

Three Bays Preservation, Inc.
864 Main Street
P.O. Box 215
Osterville, MA 02655
www.3bays.org



Bayside Explorers will be back at Dowses Beach this summer!

THREE BAYS
PRESERVATION, INC.

President:
Michael Egan

Staff:
Lindsey B. Counsell
Executive Director
lcounsell@3bays.org

Judy Heller
Program Manager
jheller@3bays.org

864 Main Street
P.O. Box 215
Osterville, MA 02655

Phone: 508.420.0780
Fax: 508.420.4489

Printed on paper made with
30% post consumer fibers.
© 2015 Three Bays Preservation, Inc.

Visit Three Bays on the Web:
www.3bays.org



PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LEOMINSTER, MA
PERMIT NO. 17

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Bayside Explorers – Kids and families get up close and personal with the aquatic wonders of low tide! Dowses Beach, Osterville on Wednesdays at 9:00 AM on 7/6, 7/20, 8/3, 8/17, 8/24; and 3:00 PM on 7/13, 7/27, 8/10. **Free!**

NEW! Paddleboard Excursions* – Led by Amy Hotchkiss, owner of Stand Up & Paddle Cape Cod, and Melissa Jansen, Melissa Jansen Yoga, we're offering these unique paddleboard adventures:

Yoga Paddle – Pose on your paddleboard: Thursdays on 7/1, 7/28, 8/11, 8/25

Birding Paddle – Birds and boards: Fridays on 7/15, 7/29, 8/12

Shellfish Paddle – Float, stop, dig: Wednesday on 7/20; Saturdays on 8/6, 8/20

**All excursions begin at 7:00 AM. For non-paddleboarders, a pontoon boat will be available for the Birding & Shellfish Paddles; Yoga Paddle is SUP only.*

Cape Cod Wildlife Festival – A great family event at Mass Audubon's Long Pasture Sanctuary on Bone Hill Road, Cummaquid on Saturday on 9/10. **Free!**

Paddle Dinner & Auction – Kick off RACE Cape Cod and support the work of Three Bays Preservation; Friday at 6 PM on 9/16.

Paddle for the Bays: RACE Cape Cod – Our popular annual celebration of the three bays will be held on Saturday, 9/17, Ropes Beach, Cotuit. *For more details about the Paddle Dinner/Auction and Race Cape Cod, visit www.3bays.org.*

A VISION FOR THREE BAYS PRESERVATION

Mike Egan isn't new to Three Bays Preservation. He is a longtime member and former board member but due to other commitments, he wasn't actively involved for some time. When he and his wife Donna became "empty nesters" last year, however, he asked to come back on the board...as President. With Richard Largay stepping down, Mike volunteered to take over the reins. "If I'm in it for a penny," he said, "I'm in it for a pound. So, I come with some historical context as well as a bit of energy of someone who is new."

Mike, who lives in Osterville and Hopkinton, sees an opportunity to "rebrand" the organization. "Some people say we are focused only on dredging and rebuilding Dead Neck. They vastly underestimate the work Three Bays Preservation is doing," he noted.

"I'd like to see us be more visible about the other work we're doing to improve water quality for everyone who uses the bays. That is the number one issue."

Mike points to a few initiatives Three Bays Preservation is undertaking, including an aquaculture project for the three bays area, an alternative to traditional storm water drainage that diverts nitrogen into specially designed rain gardens, and the restoration of Mill Pond.

"We hope to be a catalyst for public/private partnerships on projects where we can offer time, energy and expertise. For instance, thanks to our ongoing volunteer herring count and water sampling programs, Three Bays Preservation has



the largest database of our water systems. These measurements and samples are the scientific data used to file for permits. You can't just show up with old photos and say, 'This is what it used to look like.'"

In the 18 years he has lived in Osterville, Mike has seen a proliferation of sea lettuce, changes in water color and clarity, and growth of invasive species. "The quality of our bays and estuaries is inexorably tied to property values and our ability to provide services.

"We want to maximize all technologies that reduce nitrogen loading and are economic and sustainable. And we have to become more politically engaged from an advocacy point of view," he added.

"There are no more natural oyster reefs in Osterville... 'oyster-ville.' That's what the ecosystem used to be. My goal is to leave this place better than we found it."

Another goal Mike has is to increase membership, which translates into more improvements for the three bays area. "We have room for some new faces and new voices on the board," he said. "If you have ideas and energy, we'd love to chat."

Meet Zenas Crocker, Three Bays Preservation Vice-President



Zenas Crocker is a lifelong Cape resident with deep family roots in the Osterville, Cotuit, Marstons Mills areas. He attended Barnstable High School and graduated with an Honors BA from McGill University in Quebec. Zee has over 30 years' experience in the financial services industry in Boston, with an expertise in Institutional Equities. He worked for 14 years at Merrill Lynch; he currently runs the Boston office for Hong Kong based CLSA Americas, LLC.

When not working, Zee enjoys sailing and fishing and knows the three bays firsthand through lifelong experience. He is passionate about the environment and the efforts to clean our local waters.

The Newsletter of
Three Bays
Preservation, Inc.

Monitor



Vol. 54, WINTER 2016

INSIDE

MILL POND IMPROVEMENT UPDATE.....	2
DNSI FIELD REPORT SUMMARY.....	2
VOLUNTEER HERRING TRAINING.....	3
ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST GRANT.....	3
IN MEMORIAM: GEORGE HAMPSON.....	3
UPCOMING EVENTS.....	4

Mill Pond Improvement Update

From the road, Mill Pond in Marstons Mills looks nearly pristine. But looks can deceive; Mill Pond is in trouble. Due to accumulated soil and sediments, the average depth is now one to one and a half feet. According to Scott Horsley, consultant to the Cape Cod Commission and Three Bays Preservation, studies show about six feet of “really rich, black goeey sediment.” Dredging Mill Pond back to its six-foot depth is a priority for Three Bays Preservation.

