

## From the Board

Spring Greetings. We hope you had a safe and enjoyable winter. Much has happened since our last edition and there are some interesting topics in this issue.

This is our first printing since the passing of Dr. Brian Howes. He did so much to sound the alarm and wake us up to the ailing waters. We would be remiss to not stop and give him tribute one more time.

The Tufts students visited again this spring—this time to take a look at stormwater management along the Quashnet/Moonakis River. Read about their adventures and their findings inside. You'll also find

ways that we, as Cape Cod residents, can tackle the stormwater management problem too. Restoration of Waquoit Bay is a complex puzzle with many pieces. Stormwater management is one part of this puzzle.

Another part of the puzzle is installing sewers where feasible; however sewers alone will not resolve our wastewater management issues. The 'Around the Bay' series introduces you to a couple who have a thought-provoking approach that could complement other wastewater management systems to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous that enter our Cape Cod waters.

WBNERR has some great programs for 'kids of All ages' to enjoy the beauty of Waquoit Bay and beyond. Be sure to check out the listings inside.

On the regulatory front, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection closed the public comment period on its proposed regulations requiring Cape Cod towns to develop watershed plans aimed at fixing their degraded coastal waters. These plans could include a wide range of solutions from sewers to road run off management, nitrogen removing septic systems, in-home diversion systems, temporary aquaculture projects, and more.

There are many sources of funding available to implement the plans – more than ever before. Unfortunately, there was significant opposition to the proposed regulations from many public officials and activists who misrepresented it, spread disinformation, and generally caused many citizens to be unnecessarily concerned. We will continue to follow this matter and inform you as it develops. If you want to know more about it, please contact us.

As of note was a decision at the most recent Falmouth Town Meeting not to go forward with funding for the planning and design stage for sewers in Teaticket/Acapesket area as the next

eastward march towards Waquoit Bay. As we all know, sewers are expensive to build but they are a critical part of the solution to our water quality problems.

As always, we hope this newsletter not only informs you but inspires you to look for opportunities to personally

join in the struggle to restore Waquoit Bay. We have much more to do and have plenty of volunteer opportunities. If you're interested in helping out, email us at <a href="mailto:cpwb1981@gmail.com">cpwb1981@gmail.com</a>. And of course, we welcome your financial support.

- Rick Otis, President

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram: protectwaquoitbay

We're working on an update of our website. If you have suggestions, contact us with your ideas. www.protectwaquoitbay.org

And take a sneak peek at our new photography website, still under construction: <a href="https://www.photos.protectwaquoitbay.org">www.photos.protectwaquoitbay.org</a>
If you have pictures to share, please email them to CPWB and we'll post them.



# CITIZENS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WAQUOIT BAY



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### **Contributors**

## **Around the Bay:**

Patty Waltner Rick Otis

Matt Patrick Eloise 'Pam' Biscoe Bobye Anderson Patty Waltner Maggie Megaw

Photos Courtesy of: Sara Slaymaker Bobye Anderson Eloise 'Pam' Biscoe Rick Otis Patty Waltner



## Dr. Brian Howes, Deceased December 2021 By Matt Patrick

I knew him as Brian. He was from Jersey like me and he had an irreverence towards things in general that I understood and appreciated in a Jersey kind of way. It was sort of, "these folks from New England take themselves a bit too seriously and they don't see the humor in things," kind of humor. But Brian was very serious about finding a solution that would save the coastal environment and our salt ponds.

Dr. Howes observed and measured the deterioration. He wanted to do something about it and he did. He somehow wrapped his mind around the incredibly complex science behind nutrient loading in the midst of many doubting experts with competing theories and his theory was selected to remedy all the estuaries on Cape Cod and southeastern Massachusetts. It was quite an achievement.

CPWB financially supported Brian's work in 2016 with seed money for a project intended for Town of Falmouth Water Quality Management Committee and Town of Mashpee Sewer Commission. This project updated the 2004 study with data regarding water and nutrient exchange within the Quashnet River / Moonakis River. The results of that project did not paint a pretty picture, even back then.

Brian was recognized for his science all over the world and yet when I called him with a question, he would return my calls, not a secretary or an intern. He would assign staff scientists to work with me to solve my question but he would return my calls. As the new executive director of the venerable Westport River Watershed Alliance, he helped me in my efforts to convey his science to the people of Westport. He didn't have to but that was the way he was. Thank you Brian, you made a tremendous contribution to restoring our environment.



