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The 300 Committee is a private, non-profit land trust dedicated to preserving natural places in Falmouth for everyone to enjoy now and in the years to come.

Since 1985, The 300 Committee has taken a lead role to acquire treasured open space for conservation, recreation and water protection. In the last 35 years, more than 2,500 acres have been permanently protected through our efforts.

Leaves

Coonamessett River Projects Completed

by Elizabeth (Betsy) Gladfelter

Twelve years in the making, the Town has completed the restoration of the lower Coonamessett River and the construction of the Coonamessett Greenway Heritage Trail (CGHT). Phase 1 of the river restoration was completed in May 2018 and Phase 2 in May 2020. Two dams were replaced by boardwalks crossing the river (Dexter's Mill Crossing and Swift's Crossing) and a new bridge was built at John Parker Road, replacing the deteriorating culvert that restricted water flow and fish passage. The final result is a mosaic of ecosystems within 33 acres of restored wetland, plus 23 acres of upland riparian habitat; a new, 33% longer, meandering stream channel with increased diversity; an increase in free flowing stream (from 0.25 mi before restoration to 2.2 miles post restoration); and improved fish access to spawning areas — Coonamessett Pond (156 acres) and Flax Pond (22 acres).

The Coonamessett is one of the largest rivers on Cape Cod and is an important diadromous fish run. With glacial outwash as its geology, the hydrology of the river is extremely stable, and less affected by storms, drought, and changes in air temperature than similarly-sized rivers that are sourced from surface water.

Actions taken to restore the river will allow width, depth and form to adapt to changes in hydrology associated with changes in climate. Removal of the man-made barriers increases the capacity for surges associated with greater frequency and magnitude of storms; dam removal also allows for salt marsh migration upstream as sea level rises. The new John Parker Road culvert can handle increases in flow with new, clear passage for fish and wildlife, and is safer for the public. The removal of sand layers from the old bog surface promotes better ground- and surface water exchange, which helps remove nitrogen and other pollutants. Overall, the restored wetland complex and resilient, free flowing river system will be able to adapt to climate change through bio- and habitat diversity, fish migration and increased flood storage.

The CGHT is a trail network within conservation lands that border the river from Dexter's Mill Crossing to Coonamessett Pond. Along the way, 12 interpretive stations provide information on the cultural and natural history of the valley. The one-mile lower loop of the CGHT is accessible and connects in a series of switchbacks uphill to the major trailhead, the Gateway to the Greenway, and its parking area. Multiple access points with additional parking exist along the CGHT.



Aerial view of the restored Coonamessett River.
(photo by Adam Soule)

Coonamessett River Projects Completed continued

An elevated boardwalk at the Gateway presents spectacular views up and down the river. The parking area includes handicap accessibility and space for school buses to drop students for field trips. Numerous granite benches, constructed mainly from blocks on site from the 1700s-era dams, provide seating areas, while the view from the elevated walkway will allow people to watch succession along the river in decades to come.

More than 40 organizations and hundreds of volunteers have contributed to this Town of Falmouth project, with two community organizations providing considerable assistance throughout the past 12 years. The Coonamessett River Trust has monitored biological, physical and chemical parameters since 2004, and T3C has partnered with the Town to create the corridor of protected lands along the river from Coonamessett Pond to its entrance to the estuary 3 miles south. In addition to T3C, the primary funders of this project included NOAA Restoration, NRCS, MVP program, USFWS, Division of Ecological Restoration, and the Community Preservation Fund.

Coonamessett River Restoration Project and Coonamessett Greenway Heritage Trail

The Town of Falmouth is grateful to its many partners that, together, brought these projects to life



This project benefits Falmouth in so many ways, providing visitors a chance to see, hear, feel and smell of nature, to learn about this beautiful river corridor, and to learn how to become a better steward of our natural resources. Everyone who has worked on this project — volunteers, Town personnel, funding agencies, engineers and construction teams — thinks it is an amazing project. Come discover it for yourself and we hope you will visit again and again.

Betsy Gladfelter is the volunteer Project Coordinator of the Coonamessett River projects and a Conservation Commissioner for the Town of Falmouth.



New signage at the Gateway to the Greenway's river overlook helps inform visitors about the natural and cultural history of the Coonamessett River Valley.