Because Mill Pond flows downstream to North Bay, Cotuit Bay and West Bay, too much nitrogen is directly entering the three bays. “The pond is not providing its biggest function—uptaking nitrogen on its way to the estuary,” explained Horsley. Moreover, the pond’s shallow depth negatively impacts fish including the river herring. Dredging will restore the pond’s ecosystem by removing nitrogen.

The permitting process, which will likely take a year, is beginning. Three Bays Preservation will be filing applications with the town and state in the near future and is seeking a grant to fund the \$1M project. The actual dredging will occur in the winter to avoid impacts on wildlife and should take up to a month to complete. The sediments that are removed will be dewatered and transported to a suitable upland location. Since the material is high in organics and nutrients, it may be a useful soil amendment.

There is also a proposal to install manmade ecosystems that mimic natural wetlands, known as “floating constructed wetlands.” Plants and roots growing on the floating rafts improve water quality by filtering, consuming and/or breaking down pollutants.

Ultimately, the Mill Pond Improvement Project will help the entire ecosystem as well as the pond’s aesthetic value. Unsightly weeds and macrophytes growing along the pond’s perimeter threaten Mill Pond’s very existence. “If left alone, they will take over and we will lose the whole pond,” said Horsley. “Dredging will make a big difference.”



Be a Volunteer Herring Counter

Join hundreds of volunteers across the state as a herring counter! It only takes a minimal amount of time and a little effort. The river herring—Alewives and Bluebacks—are here for a just a short while (usually from the end of March until mid-May).



Learn all you need to know about being an official herring counter at our upcoming training session! We’ll explain the counting protocol, and speakers Amy Croteau of the Barnstable Department of Natural Resources will talk about the herring, and consultant Scott Horsley will update plans to restore the Mill Pond.

To register for the training, contact Judy Heller at jheller@3bays.org or call 508-420-0780.

Herring Counter Volunteer Training
Saturday, March 19, 2016 from 12 noon-2:00 pm
Liberty Hall, 2150 Main Street, Marstons Mills

Your Next License Plate Can Help Our Waters

Three Bays Preservation is among 12 organizations to receive a grant from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET), thanks to motorists who purchase a specialty environmental license plate. With each plate purchased, \$40 is donated to the MET to fund water-focused environmental programs.

To assure availability of the grants, the MET needs to sell at least 20,000 special plates each year. Three plates are offered: Right Whale & Roseate Terns, Leaping Brook Trout, and Blackstone Valley Mill.

Standard registration fee is \$60 and the specialty plate fee is an additional \$40. (\$28 is tax-deductible; \$12 is to manufacture the plate.)

Order a plate the next time you renew your registration or purchase a new car—and help us continue our stewardship of the three bays area.

Go to www.massrmv.com or visit www.mass.gov/eea/met for more information.

Dead Neck/Sampson’s Island 2015 Field Summary

Three Bays Preservation and Mass Audubon co-manage Dead Neck/Sampson’s Island (DNSI) in order to preserve the fragile environment and protect the birds that forage and nest there. Mass Audubon produces an annual Coastal Waterbird Program Field Summary, and the 2015 report brings both good and bad news.

The good news is that eight pairs of Piping Plovers nested in 2015, an increase of 14 percent over the previous year. Only six plovers fledged, however, attributed mainly to crow predation (a decrease of 0.75 chicks/per pair versus 1.3 chicks/pair).

Due to lack of suitable habitat, there were no pairs of Least Terns and American Oystercatchers. The last time DNSI was restored with sand from the Cotuit Channel in 2009, the birds returned “in droves,” said Three Bays Preservation Program Manager Judy

Heller. “We had tons of birds! It’s the old adage, ‘If you build it, they will come!’”

Among the biggest challenges facing DNSI are maximizing nesting habitat, reducing predation and managing the impact of people (and their dogs!) in nesting areas on the Nantucket Sound side. DNSI monitors erected and maintained protective/symbolic fencing and signage, and provided educational information and outreach to beach-goers so that we all—humans and critters—can enjoy this unique barrier island.

A decent number of avian guests showed up in 2015. Among the visiting shorebirds seen roosting and foraging on the oceanside of DNSI were Sanderlings, Willets, Spotted Sandpipers, Semi-palmated Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers, Whimbrels, Semi-palmated Plovers, and Ruddy Turnstones.



Due to declining populations of Piping Plovers and terns in Massachusetts, Mass Audubon established its Coastal Waterbird Program 30 years ago. Since then, the state’s nesting plover population has increased five-fold: from 135 pairs in 1986 to approximately 678 pairs in 2014, around a third of the Atlantic Coast’s Piping Plover population.

In Memoriam: George R. Hampson

We were greatly saddened to learn of the death of George Hampson, oceanographer emeritus, who died in November. A resident of North Falmouth, George designed Three Bays Preservation’s Water Monitoring Program and was a water sampler in Cotuit Bay for many years. He fell ill while collecting sediment samples on board the Buzzards Bay Coalition’s *R/V Buzzards Baykeeper* in New Bedford Harbor.

Retired from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in 1997, he remained active in research and education. As a WHOI colleague said of him, “George was a dedicated scientific researcher, as well as a staunch advocate and participant in marine science education. He was equally delighted to be demonstrating ocean sediment coring or teaching a child how to harvest quahogs.” George was a founding member in 1987 of the Coalition for Buzzards Bay, which he described



at the time as a citizens group formed to bring “scientific understanding about the bay into focus for the public by explaining the impact of overdevelopment and careless land management in layman’s terms.”

He will be deeply missed by all of us.