## **Meet the New Board Members**

## **Patty Waltner**

Patty Waltner is a full-time resident of Mashpee and joined CPWB in 2015. She has been part of the Newsletter Team for the past three years and joined the Board this year as Treasurer. Waquoit Bay's health is important to her and CPWB is one of the few (only?) water quality organizations that focuses its attention on these waters. Patty has held various financial positions ranging from CPA to bookkeeper in both paid and volunteer capacities. Other than CPWB and the waters of Waquoit Bay, her family and friends are her biggest priority.



## **Maggie Megaw**



Maggie Megaw joined the board of CPWB in 2023, after becoming involved with CPWB's Wetlanders subcommittee in 2021, focusing on possible remediation strategies for the Moonakis River. Maggie began coming to Waquoit in 1978 and was a summer visitor until 2020 when she moved here permanently with her husband Steve Monas. The past two years have been a crash course in the issues of Waquoit Bay, the Moonakis River, the salt marshes, pond ecology, AI septic systems, pee-cycling, and more. Maggie looks forward to retiring from her job so she can engage more fully with her neighbors and the community at large on these issues and more.

### **Noah Clements**

I have been coming to Waquoit Bay my entire life; some of my earliest memories are of sailing on the bay with my great-grandfather. CPWB Board Member Win Munro taught me to sail his little MK-9 — and he still lets me use it to take other younger relatives sailing in little Sunday regattas. As soon as I could stand, I stood on a little flat bottom wood boat crabbing in the Moonakis River. My grandmother used to feed us mussels from the marsh grass along the Moonakis and the Bay. And very little beats the sheer joy of eating the blue fish you caught with your cousins that day.

From the time my wife and I first had children, I have tried to instill the same love for Waquoit Bay and water activities to our children. And now that we live here year-round, I am happy and honored to be able to do my part to try to protect the bay. Sadly, the water quality in Waquoit Bay has obviously deteriorated during my short lifetime. Hopefully, together we can restore our bay, so that the water quality and sea life again parallel the unmatched beauty of Waquoit Bay.



## **Step by Step – A Stormwater Guide for Homeowners**

It's a chilly spring day of rainfall on Cape Cod. A storm front edging in and out. An accumulation to help the Cape's water table. An excuse to do needed indoor projects. Or not, and just relax. But whatever the mood and the level of productiveness on this rainy day, we need to develop an awareness on this fragile peninsula of where today's water will end up. Some of it will evaporate back into the water cycle. Some will be absorbed by the Cape's varied trees and plants. And some will land on an impervious hard surface that will prevent absorption into the environment's natural porous landscape. It is this third arrival point that needs our focus in order to protect our waters.



Stormwater pollution, road runoff, stormwater runoff: different terms but while stormwater can be most broadly defined as any form of precipitation from the sky, the common usage is that of the water that doesn't evaporate or soak but lands on roads, roofs, driveways, sidewalks, etc. The research is now very clear on the potential damage from the runoff pollution entering nearby bodies of water – and especially with Cape Cod's sandy and porous soil.

To start with that sandy soil, let's begin with soil-based runoff pollution. Lawns and gardens, especially with water that is

too fast-moving, are especially critical sources. Excess nutrients and pesticides can reach our marshes, causing algae blooms and low-oxygen dead zones. Dog waste and other bacteria sources in soil can also be a health hazard, causing beach closures. A second form of soil-based runoff is the excessive movement of exposed sediment – sand, soil, fine mulch, etc. It can fill in streams and marshes, smothering spawning beds of fish eggs, blocking sunlight, and reducing food supplies. Sediment runoff can dam up some water areas while others are flooded. Add litter from roads or trash to the mixture and the damage becomes greater. A lifelong environmentalist, Waquoit resident Jayne Abbott advocated for and acted in behalf of our local waters; she was often seen walking on nearby roads, putting litter into trash bags. Jayne knew the unfortunate effect of litter.

But perhaps the worst damage of stormwater pollution comes from chemical contaminants on the

impervious surfaces of our developed areas. Today's spring rainstorm hitting roofs, driveways, roads, sidewalks, etc. transports everything on them to both the surface and ground waters. The EPA defines common stormwater contaminants as "trash, yard waste, lawn chemicals, pet waste, wastewater, oil, petroleum products, cleaning products, paint products, hazardous waste, and sediment." Washing our garage floors with a storm drain a few tempting steps away? Washing our cars on our driveways? All our actions will affect the stormwater pollution. We need a new level of awareness.



