

2025

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.**

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◀ ON THE COVER

Cranberries during harvest in Carver (front) and native, freshwater wetlands at Tripps Mill, Mattapoissett (back)

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TO OUR FRIENDS

2025

was a very big year for the Buzzards Bay Coalition—so big that we had to supersize one of the pages inside to give you a sense of the magnitude!

We are at an inflection point, with an unprecedented opportunity to protect and restore much of the Bay watershed's most critical land. As many cranberry growers respond to market changes that have them retiring older, unproductive bogs, the challenge is ensuring that these lands in need of restoration—nearly all integrated into important rivers and wetlands—are not sold off for development and other uses that may negatively impact the Bay.

In 2025, we met the moment. You'll read about the Slocum-Gibbs Cranberry Company purchase which conserved 1,652 acres, as well as another 670 acres along the Agawam River that we purchased from the AD Makepeace Company. These are among the first of what will be many similar conservation opportunities in the years ahead, and our ability to take them on will define the Bay landscape and its health for generations to come.

Situated in the upper reaches of the watershed, the newly conserved lands hug three important rivers that make their way into Buzzards Bay: the Sippican, Weweantic, and Agawam. Don't let their winding and meandering paths fool you; these waterways directly impact water quality in the miles-away Bay. An astonishing 15 percent of all fresh water that enters the Bay originates from these rivers. In addition to improving water quality, their restoration and protection will greatly improve fish and wildlife habitat along their corridors and provide wonderful public recreation opportunities.

Save Buzzards Bay. They're not just words on a bumper sticker for us. Every day, our staff and volunteers are focused on that mission. We know that they're not just words on a bumper sticker for you either. We simply couldn't do this work without you!

From far and wide, you have decided to stand up for Buzzards Bay through your generous donations, your time and your talents. Since its beginning, the Coalition has brought together a diverse group of people with a single-minded focus: This beautiful Bay is a precious resource that needs vigilance, expertise, and drive to protect it.

Together, we have never been more effective in doing just that. Thank you!



Mark Rasmussen, *President*

David Croll, *Chair, Board of Directors*

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

2,187

New Acres Conserved

10

**New Special Places
Permanently Protected**

390

**Acres of Wetlands Under
Active Restoration**

50

**Miles of Trails
Maintained**

5,402

**Water Samples Taken in Buzzards
Bay and Vineyard Sound**

13

**Rivers Added to
Monitoring Programs**

7,061

**Outdoor Exploration
Program Participants**

962

**Swim and Ride Participants
and Volunteers**

The Buzzards Bay Coalition's Financial Statements speak to our financial stability and the growing support of our members year over year—literally the fuel that drives our programs and success. You can always view our tax filings and audited financial statements on our website at savebuzzardsbay.org/financials. The Coalition was audited in 2025 by the accounting firm of Allan Smith & Company CPAs.

Cranberry Land Purchases Lead to Record Year for Conservation

Slocum-Gibbs and AD Makepeace worked with and sold record acres of land to the Coalition for future river and wetland restoration.

MORE THAN 15 PERCENT of all land flowing to Buzzards Bay is owned by cranberry growers. And in some areas of the watershed around the Sippican, Weweantic, Wankinco, and Agawam rivers in Rochester, Wareham, Carver, and Plymouth, those figures are greater than 50 percent land ownership. With global changes in the cranberry industry squeezing Massachusetts' historic bogs in favor of more industrial-scale growing in other states and countries, many local growers are looking for options for what to do with their land — not just their bogs but the tens of thousands of acres of forests and wetlands that they also own.

For years, it was feared that bogs would be abandoned and the adjacent buildable land would be sold off to developers. Or sand and gravel mining. Or clearcut for solar panel arrays. But there was another option: preserve the land and restore the bogs back to wetlands, and allow everyone to enjoy the land in its return to its natural origins.

The Buzzards Bay Coalition finished up restoration work in 2024 on such a project, the Mattapoissett Bogs, a 50 acre bog originally farmed by Decas Cranberries and acquired by the Coalition in 2010. Fourteen years in the making, it is widely regarded as a massive success.

