



BAYWATCH

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CITIZENS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WAQUOIT BAY CPWB

CPWB Annual Meeting – Waters of Waquoit Bay

Friday, July 8th, 2011 at 5:30PM

Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Boat House

Speaker: Vitalii Shermet, Associate Marine Research Scientist and Professor in Residence at the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island.

Come meet Vitalii Shermit, research scientist who has been studying the waters of Waquoit Bay and the two major rivers; Childs River and Moonakis River. He will talk about unusual tides in the Nantucket Sound and Waquoit Bay. Specifically, there is a phenomenon of double high tides: during the flood the incoming current has two major pulses. There are other observations of currents at many places in the Waquoit Bay. Vitalii's recent focus is on the Childs and Moonakis Rivers where he proposed to establish better fresh water monitoring and exchange study with implications for water quality and silting. This subject will help us understand some of the current research being done this summer at WBNERR. He has a grant from the Office of Naval Research to study performance of new current meters in the Waquoit Bay/Nantucket Sound area. CPWB is funding instrumentation for monitoring rivers entering Waquoit Bay. Please mark your calendar to attend the CPWB Annual Meeting to hear Vitalii Shermet and spend time with other CPWB members.

WBNERR to Monitor Salt Marsh Research – *the impact of sea level rise and climate change on estuarine marshes and wetlands.*

The salt marshes behind South Cape Beach will be the focus of attention this Summer and Autumn, as research and stewardship staff led by Chris Weidman at WBNERR begins to establish the necessary scientific infrastructure there for a “Salt Marsh Observatory.” This project is part of a national system-wide initiative to understand the effects of sea level rise on this important ecosystem, with an eye toward providing information to coastal decision makers and policy makers about how to better manage human impacts on coastal resources and prepare communities to be more resilient in the face of climate change.

The “Observatory” will be comprised of several separate, but hydraulically-linked marsh areas. To the casual observer marshes may tend to “look” the same, but to the discerning they come in many flavors. Here, our most marine-influenced (or saltiest) marshes are to west near the small tidal entrance creek into Sage Lot Pond and are directly behind the long South Cape barrier beach that stretches out to the Waquoit Bay entrance channel. These marshes are dominated by the plant commonly called saltwater cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*). As the tidal creeks reach into the upper marshes to the east, passing under the walk bridge and culverts at South Cape Beach, they become a bit fresher and the surrounding marshes become more land-influenced. At the eastward extremity are the Flat Pond marshes, which are a fresh to brackish ecosystem. Here the cattail (*Typha*) and the reeds (*Scirpus* and *Phragmites*) are the dominant vegetation.

The scientific “infrastructure” of the Salt Marsh Observatory will be largely invisible, but will consist of about 150 permanent plots throughout the different marsh areas. Each plot, 1 meter square in size, will be surveyed at least once a year (in the late summer) for species presence, coverage, plant density and canopy heights. Each plot will have a small observation well for measuring the groundwater in the marsh peat. Each of the different marsh areas will also

have several Sediment Elevation Tables -- which are only small (4-6" in diameter) aluminum and concrete posts, but which are designed to hold a special device for very precisely measuring any changes in the elevation of the surrounding marsh soils over time. A series of precision tide gauges will also be installed for measuring water levels, so that the duration and frequency of tidal and storm surge inundation can be recorded. Micro-climate information will also be recorded by meteorological instrumentation in the marshes. Climate conditions here can be quite different than those only a mile or two away. Ever notice a summer sea breeze or that thick fog at the beach, while at the same time its calm and sunny just a little ways inland? That difference can have an important impact on marsh plant growth.

Additional measurements and research at WBNERR's Salt Marsh Observatory are being discussed with a number of scientists, and some of these ideas have been incorporated into some pending research proposals focusing on the inter-relationship between salt marshes and earth's climate. But that is a big and interesting topic for a future newsletter. In the meantime, Summer and Autumn of 2011 are expected to be a very busy time for the Reserve staff, interns and volunteers as we prepare to better observe, more deeply understand and appreciate our salt marsh habitats.

Washburn Island a unique campground

By Rebecca Hopkins

This article appeared in the Cape Cod Times Special Section on March 14, 2011. Jayne Abbott shared this article with the CPWB Steering Committee at our May meeting. With permission from Rebecca Hopkins, we would now like to share Washburn Island a unique campground with our CPWB members. Rebecca Hopkins is a seventh-grader at Lawrence School in Falmouth.

Cold, wet, slippery hours fill your days. Frozen ears and nose. Sick of winter yet? Imagine this:

You're sitting in a comfortable beach chair with your feet buried in the sand. It's a summer evening and a warm breeze touches your face. You're watching the last rays of pastel sunlight leave below the serene ocean. Later you find yourself seated around a happily crackling fire, joking with your dearest friends.

You're camping on Washburn Island. It's a lovely campground with a colorful background.