Let's take this awareness to the perspective of homeowners on Cape Cod, as many of us are. Our roofs, our driveways, our sidewalks - all are probably in place and too costly to change. But there are so many small doable changes we can make to move this stormwater awareness into actions. Change can be accomplished when done in small incremental steps, day after day, year after year. Here are some potential steps leading toward change, both mechanical and natural, but all with the wastewater goal of "Capture and Hold."

Focusing not on the roof but on the gutters and downspouts is one solution. When cleaned out and tweaked into a redirection, the water can be moved to lawn and garden areas. An additional benefit is that the water is directed away from the foundation, reducing potential basement flooding. The

water can also be directed to rain barrels which catch and hold the water until it can be used where needed. If yard and driveway pavers do need to be replaced, there are now previous ones that look like traditional ones but have a broader base that releases the water slowly.

More natural solutions are the environmentally based landscape practices that CPWB (protectwaquoitbay.org/newsletter-archives) has been advocating in previous newsletters – again, step by step to capture and hold water. Have a lawn? Plant an ornamental tree in the middle of it. Or anywhere else. Trees' large root systems absorb significant quantities of water and also have the ability to stop sediment erosion – two crucial benefits always but especially if your yard has a stream or body of water nearby. And look at your lawn with new eyes. Reduce its size (even just a little) and surround it with drought-resistant native plants. Add clump-forming grasses. Naturalize your land for more water absorption – but if you just can't decrease the lawn in size, add fescue grasses and mixed seeds to encourage a taller grass with deeper roots. Capture and hold.

One of the best natural solutions is a rain garden. The downspouts already on both sides of your house can direct water to a wide depression or bowl-shaped area with a berm and native plants. Simple. Attractive. Effective. A larger version is a vegetated swale, a longer and wider planted area but still with the goal to capture and hold the rainwater and filter out the pollutants. The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (apcc.org) has an excellent website with videos, information, and support for these stormwater solutions.

Want a few easy homeowner's hacks for avoiding stormwater pollution and improving the quality of stormwater runoff? Go out the front door and look around. When you wash your car, pull it onto a grassy part of your yard to avoid paved driveway contaminates. Use the smallest amount of detergent needed and when done, pour the soapy water onto an area with plants. Or easiest yet, go to a car wash or a covered carwash station. For simpler spring and fall cleanup, mow the grass clippings and layers of leaves into the grass to add nutrients. Don't cut back the perennial plants in winter so water will be caught and birds and beneficial insects will have food and shelter. And difficult as it may seem, let the lawn go dormant in dry spells. The roots will grow longer and the grass will revive. And when that mass of yellow spring pollen and oak detritus piles up, sweep it into a compost pile instead of hosing it and the driveway contaminates together.

Two pleas to our readers. One is to keep planting native plants. They are drought-resistant, stabilize the soil, reduce stormwater runoff, have deep roots, and thrive without fertilizer or watering. They're also perfect for preserving animal habitats in these ever-decreasing natural areas. And the second and most important plea? Attend community meetings, join environmental organizations, be an informed resident, write letters, and speak up as an advocate. Then do it again. And again. Your environment needs you.

- Bobye Anderson



# Around The Bay An interview with people making a difference in the waters of Waquoit Bay.

Restoring our coastal waters, including Waquoit Bay, requires using multiple approaches employed simultaneously and in locations where they make sense. These "tools in the tool box" include sewers, road run off prevention, in-home diversion, temporary aquaculture, advanced septic systems, and even addressing invasive species. In this edition of Around the Bay, we learn about urine diversion.

Hilda Maingay and Earle Barnhart have been promoting, educating, demonstrating, and living sustainability concepts and methods for 50 years on Cape Cod. Many of you met them at the Summer Gumbo Party at the Patrick's last year. They now do pioneering research and demonstrate safe human waste nutrient recycling at the Green Center, a non-profit organization, where they are both Volunteer Directors. Their current volunteer work is focused on developing affordable nutrient management infrastructure for Cape Cod that will reduce water pollution, conserve water, produce fertilizer for sustainable regional food production and create small businesses. All of us concerned with the restoration of Waquoit Bay waters could have immediate impact if we were to take advantage of their research and methods and adopt them in our own homes.