Would other cranberry growers follow suit?

Enter Carver's John "Gary" Garretson III, who owned Slocum-Gibbs Cranberry Company, founded originally by his great grandfather more than 100 years ago. Garretson was thinking about retirement, and he sat down with his wife and two daughters to discuss the family legacy.

Garretson decided to sell more than 1,600 acres of his expansive property to the Coalition. "Gary and his family had decided that conservation should be the next chapter for the Slocum-Gibbs Cranberry Company, and we worked together to bring that vision to reality,"

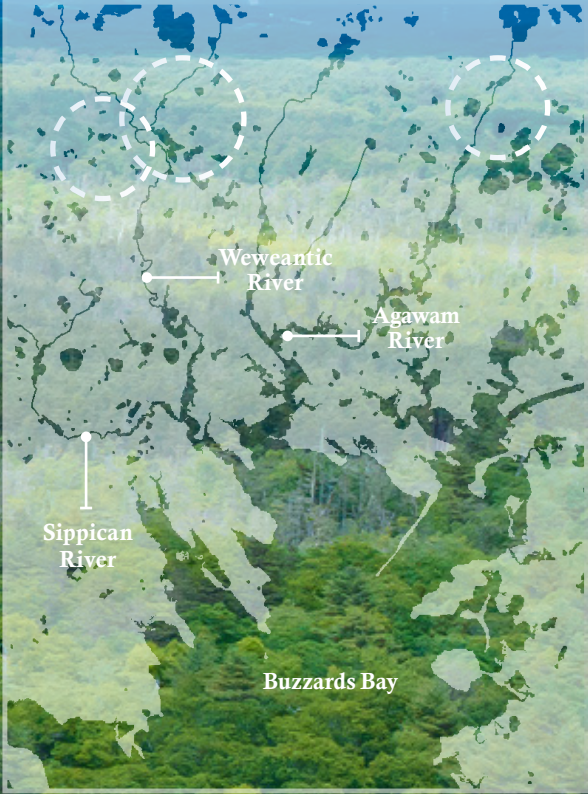
said Mark Rasmussen, President of the Buzzards Bay Coalition. Funding for the \$9.5 million purchase came from a variety of sources: \$5.5 million in state grants; \$2.15 million in federal grants; and \$375,000 each from Carver and Wareham's community preservation funds. Private donations were also crucial to the purchase.

The land is now permanently protected by conservation restrictions and engineering is underway for the restoration of 165 acres of the property's cranberry bogs back into native wetlands. And an additional 35 acres of high-performing, modern bogs will continue to be farmed for cranberries. The conservation of land will benefit water quality in the Weweantic and Sippican rivers, aquifers, and the Bay, and conserve critical habitat for fish and wildlife.

As 2025 came to a close, there was more good news. In December, the Coalition, AD Makepeace, and the Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game came to an agreement to transfer acreage surrounding the Agawam River by the Redbrook community in South Plymouth for conservation and restoration. This will lead to improved water quality and fish habitat for an important waterway leading to Buzzards Bay.

The acquisition includes two dams which the Coalition will remove. The Agawam is the strongest River Herring river on Buzzards Bay and was historically-treasured for its brook trout — so fish migration and habitat improvements will be a big part of this project in the years to come. Funding for this \$2.6 million purchase came from the federal National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration due to the project's benefits to downstream coastal waters and fish habitats.

Miles of walking trails on both properties will be opened to the public next year!



ABOVE Circle on the right represents the upper reaches of the Agawam River which are now protected with the AD Makepeace purchase. Circles to the left represent areas surrounding the Sippican and Weweantic Rivers protected with the Slocum-Gibbs purchase.



