.

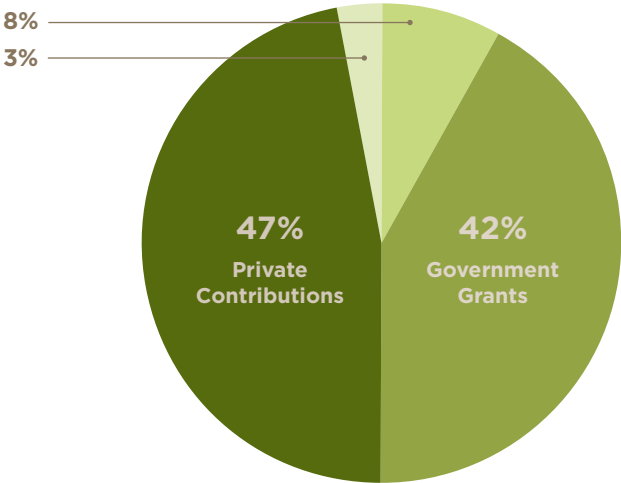
In the future, we are hoping to offer such camps at this location, grow the camp frequency and attendance, and transform the family home into a camp headquarters.

In December of 2024, we offered the gift of a large Christmas tree from the farm to the towns in our Buzzards Bay watershed. Falmouth, Carver, Marion, Wareham and Fairhaven took us up on the offer.

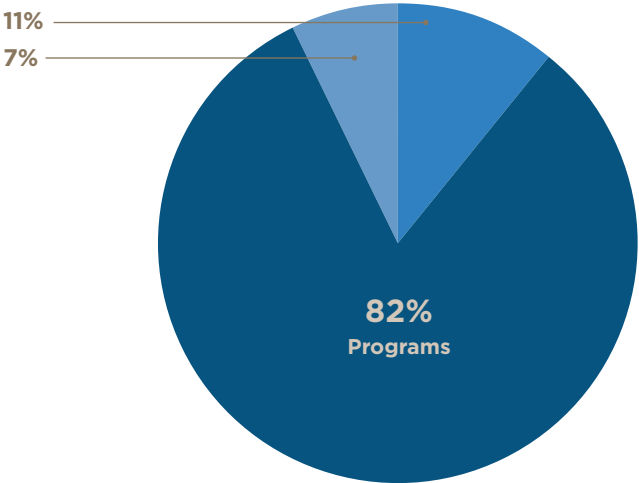
An additional 50 trees that the Coalition cut down on the property were sold to the public on an early December Saturday. Staff were on-hand with some holiday cheer to help those purchasing a tree.



*Camp attendants are offered sailing program at this waterfront property. **TOP** An aerial of the Douglass Farm during the summer camp season*



REVENUE		
Private Contributions	8,273,923	
Government Grants	7,503,344	
Investment and Other Income	1,331,511	
Fundraising Events	602,302	
Total Revenue	17,711,080	



OPERATING EXPENSES		
Programs	11,567,910	
Administration	1,595,974	
Fundraising	1,014,826	
Total Expenses	14,178,710	

NET ASSETS	
Beginning	45,395,022
Increase in Net Assets	3,532,371
ENDING NET ASSETS	48,927,393

TREASURER’S REPORT
CHRIS SCHADE

The Buzzards Bay Coalition continues its growth trajectory of our conservation work, ending the year with nearly \$49 Million in net assets. The vast majority of these assets represent the value of the lands we hold for conservation.

This annual report encompasses the unaudited financials for the period January 1 to December 31, 2024. This was the first year of our new fiscal cycle.

Growth in private contributions along with increases in government grants continue to enable expansion of our conservation and public outreach efforts. Investment gains to the Coalition’s endowment were modest and consistent with our target indexes. Spending from the endowment occurred in accordance with policies established by the Board of Directors,

balancing the need for a predictable stream of returns with long-term asset protection.

Our continued growth in conservation, science, restoration, advocacy, and outreach correlate directly to the financial contributions of you, our supporters! This coming year has great prospects as we are preparing to make the single largest conservation land acquisition in our history. At this critical juncture, the protection of the Buzzards Bay Watershed is more important than ever, and our shared commitment to the Coalition will protect our Bay for generations to come.

The Coalition’s FY24 Financial Statements are being audited by the firm Allan Smith & Company CPAs of Stoughton, MA.

WHERE WE WORK

The Buzzards Bay Coalition works throughout the Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound watersheds to protect and restore the region's coastal, river, and drinking water quality and the upland forests, wetlands, and streams that support a healthy coastal ecosystem.



Beginning at Sakonnet Point in Rhode Island in the west, our service area runs along the watershed boundaries for Little Compton's coastal saltponds, then northeast along the Buzzards Bay watershed boundary until it reaches Nobska Point in Falmouth in the east. From Nobska, our work crosses to West Chop on Martha's Vineyard along the edge of Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds, then runs up island along the Vineyard Sound coastal watershed boundary to Squibnocket Point and Gay Head. Our western seaward edge is defined by the municipal boundary of the town of Gosnold until it meets the jurisdictional boundary for "MGL 21M, Chapter 251 of the Acts of 2004," which establishes the edge of compliance with oil spill prevention rules for tank barges entering Buzzards Bay.

The Buzzards Bay Coalition also monitors land use and supports water quality protection efforts in the Assawompset Ponds watershed in Lakeville and Middleboro due to the pond's historical physical connections to Buzzards Bay through the Acushnet and Mattapoisett Rivers and their role as the public drinking water supply for the city of New Bedford.

Buzzards Bay Coalition
114 Front Street
New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740

(508) 999-6363
info@savebuzzardsbay.org

www.savebuzzardsbay.org



#savebuzzardsbay



buzzards
BAY
COALITION

BLUE WATERS
GREEN SPACES
FOR EVERYONE