There is a lot of talk these days about sewer systems, I/A systems, and septic systems. You are focusing on a different approach to address the chemical overloads in our Cape Cod waters caused by human waste--URINE DIVERSION = PEECYCLING (recycling pee). Please describe the process and some of its benefits.

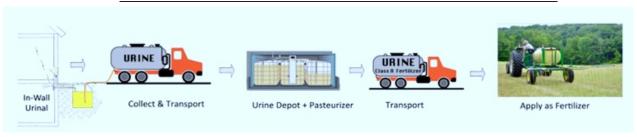
Let's start with a few facts: \*A person excretes 120 gallons of urine/year\*Urine contains 80% of nitrogen (N) and 55% of phosphorus (P) of house wastewater\*Graywater contains 10% of N and 1% of P of house wastewater\*An average flush uses 2 gallons of potable water\*6000 gallons flush water (called black water)/pers per year\*One person's annual supply of urine fertilizer produces enough wheat to make 360 loaves of bread\*

Reasons for urine diversion include:

- ★ reduce water pollution by keeping nitrogen and phosphorus that is in urine out of our water bodies.
- \* save potable water by using waterless urine-diverting toilet fixtures.
- ★ improve sewer plant efficiency in existing sewers.
- \* avoid the great cost of constructing new sewer systems which only remove some nitrogen.
- ★ create local businesses installing and servicing urine diverting toilet fixtures, transporting urine, treating urine.
- \* save the oceans by reducing excess nutrients going into water and causing pollution, algae blooms and dead
- ★ eliminate the need for ocean outfalls that pollute the oceans by disposing nutrients and contaminants directly into the ocean water.
- ★ reduce water pollution in fresh water ponds and rivers as well as coastal estuaries
- ★ manage nitrogen at 1/10 the cost of conventional solutions such as sewers and I/A septic systems.

Septic tank and I/A septic systems, as well as sewers, waste ALL nutrients, billions of gallons of potable water and in the case of sewers and I/A septic systems a lot of energy. The steps of urine diversion are: Collection, Transport, Treatment and Recycling. These steps can occur in a house-by-house approach or in an engaged community approach.

### COMMUNITY SCALE URINE DIVERSION AND RECYCLING



### HOME-SCALE URINE DIVERSION OPTIONS

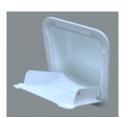
### FIXTURES WHICH DIVERT URINE:

Cinderella Urinal waterless urine only toilet

Cubie waterless unisex portable urinal



P-POD waterless in-wall urinal





Wostman Urine-Diverting Flush Toilet a flush toilet similar to a conventional toilet with a urine-diverting bowl in front

## FIXTURES WHICH REMOVE AND RECOVER ALL HUMAN WASTE NUTRIENTS:

Cinderella Incinerating Toilet diverts all nutrients from wastewater by burning waste to a small amount of ash.

Separett 'Villa' waterless urine-diverting composting toilet self-contained on one floor



Greenway Composting Toilet waterless urine diverting composting toilet installed with compost bin on lower floor or basement

Is there any town/political/regulatory agency support for Urine Diverting (UD) systems? Please share information regarding your current efforts with the Pilot Program for the wall urinals, P-Pods.

MASSTC (Mass Alternative Septic System Test Center- a Barnstable County Agency) is very interested in UD infrastructure technologies. They want to have a urine collection depot and pasteurizer at their facility. Green Center is working together with MASSTC, Falmouth Pond Coalition and Nutrient Networks on UD pilot projects.

Green Center and MASSTC had a meeting with MassDEP's director of wastewater for the Cape, Islands and the South Coast and two of her staff. They are interested in our UD pilot project plans and we are submitting our plan as this newsletter goes to print.

Interest is growing in doing a significant UD pilot project in Falmouth. Two selectmen have already told us they are in favor, and two of the selectmen running for office are both in favor, as well. Sue Moran has contacted us and asked for our large 90-home UD pilot project plan. We sent her our plan with draft budget for a two-year pilot project.

The UD pilot project will include waterless urinals and other UD fixtures, as well as collection, pasteurization and transport to farmers off Cape. There are 1500 farmers within 70 miles of Falmouth. Falmouth currently transports (in many trucks each week) sludge 70 miles to an incinerator.