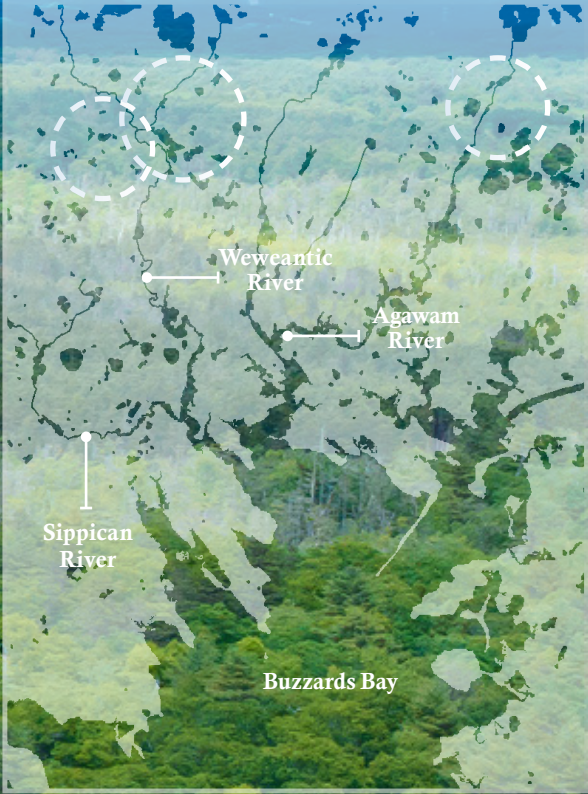
This is where Buzzards Bay begins.

BACKGROUND PHOTO *This isn't Maine.*
It's a bird's eye view of Buzzards
Bay lands protected with this year's
Slocum-Gibbs purchase.



**Scan code to hear
Gary Garretson's story**

VIDEO BY CHLOE MANGOLD



ABOVE Circle on the right represents the upper reaches of the Agawam River which are now protected with the AD Makepeace purchase. Circles to the left represent areas surrounding the Sippican and Weweantic Rivers protected with the Slocum-Gibbs purchase.

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 16,000 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.

Coalition Conserves More Places for Salt Marsh Migration

By conserving land adjacent to major salt marshes, the Coalition is preparing these crucial wetlands for a climate change-influenced future.

Thriving on the ebb and flow of the tide, salt marshes provide a critical ecosystem for wildlife, coastal resilience, and ensuring clean water. Moreover, salt marshes are carbon sinks, storing three to four times more planet warming carbon than tropical forests.

The Coalition's work on salt marshes has revealed that we are losing local salt marshes primarily due to rising sea levels. Salt marshes can migrate to higher ground when there is available adjacent space, but such spaces are threatened by the development of that coastal land.

A number of years ago, the Coalition began to plan strategically with a long-term view toward maximizing opportunities for healthy salt marshes in the future. VP of Watershed Protection Brendan Annett says, "we now focus on protecting the remaining natural, undeveloped land that abuts the Bay's marshes in order to provide the space necessary to sustain these vital habitats."

It's been a steady march working towards this goal with significant strides made in 2025.

In Fairhaven, protecting land behind Wide Marsh on Sciticut Neck began three years ago with the Coalition's purchase of Wide Marsh Farm from the Jenney family. The Coalition purchased the farm, placed a conservation restriction on it, then re-sold it to another farmer—protecting the land but still allowing farming to occur.

In June, the Coalition purchased an additional parcel owned by the Trott family that takes up the lower part of the project's footprint. The Coalition also acquired

a conservation restriction on the Viveiros Farm in between the Trott Woods land and the Wide Marsh Farm land, allowing farming but protecting it from future development.

Over in Marion, the Coalition purchased 27 acres of forest and wetlands on Aucoot Cove in October, filling a remaining gap in a large complex of preserved land that will be crucial for salt marsh migration there. The acquisition nearly completes the protection of the Aucoot Cove shoreline. Also in Marion, 67 acres of salt marsh adaptation land were conserved through the purchase of a cranberry farm along the tidal portion of the Sippican River.

In March, the Coalition worked with the Town of Wareham to purchase a conservation restriction on the Little Harbor golf club, which consists of 57 coastal acres.

