

Trail Crew Logs 143 Man-Hours

T3C's trail crew is a vital force for stewardship and land management, maintaining trail networks all over town. From early November through mid-March, 10 work days with several dedicated volunteers amounted to 143 man-hours of important work on Falmouth's trails.

Led by volunteer Charlie Peterson, the crew began its season by tackling trails at the Hanson-Powell Parcel and Bella Shepherd Reserve off Central Avenue, and the Donald Whelden Preserve and Sea Farms Marsh off Davisville Road. By mid-December and into January, Beebe Woods was the focus, with the Punch Bowl Parcel, Kelly Woodland and trails to Falmouth Hospital and Falmouth Academy receiving attention. The Dorothea Allen and Hayway Road Parcels were next, followed by trails near Falmouth High School, which still had downed trees left over from last year's storms. Finally, the connector trail from the Lower Coonamessett River Conservation Lands to Andrews Grove was cleared, and a small bridge was constructed to make the river crossing possible.



Trail crew members Steve Faluotico and Steve Morris clear a fallen tree near the Coonamessett River. Trail crew leader Charlie Peterson said, "Steve Faluotico was the key volunteer on the trail crew who led the chainsaw work. No tree fall was too tough for Steve to tackle."

Thanks to our committed trail crew, everyone can enjoy hiking Falmouth's beautiful trails!

Photo by Charlie Peterson

T3C Seeks Contributions for New Land Projects

T3C is embarking on a new farmland preservation project. Working with local farmer Matthew Churchill of Pariah Dog Farm on Trotting Park Road, T3C hopes to raise \$65,000 to support the purchase of a conservation restriction on 10 acres that will ensure the preservation of this working agricultural land. To support this project, T3C has submitted an application for federal funding to the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). If this funding is approved, T3C will close on the purchase in January 2020.

Within the next year, we hope to see the completion of the 0.7-mile Lower Loop Trail, an accessible pathway that is T3C's part of the \$1.5 million Coonamessett Greenway Heritage Trail (CGHT). The CGHT is a major component of the Coonamessett River

Restoration project, a \$4.5 million Town of Falmouth initiative, funded largely through state and federal grants, with additional support from the Town and local nonprofits. The CGHT, when complete, will be a 3.2-mile passive recreation trail within more than 280 contiguous acres of permanently protected lands along the river. Elements of the CGHT include pedestrian bridges, wetland walkways, a Gateway Park and eleven waystations with interpretive signage. In recent years, T3C and the Town have taken the initiative to incorporate all-access design as much as possible at protected areas. We are excited to be working on the CGHT's Lower Loop Trail, which will be open to people of all ages and abilities. T3C's expected contribution to the Town for this project is approximately \$230,000.

As always, contributions to T3C are fully tax-deductible.



A primary element of the Lower Loop Trail, the Dexter's Mill Crossing is the southernmost pedestrian bridge across the Coonamessett River.

New Grants

Foundation grants are critical to T3C's work. We are grateful to:

The Falmouth Fund of The Cape Cod Foundation, for its support of the accessible connector path at Two Ponds Conservation Area.

Falmouth Road Race for a generous grant for The Two Ponds accessible trails project.

Horizon Foundation, whose grant will support interpretive signage along the Coonamessett Greenway Heritage Trail (CGHT).

The Sporting Safety, Conservation & Education Fund of Falmouth, Inc. (SSCEFF, the charitable foundation of Falmouth Rod & Gun Club) for its support of T3C's stewardship program.



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- ♥H. Alfred Allenby from Louis & Lee Turner
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- ♥Frances Kimball Bullock from David Bullock & Patricia Hannon
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- ♥Howard A. Lane from Louise Lane
- ♥Alexander I. Lewis III from Gretchen Lewis
- ♥Elsa Johnson Lundgren from Gretchen Lewis
- ♥Bentley MacPhail from Wendy M. Nickerson
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- ♥Beth & Gary Schwarzman from Rebecca Lash
- ♥Sarah Snyderman from Robert & Morgan Butler
- ♥John & Anita St. Clair from Francis Lovell
- ♥Robert C. Swenson, Sr. from Karen & Robert C. Swenson, Jr.
- ♥Kate Heery Tulchin from Joseph Tulchin
- ♥Sylvia Werner from Ruth Segal
- ♥Cleveland S. White & Helen S. White from Allison Brewster White
- ♥Yvonne from Werner & Barbara Deuser
- ♥Alexander Ziss from Judith Ziss

GIFTS IN HONOR OF...