## What can readers do to obtain more information and/or support your endeavors?

- ★ Write letters to local papers in support of doing a UD pilot project which will provide the data needed to evaluate the role UD can play in protecting our waters from nutrient pollution
- ★ Voice your support to the select boards of your town and the water quality management committee (WQMC)
- **★** Vote accordingly
- ★ Start diverting your own urine. (There is no need to wait until the town makes decisions for you to sewer or to put in I/A septic systems. Be responsible for your own human 'waste' and your personal contribution to the water pollution in the estuaries, ponds and rivers. The sooner people can divert their human waste nutrients out of the waste stream, the better for our waterbodies).

Contact us for more info and/or sign up for a tour at 28 Common Way, East Falmouth, MA 02536

newalchemists.net
info@greencenterinc.com

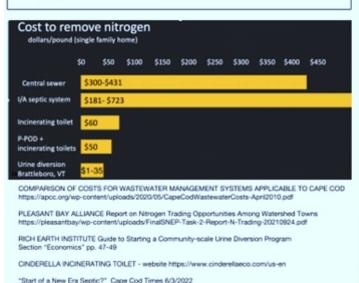
#### Community-scale Urine Diversion Infrastructure Urine Depot with \$17 to transport Farmer pays pasteurizer one person's \$0-400 per \$18,000 annual urine 1000 gallons (capacity 180 people) (120 gallons) of to farms within pasteurized One P-POD urinal Cost to pasteurize 70 miles urine and one other UD

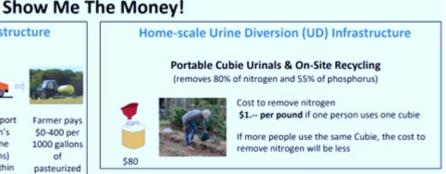
\$0.01 per gallon

toilet installed +

buried storage tank

\$4-5000

















or \$180-700+/pound with I/A septic systems





## **Tufts Students Visit the Moonakis to Study Stormwater Runoff Sites**

What better day to study stormwater runoffs than a rainy one? That's exactly what seven Tufts graduate students encountered on April 1st when, as part of their course Planning for Low Impact Development with



Scott Horsley, they drove down from Boston to Waquoit. Their course assignment was to propose appropriate green infrastructure designs for several stormwater runoff sites. A Waquoit visit to observe the chosen sites was essential. Green infrastructure uses plants and soils to filter and absorb stormwater, and so avoids direct flows of pollutants such as oil, sediments into nearby bodies of water.

To start the day, Scott took the group on a tour of four existing green infrastructure sites in Cotuit and Marston Mills. At these sites, students observed the functionality and maintenance requirements of different designs. The sites included the Cotuit town dock parking lot which has bioswale with a recycling system; the Ropes Beach parking lot with an infiltration trench; the Cotuit Library with a biorentention garden and a solar-powered

monitoring system; and a site at Prince's Cove with an infiltration system off the driveway road.

After a brief stop to regroup and get out of the rain for a bit, the group headed for Waquoit and the Quashnet-Moonakis River. The site identified on Route 28 near the Quashnet proved to be an excellent choice. Water gushed off the highway forming a small stream that eventually ended up in the river. Students took measurements and photos of the site and began to consider potential designs. Next, they crossed over Route 28 to Martin Rd. to observe water running off the road directly into the Quashnet. Again, students measured and discussed potential green infrastructure designs suitable for the site. They also visited a third site closer to the source of the river. However, no significant runoffs were found at this final site.

In the afternoon, the students took refuge from the storm in WBNERR's Boat House where they continued brainstorming design ideas for the two sites. The visit wrapped up in the early evening with a sumptuous dinner with other CPWB and community members at a member's house overlooking Bournes Pond. The skies finally cleared, and the sun set in an orange glow over the pond.

The students presented their report at the course's final meeting at Tufts on April 28th. Their proposed designs included terraced beds planted with native species on Martin Rd. and a series of water bars with rain gardens to slow water flow and facilitate



infiltration at the Route 28 site. Their complete report is available on the CPWB website, <u>protectwaquoitbay.org</u>, and Facebook. Stay tuned for next steps that CPWB is considering based on the students' recommendations.

This is the second time that a dedicated group of Tufts students has chosen the Quashnet-Moonakis River as a study site. We at CPWB are grateful for their interest and appreciate the work they have done. It will be a valuable guide as we strive to restore the river and Waquoit Bay.