And in Dartmouth, the Buzzards Bay Coalition recently conserved 22 acres of land on Little River Road. The scenic land will allow space for the salt marshes to move into as rising sea level threatens the existing marsh.

This strategic attention to land abutting local salt marshes will be a continued focus of our land protection work, as we prepare the Bay to adapt to the effects of climate change.

LEFT PAGE Rachel Jakuba, Ph.D., Vice President, Bay Science at Little Bay, Fairhaven

Prescribed Burn on Cuttyhunk Improves Habitat, Protects Homes

The Coalition partnered with Massachusetts DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry, MassWildlife, and the Town of Gosnold Fire Department to burn 30 acres on Cuttyhunk Island, half of which is owned by the Coalition and on half of which the Coalition holds a conservation restriction. This preventative measure decreases the amount of brush (fuel) in the area to reduce the risk of a wildfire from spreading into town. It also maintains this slope as maritime grassland—an important but declining habitat type in our region, which provide habitat for migratory birds such as sparrows, meadowlarks, American kestrels, and more.

Jack Sidar, Land Stewardship Director, assists in the prescribed burn.

Two More Dartmouth Farms Forever Conserved

A conservation restriction that prohibits future development has been placed on the last remaining farm in Padanaram, a 10-acre farm fondly known as Merrylegs Farm. The Owen family has owned the land since 1895, and the farm was once known for breeding prize Morgan horses. It is now being leased by Flying Carrot Farm, a family farm known for their fresh vegetables and eggs. The Coalition also purchased 16 acres on Tucker Road and will resell it to a farmer in 2026 subject to a conservation restriction. These projects were made possible due to funding from the USDA Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Program. Among a select few nationwide, the Coalition has been designated as a Certified Entity by USDA to assist in streamlining access to these funds for local farmers.

Merrylegs Farm, the last remaining farm in Padanaram, now preserved forever

Coalition Continues Efforts to Protect Cold Water Streams in Westport

In a strong example of collaboration between the Coalition and local governments, the Coalition is teaming up with the Town of Westport, Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), and the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program to restore cold water streams for brook trout. This effort includes assistance with multiple culverts in Westport that require attention. Culverts with susceptibility to back up and flood, such as those at Angeline Brook, Snell Creek, and Lyons Brook, will be replaced to better convey stormwater flow and restore the river channel for native migratory fish.

Granite culvert at Snell Creek in Westport

Salters Pond Restoration Kicks Off

For years, the Coalition has been exploring options on how to restore the health of Salters Pond by reconnecting it to the Bay. The buildup of muck and low oxygen throughout has made it inhospitable to clams, mussels and blue claw crabs. The Woods Hole Group recommended periodic dredging to deepen the inlet, and neighbors raised more than \$400,000 to implement the pond restoration. The engineering design phase is expected to be completed by summer 2026, with a year of federal, state and local permitting to follow.

Buzzards Bay Coalition staffer monitoring at Salters Pond, Dartmouth in July 2025

In 2025, 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.



An aerial view of the burn on Cuttyhunk last spring

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 33 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.

Marsh Island Reopens and Massive Cleanup Reveals Extent of Harbor Pollution

Restoration efforts at Marsh Island, which began nearly three years ago, have brought five acres of salt marsh on this peninsula back to life, which had been lost since the late 1930s.

Marsh Island is the largest restoration of nature ever on New Bedford Harbor. Located at the site of a former salt marsh filled in with dredged sand from the harbor decades ago, this area was referred to by locals as “Tin Can Island.”

The Buzzards Bay Coalition and its partners have completed the first half of the salt marsh’s restoration, which can now be enjoyed by the public.

The second and final phase will begin in 2030 when the current radio tower lease ends and the giant towers are removed. This phase of the project will uncover additional sediment from the filled marsh and restore native plants and tidal flow, improving water quality and wildlife habitat, further expanding the restored marsh. Once completed, the restored site will feature an expanded perimeter trail, pedestrian bridge, scenic overlooks, and a trailhead parking area, making this entire gem accessible to all.