T3C Loses a Champion

A woman with an astonishing history of service to T3C and the town, it is hard to imagine that the shoes Virginia Valiela created could ever be filled. When Virginia died in May, T3C lost not only a dear friend and staunch advocate for conservation, but also a wise, seasoned and hugely respected visionary, communicator, negotiator and community leader.

Virginia was elected to T3C's board in 2007 and served as a valuable director and member of the Stewardship Committee. She took on her role with T3C after spending many years safeguarding the environment through her public service: as a member of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth, she founded the Falmouth Recycling Committee and served as its chairman for 10 years. She was a commissioner of the Department of Public Works from 1981 to 1986. She was elected selectman that year, a seat she held for 21 years. As a member of the Senior Management Board, comprised of one selectman from each of the surrounding towns and organized to work on the cleanup of the polluted groundwater plumes at the Massachusetts Military Reservation, Virginia was Falmouth's lead negotiator with the military on restitution for the town. She also was a leader in developing the Town's early efforts to protect water quality; she then served as vice chairman for the Water Quality Management Committee, tackling the townwide problem of excess nitrogen in Falmouth's coastal ponds and estuaries coming from septic systems. This led to the sewerage of Maravista/Little Pond area and the implementation of other water quality improvements. When the fate of the Coonamessett River cranberry bogs became a contentious issue, Virginia volunteered to lead an advisory committee to gather facts and make recommendations to the Selectmen and Town Meeting. This committee's work helped guide the Town's decisions; today the restoration of the river corridor is complete with revitalized habitats and major public access improvements. (See cover story.)

The list of Virginia's extraordinary accomplishments and contributions could go on for pages. We are so fortunate that she joined T3C's board and lent her tremendous energy, intelligence and integrity to our land conservation mission. Of particular note: In 2011, Virginia was instrumental in guiding T3C through the acquisition of Joe's Driving Range, and helped steer the 11-acre restoration effort for Teaticket Park. Seven years later, she deftly led T3C's strategy in partnering with the Town to permanently protect the 46 acres of Andrews Farm and Andrews Grove, key links in the Coonamessett Greenway.

It is difficult to find a way to adequately honor someone who has been so important to our organization. At T3C's Annual Meeting, the Wise Owl Award, which was presented for the first time last year to Virginia, was renamed in her honor. A memorial sign was dedicated along the Coonamessett Greenway, which pays tribute to Virginia's enormous contributions. Plans are in the works for a "Wise Owl" sculpture to soon be installed on T3C protected land.



Virginia Valiela made countless contributions to T3C, among them beautiful stamps from her father's collection. Her enormous smile was infectious!

GRANTS

Since our last newsletter, The 300 Committee has received several grants in support of our work. We are enormously grateful to:

Martha's Vineyard Bank, whose Community Impact Grant is helping fund special stewardship projects.

The Behrens Fund, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church. This award supports our Year 2 partnership with TerraCorps (2021-22), helping us continue a full-time stewardship staff position and leveraging more than \$20,000 in federal and state funding.

The Friendship Fund, whose grant will fund the design and fabrication of educational signage for our new pollinator meadow at Teaticket Park.



Black-eyed Susan and Blanket Flower are among the species mix in the new pollinator meadow at Teaticket Park.



Mountain Laurel



Much needed rain over the summer contributed to an abundance of mushrooms.

Annual Meeting Celebrates T3C's Continuing Accomplishments

The 300 Committee held its 36th anniversary and second-ever virtual annual meeting on July 15, with nearly 100 friends and members participating by Zoom webinar. While board president Anne-Marie Runfola was not able to join in person, her pre-recorded video opened the meeting and greeted attendees. Jo Ann Muramoto, T3C VP, took on the role of host, added her own welcome and thanks to T3C's supporters, and then asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of T3C's beloved and valued board member, Virginia Valiela. (See tribute to Virginia, page 3).

Next up were the financial review and T3C board business. Retiring Treasurer Gary Vostok gave an overview of T3C's finances, which remain robust, and board member David Bailey led the nominations and elections of new board members. Richard Dotson and Marcia Macedo were elected to the Board of Directors; Richard will also serve as T3C's Treasurer (See new board member profiles, page 5.)



T3C's volunteer walk leaders were honored with the Special Places Award.



Mike Tucker was awarded T3C's Invaluable Volunteer for 2021. His walks and talks about birds are a wonderful and popular addition to our outreach program.