## Upcoming Programs at Waquoit Bay Reserve



Join Waquoit Bay Reserve staff on programs this spring and summer. Here are some highlights but check out the latest schedule and register for the programs below at waquoitbayreserve.org.

Quashnet River Restoration Walk with Fran Smith: Saturday, May 20, 2023 9:30am-12:00pm (Rain date: May 25, 2023)

WBNERR is teaming up with Cape Cod Trout Unlimited (CCTU) for a walk along the Quashnet River with Francis Smith. The CCTU Restoration Project Lead will share his story of the 40 years of work to restore the Quashnet for brook trout habitat which has become a model for other Cape Cod rivers. Meet at the Quashnet River Trailhead parking lot on Martin Road in Falmouth. Dress for the weather, bring water and a snack. Registration preferred.

**Southeastern MA Adult Walking Club Walks** (ages 16 and up) Please remember water, sunscreen and insect repellent. If weather conditions are questionable, please call or text 617-259-0209.

**Quashnet River Hike** Sunday, June 11, 9am-11am. A moderate 2.8 mile hike starts on wide level trail and crosses over the river to a hilly, narrower trail. Meet at the Quashnet River Trail head parking lot on Martin Road, Falmouth.

**South Cape Beach Hike** Saturday, July 1, 9am-11am. 1-2 mile hike on the Great Flat Pond Trail, a fairly flat trail with some boardwalk through marsh and forested areas. Hike is open to walkers ages 16 and up. Meet at Bayberry Parking lot, 669 Great Oak Road, Mashpee.

**Let's Go N'Seine**: We'll bring nets and buckets and explore the bay! Meet at the Visitor Center and wear shoes that can get wet (no bare feet) All ages welcome. 9 weeks July 5-Aug 30, **Wednesdays** 10:00am-11:00am (added due to popular demand) 8 weeks July 8-Aug 26, **Saturdays** 11:00am-12:00pm

Also coming up this summer-**Junior Rangers**, **Sea Life Story walk**, and keep your eyes open for **Pop-up programs** at South Cape Beach or the Visitor Center grounds! Topics will include **Shorebirds**, **Osprey**, **Creature Feature**, **Estate History**.

Waquoit Bay Science School: There are still some slots left.

**Jayne Abbott Memorial Scholarship:** Do you know of a child who would benefit from attending Waquoit Bay Science School but may not have the means? Please spread the word about these scholarships which are available. The application is available on our website.

WAQUOIT BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE
131 Waquoit Highway Waquoit, MA 02536 508.457.0495

"Fertilizer is becoming one of the 'fighting' words. Balancing the amount of food the plants get so that it's just enough but not too much that the extra ends up polluting our water sources. It's difficult to resist the American mind set that 'more is better'. When we use some of the concentrates the dilutions could be 1/8th teaspoon is two gallons of water. We don't use many chemicals but I hold my breath to see if such an apparently weak solution will do the job. It does, so trust the label. There are all sorts of government agencies that monitor those labels. Enjoy using less and saving some money."

Phyllis Sprout, Sprout Farms 97 Quinaquisset Ave. Mashpee sproutfarm.net Open daily 9 - 5



Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of Waquoit Bay and its estuaries.
(Tear here and send to: P.O. Box 3021, Waquoit, MA 02536)
Yes, I want to help restore Waquoit Bay!
\$250\$100\$50\$35Other \$ Please make checks payable to: Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay (CPWB) OR Donate securely online at <a href="https://www.protectwaquoitbay.org/">https://www.protectwaquoitbay.org/</a> Name:
Company/Organization:
Summer Address:
Winter Address:
Email:
Please send me more information on:VolunteeringPlanned Giving

Thank you for your support! FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM

## Update: 419 Waquoit Highway

The possible acquisition of 419 Waquoit Highway, reported on in our last newsletter, continues to be explored by a group of interested parties. The 300 Committee, the Falmouth Housing trust, neighbors, and possibly the DCR in coordination with WBNERR, are all trying to find a way to preserve the parcel from development. The current plan involves one acre on Route 28 being developed as affordable housing, with the remaining approximately 3 acres being acquired as conservation land. We are currently waiting for a representative of the DCR to walk the property and make a determination of their level of interest and involvement.





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