Debris has accumulated on the shore of this peninsula for decades. While jutting into New Bedford Harbor gives the spot wonderful views of the surrounds, it also makes it a magnet for all the floating trash in the harbor. Days after it was opened, nearly 200 volunteers flocked to Marsh Island to remove tons of debris from its shoreline.

These four full days of trash pickup were a collaboration between the Center for Coastal Studies’ Beach Brigade, Operation Clean Sweep, Buzzards Bay Coalition, Fairhaven-Acushnet Land Preservation Trust, Be the Solution to Pollution, and the municipalities of New Bedford and Fairhaven.



PHOTO BY ERIK KOWALSKI

Volunteers hauled large objects such as tires, oil booms, and sections of docks and collected smaller items such as cups, water bottles, straws, plastic bags, and nips in categorized sacks to be weighed then transferred to a large dumpster. Other items of note collected in vast quantities: fish netting, line, and rope. Volunteers used pickers and even got on their hands and knees to manually separate small plastics from the shoreline dirt.

Following the historic cleanup, everything was weighed to better understand the volumes of debris and where it comes from.

LEFT PAGE New perimeter trail, observation decks and bridge are now open to the public on Marsh Island.

INSET More than 25,000 pounds of debris were collected, including nearly 11,000 pounds of plastics alone.

Advancing Nitrogen Pollution Cleanup in Bourne and Falmouth

With support from the Coalition, the Falmouth Board of Health voted in October 2025 to approve and enact changes requiring septic upgrades to utilize best available nitrogen-reducing technology. These upgrades will be required for new construction or increases in septic flow. Falmouth joins Westport, Marion, Wareham, and Tisbury, which already require such systems. Just north in the town of Bourne, Coalition legal advocacy resulted in an order by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection that Bay View Campground on MacArthur Boulevard fix its wastewater discharge practices and comply with the Massachusetts Clean Waters Act. During its active season, the 407 camp sites at Bay View Campground released more than 36,000 gallons of sewage each day into groundwater that flows to Phinneys Harbor, which is significantly polluted by nitrogen from wastewater.

A nitrogen-reducing septic system being installed in Falmouth

Gooseberry Impact Report Answers Decades-long Questions Related to the Island's Causeway

Gooseberry Causeway is *not* affecting water quality in the Westport River, and it is not the cause of accelerating erosion at East Beach, according to a report released in 2025. Due to long-held concerns that the mile-long Gooseberry Island and its Causeway and other human modifications were affecting the Bay shoreline from Little Compton to Dartmouth, in 2022 the Buzzards Bay Coalition convened a team of scientists from Boston University, Woods Hole Group, and Virginia Institute of Marine Science in a three year intense science effort to understand how this human structure interacts with the land and water around it. Additional findings which focus on Dartmouth's Allen Pond and Slocums River will be released in 2026.

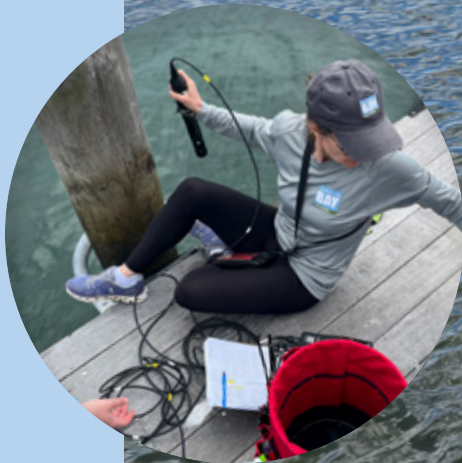
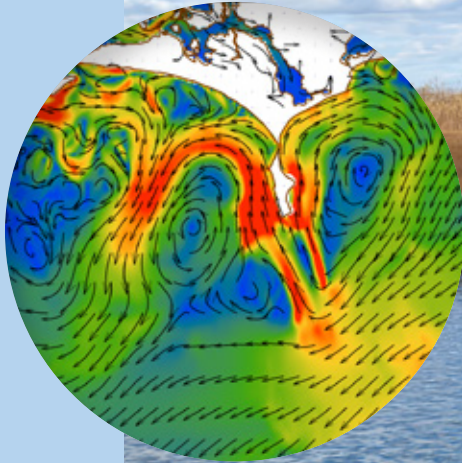
Researchers studied the direction and speed of water movement around Gooseberry Island. The science showed that circulation patterns would be the same with or without the Causeway.