T3C's board and staff gathered at Teaticket Park in September to thank retiring treasurer Gary Vostok (above, front row, with framed photo) and to welcome new treasurer Richard Dotson and board member Marcia Macedo).

Executive Director Jessica Whritenour's Year in Review covered a wide range of topics, and highlighted partnerships: with local Business Members, with the Town – particularly on the Coonamessett River restoration and the creation of the Coonamessett Greenway Heritage Trail (see cover story), and with local organizations. Jessica discussed the year's three new protected parcels: the Lowell Woods donation, which, thanks to T3C founder and former board member Vicky Lowell, adds 7.8 acres to Beebe Woods; the purchase of a conservation restriction on the 10.2-acre Pariah Dog Farm in Teaticket, which

secures this farmland for local food production; and the donation of 3 acres in North Falmouth by Donald and Janet Moller, adjacent to land already protected by conservation restrictions donated by the Valiela and Hocker families.

The agenda progressed as staff members Lucy Helfrich and Alexandra Zollo presented highlights of their respective programs: outreach and education projects for the public and stewardship initiatives undertaken on protected lands across town.

Following tradition, the meeting then featured and celebrated T3C volunteers. The 2021 Invaluable Volunteer Award was presented to Mike Tucker, for enlivening our educational and outreach offerings through numerous bird walks and Zoom talks; indeed Mike has become a popular and highly valued member of T3C's outreach volunteer team. The Mel Miller Stewardship Award was given to Robert (Bob) Laquidara, a talented and committed volunteer who made key contributions to several land projects over the year, most notably the steps along the Shallow Pond Woodlands trail system. T3C's Walk Leaders were honored with the Special Places Award for their creative and tireless efforts to effectively and safely get people out on Falmouth's many beautiful trails. All of T3C's volunteers were commended on their extraordinary efforts during this most challenging time.

Annual Meeting continued

Finally, board member Leonard Johnson reminded everyone that last year Virginia Valiela was honored with the inaugural Wise Owl Award for her “many years of wisdom, experience and dedication” to our land protection mission. To honor her memory, Leonard announced that the award going forward will be named the “Virginia Valiela Wise Owl Award,” to be presented on an occasional, not yearly, basis.

The meeting was peppered with several polls that encouraged attendee participation and adjourned with Jo Ann Muramoto raising a glass and toasting everyone in attendance: members, friends, board members and staff. “We could not have come this far without you,” she said, “and don’t go anywhere! We need you, and we need all of us working together to keep our community special.”



Bob Laquidara, (second from right) recipient of this year's Mel Miller Stewardship Award, led the volunteer team that built the steps at the Shallow Pond Woodlands for easier navigation on a very steep section of trail.

T3C Welcomes New Board Members

Richard Dotson, who was elected to T3C's board as a member and as Treasurer at the annual meeting in July, has been a Falmouth resident for 11 years. He worked in the State Department as a diplomat for 25 years and went on to the Department of Defense where for 13 years he worked both domestically and internationally with stations in Heidelberg, Sarajevo and the Pentagon. In his retirement, Richard has been busy with community volunteerism including serving as treasurer of the Waquoit Bay Reserve Foundation.

Marcia Macedo is an Ecosystem Ecologist with the Woodwell Climate Research Center, whose research focuses on the impact of agricultural expansion and intensification in the Brazilian Amazon and Cerrado. In addition to her volunteer work with T3C's Outreach Committee, Marcia volunteers for Cape Cod Rivers Observatory conducting water quality monitoring. The US-born daughter of Brazilian parents, Marcia brings to T3C a commitment to inclusion and diversity, hoping to help us more effectively serve underrepresented members of the community, particularly the many Brazilian and Portuguese emigres who now call Cape Cod their home.

T3C is delighted to welcome Richard and Marcia to the board and we anticipate that both will bring talent, creativity and their unique perspective to help guide T3C in the coming years.