- ♥Susie Goodman Hallstein from Eric Hallstein & Suzanne Lippert
- ♥Owen Fitzhugh Harvey from Thomas & Andrea Harvey
- ♥Susan Houghton from Nawrie Meigs-Brown & David Brown
- ♥Leonard Johnson from Helenann Dixon
- ♥Charles Katz from Ruth Segal
- ♥Peter Kroll from George & Marjorie Yost
- ♥Vicky & Pete Lowell from Joanna Lowell
- ♥Anne-Marie Runfola from Ken & Wendi Buesseler
- ♥Sue & Fran Smith from Phil & Kathy Wessling
- ♥Tom Stone from Judy Fenwick, Michael Stone
- ♥Alden Thomas, Eagle Scout from Kenneth A. Heisler
- ♥Virginia Valiela from Ralph Herbst
- ♥Gary & Linda Walker from Cynthia Walker-Condrich & Russell Condrich

Upcoming Events and Dates

Mark your calendars and please plan to join us.

Pedal to Parcels: A Bicycle Tour of Falmouth's Open Spaces
Sunday, June 2, 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Grab your bike, your helmet and plenty of water for this exciting group ride. This year's P2P will begin and end at Andrews Farm, 394 Old Meetinghouse Road, East Falmouth. The route will cover approximately 11 miles and will feature 9 permanently protected open space parcels. Groups of about 8 riders each will focus on safety and fun. RSVP to helfrich@300committee.org. We hope to get an early head count so we can plan to have enough "leaders" and "sweeps." There is no scheduled rain date, so cross your fingers for good weather! Hope to see you on your bike!

Teaticket Park Community Day

Saturday, June 8 (raindate: Sunday, June 9), 1 to 3:00 PM
A chance to celebrate spring and enjoy the beautiful park with walks through the variety of habitats, activities for kids and free ice cream for the first 100 attendees!

T3C Annual Meeting, Thursday, July 18

at the Navigator Clubhouse, Ashumet Road, Hatchville
6:30 PM: Socializing and snacks on the patio
7:15 PM: Meeting and Awards
Join T3C board members, staff and volunteers as we reflect on the 2018-19 year and celebrate T3C's continuing land protection work in Falmouth.

Summer 2019, Yoga in the Park

Saturday mornings at Teaticket Park. A partnership of T3C and Calm Studio, Falmouth. Stay tuned for details.

2019 New Balance Falmouth Road Race

Sunday, August 18, Race Start: 9:00 AM in Woods Hole
T3C has guaranteed bibs reserved through the Numbers for Nonprofits Program for 10 runners who wish to support T3C's land preservation work. Visit 300committee.org for more information.



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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 33 years, more than 2,400 acres have been permanently protected through our efforts.

Leaves

Two Ponds Accessible Trails Project Nears Completion

The Two Ponds Conservation Area off Gifford Street is home to a globally rare Atlantic White Cedar Swamp and has frontage on both Jones and Sols Ponds. Its proximity to downtown Falmouth and its beautiful natural features make this refuge an obvious candidate for T3C's most recent public access initiative. Nestled just north of the senior living complex Atria Woodbriar Place, and abutting several backyards in the Grasmere neighborhood, this land was formerly the Woodbriar golf course, a popular 9-hole, par 3 course that closed in 2009. The original 14.75 acres were donated to T3C in 2014 for open space mitigation as a condition of Atria's development permit.



Staging for the boardwalk got underway in April.

In March of last year, Two Ponds grew by 2 acres when Lawrence-Lynch Corp. donated to T3C a vacant parcel that fronts on Gifford Street and Sols Pond. Today, the entire 17-acre preserve has an extra layer of protection through a conservation restriction held by The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts.

When T3C acquired the land, the property had been outfitted with a short pathway, accessible to wheelchairs and available for public use, with several benches located on a wooded knoll to capture views of the ponds. After much planning, T3C is now moving quickly to complete an expanded trail system that includes: lengthening the wheelchair accessible pathway; building a 360-foot elevated boardwalk; installing interpretive signage; and creating an upper wetland loop hiking trail. Currently, Two Ponds features 390 feet of accessible pathway. T3C is extending the total pathway length to 2,635 feet; 955 feet will meet federal trail accessibility guidelines.



The boardwalk at Two Ponds takes shape, with Jones Pond to the left and the Atlantic White Cedar Swamp to the right.

A portion of the trail just beyond the boardwalk has required the installation of "bog bridges" to cover wet ground; 13 8-foot bog bridge sections were built this winter by Eagle Scout Alden Thomas and his Boy Scout compatriots. The troop also cleared the wooded portion of the trail (approximately 1,570 feet) to complete the loop around the preserve.