Coalition Expands Autonomous Logger Network Around the Bay

For over three decades, the Coalition has provided the most comprehensive data set that explains the health of Buzzards Bay and its embayments, thanks to its water quality monitoring program. In 2025, the Coalition focused on expanding the reach and volume of the data we collect by increasing our autonomous logger network to include multi-sensor systems in Onset Bay, New Bedford Harbor, Apponagansett Bay, and West Falmouth Harbor as well as other individual sites, for a total of over 20 loggers deployed between the Westport Rivers and Squibnocket Pond on Martha's Vineyard. These loggers measure dissolved oxygen, salinity, and water temperature, three important measurements used by the Coalition to monitor the Bay. Through a National Science Foundation grant with the Woodwell Climate Research Center and others, we are gathering information on how to best use loggers to characterize oxygen dynamics in an embayment. Autonomous loggers record data as often as every 10 minutes, capturing fluctuations *within* the day, due to factors such as sunlight, wind, and tidal activity. This information, along with nutrient sampling, provides a robust picture of embayment health throughout the watershed and will inform the Coalition and policymakers in our efforts to better fight pollution.

Coalition staffer Lara Gulmann Ph.D preps the loggers for deployment.

In 2025, 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.



A researcher retrieves a sensor after a months-long deployment in Allens Pond for the Gooseberry Causeway Impact Study. An overview of Part I of the report can be found at:



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.

Committing to Community, OBC Expands Opportunities for All Families

After another successful year, the Onset Bay Center (OBC) is focusing on assuring that every child has the opportunity to explore, play, and connect with their Bay.

“I caught my first fish!” The words floated across the bay as OBC’s campers were fishing last summer. We believe moments like these sow the seeds of environmental stewardship. It’s why connecting people to the Bay is such a fundamental part of our work.

Each year, the Coalition strives to increase the number of families reached and to expand our inclusiveness. In 2025, our Onset Bay Center scholarship allowed 90 kids who wouldn’t have been able to go to camp a great experience with no cost to the family. This year, the OBC will introduce a tiered pricing structure to keep camps affordable for needs based and local families, along with adding a new age group for 6 and 7 year olds.

This year witnessed some of our campers grow up through the OBC program—beginning as young campers, moving through the Waterfront Training Academy and then into seasonal staff. Diamond Staton says, “As a local kid, I came here as a Bay Explorer and loved every bit of it... and decided I wanted to apply for a job here.” She describes an idyllic 2025 summer as Lead Instructor: “The kids always had smiles on their faces, and there was always laughter in my group.”

BY THE NUMBERS

Onset Bay Center

4,589	participated in free OBC programming
581	kids in summer camp explored in Bay
320	free paddle rentals on special community days
90	camp scholarships awarded

All year long, the OBC also hosts popular community events and outdoor programs. One example: Onset Bay Plunge on January 1 hosted in collaboration with the Onset Bay Association. 2025’s event attracted hundreds of participants and hundreds more were on hand to watch, totaling upwards of 800 people that day on Onset Beach for the festivities.



LEFT PAGE 2025 Onset Bay Plunge ABOVE Campers get outside to explore and appreciate the Bay

New Bedford Students Connect with Cape Verdean Culture and the Bay

The Coalition expanded its innovative *Schooner Ernestina-Morrissey* program to 700 New Bedford sixth-graders, bringing students face-to-face with science, history, culture and navigation skills while day sailing aboard the historic vessel in partnership with the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. When Coalition staffer Carly Baumann asks the groups how many are on a boat for the very first time, a sea of hands routinely shoot up. In 2026, we will bring the experience to every single sixth grader in the New Bedford school system, roughly 1,000 students.