Scout Project Benefits Teaticket Park

Rigel Laundré completed his Eagle Project on Saturday September 11 at Teaticket Park. He and his troop of helpers removed old chain-link fencing and chicken wire from along the edge of a wetland bordering the north side of Teaticket Park that had been left over from the days of the driving range. The old fencing was preventing wildlife from moving between the wetlands and turtles were often sighted stuck on one side or the other. A new wildlife-friendly barrier replaces the fence to guide people along the trail that borders the wetland. Rigel and friends also installed birdhouses to reuse the old fence posts too embedded to remove without further damaging the wetland. Rigel lives in Falmouth and is a senior at Sturgis West in Hyannis. A donation from Driftwood Plaza LLC helped make this project possible. A huge thank you to all involved on this much needed improvement to the park!

To complete his Eagle project, Rigel Laundré assembled a large team of helpers.



Eagle Scout candidate Rigel and the newly completed fence along the north side of Teaticket Park



Passing the TerraCorps Baton

The completion of our first year with a TerraCorps member was a great success. Colleen Smith helped us grow our stewardship capacity and streamline our monitoring processes, and brought a fresh and smart perspective to everything she worked on. As we launch our second season with TerraCorps we are excited to introduce Lynn Francis. Born and raised in Falmouth, Lynn is already an asset to our stewardship team. With her help, we will continue weekly clean-ups, respond to issues uncovered from monitoring, and strive to be a more inclusive and visible organization for all in the Falmouth community. We are so grateful for Lynn's support and our TerraCorps partnership, and look forward to continuing to build T3C's stewardship program.



Members of the Stewardship Committee welcomed new TerraCorps member Lynn Francis (center, in black top) with a walk at the Coonamessett River.

Record Support for T3C in Road Race 2021



Four high schoolers from southern California ran in August for T3C and were generously sponsored by Kay Kahn: (l to r): Cecilia, Sydney, Peyton and Ginger.

For the 18th consecutive year, T3C was a charity partner in the Falmouth Road Race's Numbers for Nonprofits Program (NFNP). Through this collaboration, the Road Race provides bibs to runners who commit to raise money in support of a selected nonprofit partner. This year's T3C team welcomed 16 runners in all, who ran the 7 miles in person on August 15 or "at home" during Road Race Week. (After a full "at home" race in 2020 due to the pandemic, this continued to be an option in 2021.)



Karl, Richard, Sandy, Emily and Sarah represented the Mangelsdorf-Rosengren family in the 2021 Falmouth Road Race.

Most of T3C's team were repeat runners with deep roots in Falmouth, including five members of the Mangelsdorf-Rosengren family—Sarah Mangelsdorf and Karl Rosengren (Rochester, NY), Emily Rosengren and Richard Lee (from Chicago) and Sandy Lee (based in Montgomery, AL) along with Arna Vatuk from California, running for T3C for her 17th year. Summer resident Hank Jones and his sons, Caleb and Graham, also signed up again this year, along with Nick Foreman of Chicago, who grew up in Falmouth and whose dad Ken is a T3C board member.

T3C's team also included six first-time NFNP runners: recent college grad Corinne McGillicuddy, based in Washington, DC but originally from Falmouth, and five others, generously sponsored by Kay Khan, a decades-long summer resident (since 1972). Kay's group included her daughter, Tira, from Newton, MA, who has run Falmouth numerous times, and her 16-year-old granddaughter, Ginger, and three of Ginger's friends, Cecilia, Peyton and Sydney, who all live in southern California. The young ladies from the west coast run high school track and were very excited to stretch their legs along the race course for the first time. Kay's generous support was given in memory of her husband, the late Nasir A. Khan, MD. Nasir began running Falmouth in 1979 and inspired his family to run in many subsequent years.

We are enormously grateful to all of our runners, whose support for land preservation in Falmouth has totaled more than \$20,000.



Arna Vatuk ran her 17th Road Race in support of T3C.

T3C's Land Acquisition Committee

"Special places don't stay special by accident"

Have you ever wondered how The 300 Committee decides what land parcels to preserve and why? Over the years, the Land Acquisition Committee (LAC) has reviewed and recommended dozens of land parcels for protection. When a parcel of interest is offered for sale or a landowner wants to protect a parcel and contacts T3C, the LAC swings into action.

Each month the LAC reviews potential open space parcels using a process that includes a preliminary map-based assessment, a site visit, scoring and evaluation, discussion of protection strategies and partners, and a recommendation to the Board. LAC uses several criteria to judge whether a parcel would be suitable for open space: high conservation value, high public value, linkage to existing protected lands, whether it contributes to an equitable distribution of open space throughout town, and land management needs. Climate change adaptation is also part of the evaluation. Above all, LAC looks for strategic, sustainable, and long-term connections that will benefit natural habitats and people. Once the Board accepts a recommendation, this sets in motion T3C's machinery for pursuing land protection: due diligence, negotiation with the owner, fundraising, coordination of partners, and more.