Washburn Island, which is 330 acres in all, is part of the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. It is one of the few large, coastal, undeveloped pieces of land on Cape Cod. It consists mostly of oak and pine forests lined with beaches.

Washburn Island has a unique history. It used to be an attractive summer home belonging to Albert H. Washburn (who was ambassador to Austria) and his family until 1929, when the main house burned down. During World War II, Washburn Island was a training ground for the Engineer Amphibian Command at Camp Edwards. Rusted car frames can still be found on a hike of the island. In 1975, Washburn Island was for sale to Falmouth, but Falmouth didn't buy because it was priced at \$2.57 million. Later, in 1981, 50 luxury homes were to inhabit the island, along with a helicopter pad and a yacht club. The public protested these plans and they were abandoned. The state purchased the island in 1983.

Marine creatures inhabit Washburn. Cute little hermit crabs crawl along with blue and green crabs that inhabit the shallows. Clams like quahogs and steamers live on and around the island. Minnows tickle your toes in the shallows, while slightly larger fish occupy waters slightly farther out in Waquoit Bay. Washburn is only accessible by boat.

The beauty of the coastline and the pristine, fresh air make an irreplaceable combination. Washburn Island is an extraordinary experience for every person.

Falmouth Voters Approve Moving Forward with the Town's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan

By Matt Patrick

Ballot question #1, which asked Falmouth voters if they wished to fund research and demonstration projects of alternatives to sewers as well as sewer design work for phase one, surprised everyone by passing with the most votes of any question or candidate on the ballot. What the results told us is that the voters of Falmouth are paying attention to the debate on how Falmouth should protect its bays and freshwater ponds and that they are interested in finding out more about eco toilets, permeable reactive barriers and shell fish propagation as more affordable ways to limit the amount of nitrogen entering our salt ponds and also, phosphorus, which does the same thing to fresh water ponds.

The next step requires the Board of Selectmen to appoint a volunteer committee to organize the various components and make recommendations to the Selectmen. The committee will formulate requests for proposals for the various research projects and determine how the demonstration project is to be designed.

CPWB members can apply for the committee (if they are Falmouth voters) and attend meetings of the Board of Selectmen as well as the new committee to follow how things progress. Public comments are usually accepted at these meetings.

CPWB ANNUAL RAFFLE

By Mike O'Leary, President – CPWB

The CPWB Raffle is again underway, prizes this year are again featuring Red Sox and Patriots tickets as well as a host of locally donated gifts, gift certificates and an Aerial photograph donated from Paul Andrews.

Tickets will be available by mail with this newsletter and are sold on selected dates at Mahoney's Garden Center, Kenyon's Market, Moonakis Restaurant or at the Reserve. Drawing will be held at the Watershed Block Party on Tuesday, August 2nd. Ticket prices are \$1.00 ea or "SIX for FIVE"

Please join us in supporting programs and research which benefit Waquoit Bay and win a nice gift at the same time. Thank You for you support.

Enclosed are two books of raffle tickets for the 2011 CPWB fundraiser. Some members have not been able to easily purchase tickets before the August Drawing. Therefore, we have sent everyone two books to purchase. Please fill out the top tickets, tear bottom part off, and return with your check to CPWB, P.O.Box 3021, Waquoit, MA. 02536.

CPWB Remembers Friends that Contributed Leadership and Guidance

By Maureen Jankauskas

Tom Abbott, 81 -2/15/2011

Long time CPWB Steering Committee member, leader and historian. Tom Abbott was a Town Meeting member, served on Falmouth's Conservation Commission, serving as Falmouth's representative on the South Cape Beach Advisory Committee and a Director for the Preservation of Cape Cod. He helped to plan for the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and for 25 years as a member of the Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay. It is hard to explain how comfortable Tom immediately made you feel whenever you were with him. For residents of the Falmouth-Waquoit area new or old he welcomed your interest in Waquoit Bay, preserving clean water and fishing habitats for us all. While health problems issued challenges in recent years Tom continued to fill each day supporting his family and community. Here are a few thoughts about Tom, Matt Patrick shared with me when I suggested Matt would now be our CPWB historian:

Funny you should mention me as the historian of Waquoit Bay and CPWB because that's exactly how I thought of Tom. Through all the years that we have known him he was a reliable source of how things happened here going back to the 1930s. For example not only did he remember details of how CPWB got started, he also remembered that they built boats in front of my home. He was also a reliable source for what fish were running in the bay. Tom enjoyed Waquoit Bay immensely from a very young age and he spent a good deal of time in his boat on the bay fishing and shell fishing. Jayne and his children will certainly fill in for Tom as much as they can but we lost a cornerstone of the community when Tom passed away this past winter.