Logan Mendes talks with students aboard the Schooner Ernestina-Morrissey. Logan's great-grandfather Henrique Mendes owned the ship in the mid-1900s.

Swim, Run, Ride Break Records in 2025

It was quite a year for our trio of signature events. The Buzzards Bay Swim was held in Onset in June due to the threat of sewer overflows in New Bedford's Outer Harbor, its usual location. More than 270 eager swimmers took off from Shell Point Beach, swam around Wickets Island, and emerged onto the shores of Onset Beach to a crowd of more than 300 cheering them on. Swimmer fundraising surpassed the \$250,000 goal. Then, 35 runners participated in the Falmouth Road Race in August to raise nearly \$57,000 for the Coalition. 400 riders registered for our October Watershed Ride. The riders enjoyed beautiful, unseasonably warm weather for the event, which rambled by the coastal farmlands, windswept beaches, cranberry bogs, and scenic harbors between Little Compton and Woods Hole, with more than \$300,000 raised.

Longtime swimmer Larry Fish expresses excitement prior to jumping in for our 2025 Swim.

Bay Adventures Engage More Adults and Children Alike

In 2025, our Bay Adventures welcomed 2,472 participants, continuing a steady rise as more families discover this free, guided programming across the Buzzards Bay watershed. Activities connected people to local trails, rivers, and beaches through hands-on outdoor experiences like walking, paddling, biking, and fishing. New themed trail walks and special events kept turnout strong, and Adventure Ready, delivered with the American Red Cross, gave participants practical first aid and CPR basics for on trail emergencies.

Vernon Baptista, Bay Adventures Manager finds amphibian eggs at the vernal pool in Tinkhamtown Woodlands in Mattapoisett.

Coalition Welcomes New Lifeboat at Horseneck Point Life-Saving Station

A new lifeboat was unveiled at the Coalition's lifesaving station in Westport. Commissioned by the Coalition and built by students at the International Yacht Restoration School in Newport, the 25-foot double-ended lapstrake cedar surfboat replaces the one previously on loan to the station, which has returned to its home on Cuttyhunk. Mere weeks later, Coalition staff jumped in it and took part in Dharma Voyage's first-ever Westport River Invitational Regatta with thirteen traditional rowing boats from across New England. The Coalition also supported the publication of *Shipwreck: Horseneck Point Lifesaving Station and South Coast Rescuers* by Charles McGrath, which celebrated the history of the station and the replica's construction.

The lifeboat replica gets its sea legs at the first-ever Westport River Invitational Regatta.

Throughout 2025, 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.



A swimmer dons her medal and t-shirt following our 2025 Swim



Donor Spotlight Julius, Sandra and Vanessa Britto

The Britto family’s history with the Bay begins with Julius and his sister Vanessa’s great-grandfather, a Cape Verdean Whaler. Following the island nation’s independence in 1975, Julius was the driving force in the rescue of the Schooner Ernestina-Morrisey, the State Tall Ship of MA and one of the Coalition’s premier outdoor exploration program sites for New Bedford youth. Through Board service, building connections to the Cape Verdean community, participation in youth programs, and an expanding philanthropic commitment to the Coalition, the Britto Family has made a lasting impact in saving the Bay for the next generation of environmental stewards.

ABOVE Vanessa and Julius Britto flank Cape Verde President José Maria Neves on a 2025 trip to develop further connections between the Island and Buzzards Bay.