Parcels recommended by LAC that are now permanently protected include the Bartolomei Conservation Area, Little Pond Conservation Area, Teaticket Park, Shallow Pond Woodlands, Kelly Woodland, Andrews Farm and Andrews Grove, and the Florence Sylvia Woodlands. LAC has also recommended many conservation restrictions for parcels in all seven of Falmouth's villages.

"LAC members have a deep knowledge of the land and our community," said Dr. Jo Ann Muramoto, chair of the committee. "This really helps us in determining whether a parcel could be of value for conservation as well as people." LAC members have experience in many areas: town assessment, zoning and planning, conservation biology, wetland regulations, wildlife and plant biology, building and development, open space funding, water resources, climate change science, and land management. Members include lifelong residents as well as wash-ashores, but all share a passion for open space.



LAC Chair Jo Ann Muramoto shares parcel details with Emmanuel Owusu from the MA Division of Conservation Services during a 2016 site visit to Shallow Pond Woodlands.

New CR Land Links to Beebe Woods

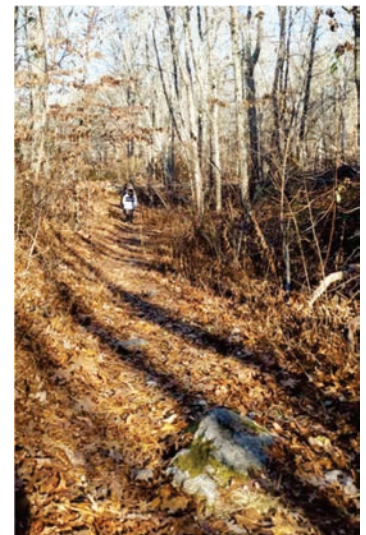


The Hallmann-Ladd CR property is home to this massive granite boulder.

The 2.07-acre Hallmann-Ladd Conservation Restriction was made possible through the generosity of Larry Ladd and Laurel Hallmann. The land, which abuts a wooded corridor with access to Beebe Woods, had already been approved for a two-lot subdivision when Larry and Laurel purchased it in 2019; their intent was to work with T3C to preserve it in perpetuity for conservation. The property hosts high-quality habitat and is well-vegetated and healthy with few invasive plants. A pre-existing foot trail extends along the southwestern side of the premises and connects



This beautiful old stone wall runs along the southern boundary of the new CR.



A trail through the Hallmann-Ladd property provides access to Ter Heun Drive and Beebe Woods.

across Ter Heun Drive with the Beebe Woods trail system. T3C thanks Larry and Laurel for their foresight and dedication in pursuing this land for conservation.



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GIFTS IN MEMORY OF...

- ♥**Jayne Abbott** from William Slaymaker, Lawrence & Shann Wood
- ♥**Richard Backus** from Denise Backus
- ♥**Jamie Bugley** from David Whittaker
- ♥**Robert L. Day** from Dorothy Ellis
- ♥**Bill & Maureen Durfee** from David Cardoza & Kelly Durfee
- ♥**Barbara Fanger** from Susie & Bill Hallstein, Anne-Marie Runfola & Ken Kostel
- ♥**Seth Harvey** from Thomas & Andrea Harvey
- ♥**David Jewett** from Marvin & Avis Grosslein, Michael & Emily Stone
- ♥**Joan Kanwisher** from Nancy Kanwisher & Robyn Kanwisher
- ♥**Barbara P. Kazlauskas** from Louise Goodman, Michael Malzenski
- ♥**Richard Kendall** from the Falmouth Democratic Town Committee
- ♥**Dr. Nasir A. Khan** from Kay Khan
- ♥**Rosemarie Lawrence** from Frederick Lawrence
- ♥**Liam Maguire** from Fran & Sue Smith
- ♥**William Malley** from Ruth Segal
- ♥**Frank Mello** from Sharon Jaquith
- ♥**Jennifer Michaels** from Ruth Segal
- ♥**Casey Miller** from Mike & Kathy Miller
- ♥**Paul S. Montague** from Paul Montague
- ♥**Shirley Mossman Nisbet** from Ian Nisbet
- ♥**Virginia Valiela** from Phil Benjamin, Albert & Deborah Bradley, Robert & Valerie Butcher, Hovey & Rose Clifford, Andrew Dolan & Zoe Cardon, Susie & Bill Hallstein, Lucy & Karl Helfrich, John & Olivann Hobbie, Kelly Holzworth, Leonard & Patty Johnson, Victoria Lowell, Day & Kathy Mount, Meghan Naujoks, Richard Payne & Deborah Siegal, David & Edith Ross, Jay & Margaret Russell, Scott Simenas, Jane Tucker & Paul Joyce, Jessica & Bob Whritenour
- ♥**Roland Wigley** from Susan Wigley & Jay Burnett
- ♥**Their parents** from Robert & Rita Ottaviano