Betsy Lowery, 94 – 3/11/11

A long time resident of Waquoit, Betsy was active in preserving the estuary, Washburn Island and shell beds in Waquoit Bay. She was an avid sailor and CPWB member who could be found selling WBNERR tee shirts at Tuesday Night on the Bluff events. Her example has brought many in the community to discover what is happening at the Reserve. Betsy had a career as a nurse, airline stewardess, raised a family and was a voice in preserving Waquoit Bay and Washburn Island.

CPWB Donations

During the past winter and spring CPWB was the recipient of a number of donations in memory of four individuals including members Tom Abbott and Betsy Lowery as well as Joan d'Hedouville and Ann Savidge, all of whom felt that Waquoit Bay was very important in their lives. We also received a very generous contribution from a member who prefers to be anonymous for our educational efforts, particularly for scholarships to the summer science school.

This year 16 families with children attending the Summer School joined CPWB.

CALENDAR Notes:

CPWB Annual Meeting – July 8th at 5:30pm, in WBNERR Boat House – please join us.
Waters of Waquoit Bay – Vitalii Shermet

July -- **Tuesday Nights on the Bluff** starting at 6:30pm

July 12 – Bash the Trash

July 19 – Reptiles Rock

July 26 – A Passion for Birds

August 2nd - **Watershed Block Party** from 3:00pm – 6:30pm

NEW this season: **Estuary Paddle Tour** (adults)

July 13th 9:30am, July 28th 9:30am, August 5th 3:00pm, August 12th 9:30am and August 25th 9:00am

\$20 donation (sponsored by CPWB), 1.5-2 hour paddle tours led by a Naturalist

Registration required for forms and more details check the web site www.waquoitbayreserve.org or call 508-457-0495

Visitor Center is the core to so many activities: **Coastal Encounters** on Thursdays at 10:00am on the porch, **Let's Go N'Seine** on Saturdays at 10:00am – explore with an interpreter using dip nets. Look for the white board in the Visitor Center. The white board is there to post the date, time of bird or animal sightings on WBNERR grounds.

Are you interested in **Jr. Ranger Program** (ages 8-12) & **Shoreline Stories** (under age 8) the Reserve web site waquoitbayreserve.org is your best resource for exact dates and times.

TIDAL Quest – Summer Science Program for High School Students July 18th through July 22nd

There are a few openings for this exciting program. Teens will assist scientists conducting environmental monitoring projects and discover what field work is all about. They will learn to use various types of scientific equipment and practice protocols for identifying marine life, monitoring rare birds, sampling fish, measuring water quality and analyzing data. Working in the salt marsh, having the data entered in a world-wide project to catalogue life in the oceans will make a rewarding summer experience. Please contact Joan Muller, joan.muller@state.ma.us or 508-457-0495 x107 for more information. Registration forms can be downloaded from the Reserve's web site www.waquoitbayreserve.org. Space is limited, cost is \$150, and CPWB scholarships are available.

CPWB's June newsletter for 2011 is sharing with our members the research, education and staff news to keep you informed. We hope you are as excited about the material to continue your support and active participation in the coming year. Please join us at the next CPWB meeting at WBNERR.

Membership CPWB

Our membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th. Please check to see if your membership is current.

\$ 10.00 Membership \$ _____ Contribution

Names: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address _____

Summer Address: _____

I would like to be on the Steering Committee _____

I would like to work on a CPWB project _____

Volunteer to assist with fund raising and raffle event _____

I would like to assist with BAYWATCH Newsletter _____

Please make checks payable to CPWB, P.O. Box 3021, Waquoit, MA 02536

Your \$10.00 membership fee supports educational programs. CPWB thanks the members who give additional contributions. We are committed to providing critical support through our membership base to support WBNERR.

Exciting News!

WBNERR has received a grant to fund a new, “green” maintenance building, renovations to the Carriage House for an additional classroom and updating to the laboratory space. Look for a more welcoming entrance, new exhibits, and a more pedestrian-oriented campus. Congratulations to the staff, we all look forward to seeing the updates start to take form in our 2012 season.

FAMILY FUN - Exploring the beach on your next visit, see what you can find:

Birds you can see at South Cape Beach and Waquoit Bay

- Osprey
- Piping Plover
- Herring Gull
- Least Tern
- Swans
- Sandpiper

Are they feeding?

Just flying as they move from a pond to the sound or maybe they are migrating?

Can you tell if it's an immature bird? How many did you see?

Shells:

Remember they may be a home to a sea creature or tide pool animal. On South Cape Beach you may find clam, whelk, Bay Scallop, Slipper, Quahog, mussel, jingle shell

Egg casings:

Skate casing is black, strings of whelk egg capsules are common to find when combing the beach

Tide

Is it high or low?

Crabs:

Fiddler, Green, Hermit, Horseshoe

Other things to observe: kelp, sea lettuce, moon jelly, rocks, sea glass

Find a Beachcombers guide or Pond Watchers guide at the WBNERR Visitor Center or at the local book store.

Watch where you step! There are living things everywhere! Don't take any animals off the beach? **Look closely and have lots of FUN!!!!**

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