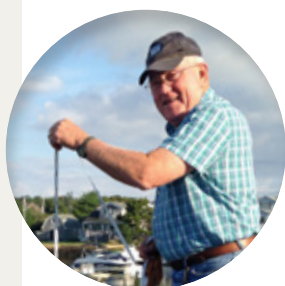
In Appreciation Korrin Petersen & Allen Decker

We are grateful for the dedicated service two long-time legal professionals provided the Coalition over the past two decades. **Korrin Petersen** fiercely advocated for clean water beginning with her defense of crucial regulations for the oil shipping industry in response to the Bouchard Oil Spill of 2003. She also achieved numerous successes on fighting nitrogen pollution across the Buzzards Bay watershed. She has moved on to private practice at the firm of Bowditch & Dewey. **Allen Decker** was instrumental in building the Coalition’s land conservation program. He not only helped the Coalition acquire thousands of acres of land, but was crucial in establishing nearly 70 existing conservation restrictions that restrict development to ensure clean water for the Bay. In his retirement, he plans to spend his time walking the lands he helped protect.



In Memoriam John Sherburne Reidy

The Bay and the Coalition lost a dear friend in 2025 with the passing of John Sherburne Reidy of Wareham. From his home overlooking Little Harbor, John was an ardent supporter of the Coalition for nearly 30 years and worked throughout that time to pass on a healthy Bay environment to future generations.



In Memoriam Brian O’Rourke

Brian O’Rourke’s life was marked by dedication—to his family, his profession, and the waters he loved. He built a summer cottage in North Falmouth for his family and, upon retirement, he moved there with Mary Lou, his wife of 62 years. He became one of our longtime volunteer Baywatchers, monitoring the water quality of Wild Harbor in Falmouth for 14 years.





Donor Spotlight Lizanne Campbell

In 2025, Lizanne celebrated her 15th Watershed RIDE. Since 2013, she has volunteered at, participated in and donated to countless Swims and Rides. She currently serves on the Coalition's Leadership Council. In her own words, Lizanne states that, "when my husband and I give to the Coalition, it affirms our connection to the Bay. We're sailors, my granddaughter attends camp programs, and my friends and neighbors walk the trails. It makes me feel good that our gifts go to support various opportunities for all people across the watershed. With our giving, we know we are helping the entire community."

Donor Spotlight Chris and Tricia Schade

For Chris Schade, supporting the Buzzards Bay Coalition is about protecting the places that make this region special. Having spent summers on Salters Point with his family for over 20 years, Chris brings an environmental ethos to his Board service as Treasurer. Most recently, Chris and his wife Tricia assisted fundraising efforts for the Salter's Pond Inlet Management Campaign (see page 6). Their volunteer leadership in 2025 helped secure over \$400,000 for the project. Restoration efforts will begin this fall. Thank you, Chris and Tricia!

LEFT *Chris & Tricia Schade at the 2025 Swim*

2025 Buzzards Bay Guardian Awards



PHOTO BY SEAN SWEENEY

The **37th Annual Meeting** of the Buzzards Bay Coalition was held under the tent at the New Bedford Yacht Club in South Dartmouth in May. Two Guardian Awards and the Volunteer Appreciation Award were presented to:

John "Gary" Garretson, who sold Slocum-Gibbs' 1,642 acres to the Coalition for permanent conservation. It is the largest land protection project ever completed by the Buzzards Bay Coalition. More than 35 acres of the highest-producing and environmentally-friendly bogs will continue to be harvested maintaining the heritage of farming on this land, and the remaining 165 acres of older bogs, most running alongside the Weweantic River, will be restored back into natural wetlands (see page 2). Gary Garretson's legacy of conservation is a model which others have already begun to follow, with cranberry growers throughout the region taking note of Garretson's decision to choose land conservation.

Long-time partner **Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries** of Falmouth, a local land trust that has saved 250 acres of open space since its incorporation in 1962, including Historic Bourne Farm, The Knob, Peachtree Circle Farm and Salt Pond trails. When the Town of Falmouth sought to expand their wastewater discharge from their sewer plant Salt Ponds took on a community leadership role and joined the Coalition to speak against the town's proposal with an advocacy campaign. When a local development sought to build 24 new homes on four acres with all the new homes on conventional septic systems that are not designed to treat for nitrogen, Salt Ponds joined the Coalition as co-plaintiff in litigation.

Dartmouth's **Mark Perry** garnered the 2025 Volunteer Appreciation Award.

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