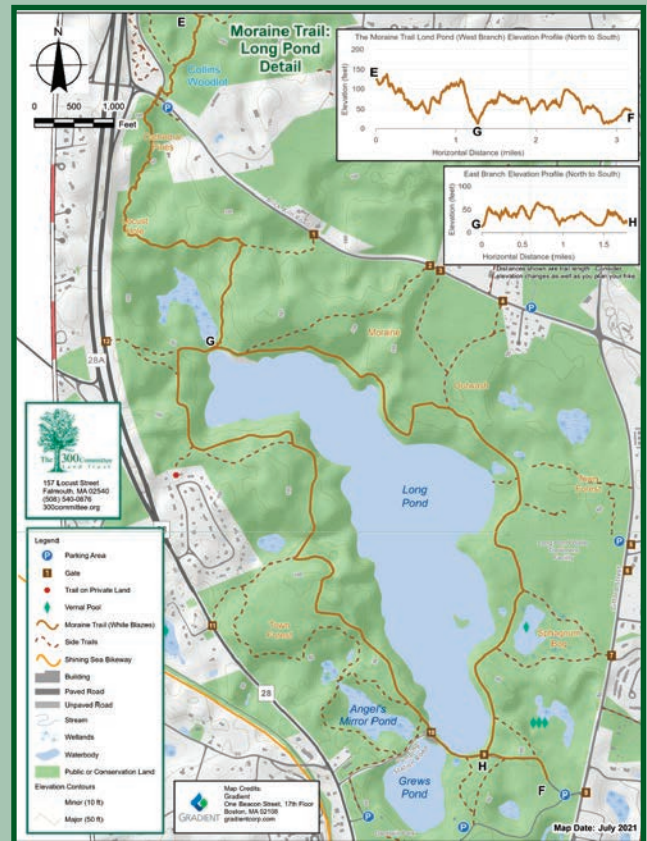
GIFTS IN HONOR OF...

- ♥**Bernard & Janet Aserkoff** from Alan & Sandra Gullicksen
- ♥**Dave & Ellen Bailey** from James Rakowski & Diane Mengani
- ♥**Melissa Beford** from Debby & Tony Green
- ♥**Sally Chandler** from Carla Zavorskas
- ♥**Will Clarke** from Andrea Rosen
- ♥**Molly Cornell** from Charlotte & Mary Harris
- ♥**Susanne Goodman Hallstein** from Bill Hallstein, Carolyn Partan
- ♥**Leonard & Patty Johnson's 60th anniversary** from Susie & Bill Hallstein, Alison Leschen & Scott Lindell
- ♥**Lily, Colin, Chloe & Bella Rapoza** from Rebecca Coverdale
- ♥**Stephanie Prior** from Anne Halpin
- ♥**Laurie Raymond** from Anne Halpin, Ann & Jim Menashi
- ♥**Carla Zavorskas** from Sharon & Paul McQuarrie

Extra Thanks...

...to all T3C's committed **Stewardship and Outreach volunteers**, whose work is invaluable to T3C's mission.

...to the team at the environmental and risk sciences consulting firm **Gradient** (Naomi Slagowski, Matt Mayo and Tim Verslycke) for their time, dedication and GIS expertise throughout the Moraine Trail map update project. New maps are hot off the press and will also soon be available on T3C's website.



Section detail of the new Moraine Trail map features the southernmost portion of the trail that includes Long Pond and the Falmouth Town Forest.