Two Ponds Accessible Trails Project Nears Completion continued from page 1



The Two Ponds educational panel provides information about the rare Atlantic White Cedar Swamp ecosystem. Designed by T3C volunteer Allison Leschen and George Lawrence of Sketchbook Studio in Santa Fe, NM, the panel was made possible by a grant from The Friendship Fund.

Soon, T3C's Two Ponds Conservation Area will offer a unique opportunity for all visitors, including young children, people with mobility challenges and seniors, to enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of pond front open space and the wonder of an Atlantic White Cedar Swamp. Stay tuned for our announcement of a ribbon-cutting ceremony and the official opening of this truly special place.



Alden Thomas, a Falmouth High School junior, took on the bog bridges and trail clearing project to complete the requirements needed to earn his Eagle Scout rank.



Fellow Boy Scouts help get the work done!

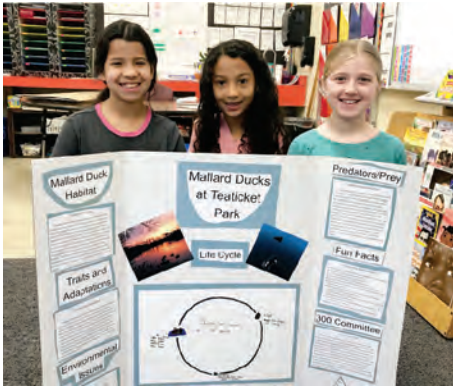
Photos by Deb Thomas

Elementary Schoolers Study Teaticket Park

Fifty-one third graders at Teaticket Elementary School visited Teaticket Park this winter to learn about the Park's habitats. The three classes each focused on one habitat—wetland, grassland and woodland, and learned about different animal and plant species known to live there. Working in small groups, the students chose a particular “critter” to research, seeking to answer questions about the animal's life cycle, traits and adaptations, predators and prey, and environmental stressors. Compiling what they learned, the students presented posters at the Falmouth Public Schools Science & Engineering Fair, which was held March 23 at Falmouth High School. They also made presentations to other classes at Teaticket Elementary to share their findings, and created skits about walking through Teaticket Park; the skits were filmed in front of a green screen and a backdrop the students made in Art class.



Third grade students share their research results with Teaticket Elementary principal Sandy Kapsambellis at the Falmouth Public Schools Science & Engineering Fair.



Students in Kelly Geist's third grade class presented posters on their critters after visiting Teaticket Park and conducting research.



Nichole Freeman's Teaticket third graders enjoyed their field trip to study the grassland habitat at Teaticket Park.

T3C is grateful to Teaticket teachers Nichole Freeman, Kelly Geist, Michelle Mokeler and Jennifer Cleary for developing this creative and multi-disciplinary project, which was fun and rewarding for the students. We are pleased that these 51 third graders had the opportunity to get outdoors and learn in Teaticket Park, the natural classroom right next door to their school.

How Do We Manage That?

There are many factors to consider when determining how to manage land: age of trees, diversity of species, parcel connectivity, habitat functions, and more. Managing our 30+ conservation properties with a range of objectives and resources, T3C has come to understand that efforts can and should be implemented in some areas, while other parcels' needs or conditions exceed our capacity for restoration. We have learned that some invasive thickets provide valuable habitat for nesting birds, and there can be value in the cycle of regeneration that takes place when larger trees die, making way for new growth. At the same time, we are continually evaluating the state of our conservation lands and are primed to reallocate energy towards a needy parcel or project as resources arise.

Some invasive species are so aggressive that pulling, drowning, burying, plowing and fire won't make a difference. In these rare instances we have found success through targeted herbicide application. At our Flume Pond parcel for example, T3C has collaborated with the Buzzards Bay Coalition since 2013 to treat *phragmites* annually with glyphosate. Through this study we have seen the near eradication of *phragmites* and the return of native marsh species. This limited, targeted application is an example of how chemicals can be used responsibly to improve our ecosystems.

T3C is committed to best management practices and preventing negative impacts on the land whenever we can. Members of our Stewardship Committee will be testing alternatives that minimize harmful exposure to both the environment and our applicators. We look forward to expanding our toolbox and finding organic solutions as they become available.



Responsible use of glyphosate has produced the virtual elimination of invasive phragmites at T3C's Flume Pond parcel off Sippewissett Road.

Outreach Highlights

T3C's Outreach Committee enthusiastically plans and executes walks, talks and other events that spread the word about T3C, engage members of the community, and attract visitors to Falmouth's beautiful protected lands. We truly appreciate the support of our Outreach members at these recent events:

The March “Friend Raiser” and dance party at Grumpy's Pub was a packed house, with live music by local band Puffy Elvis, featuring T3C board member Greg Souza as guest guitarist. Nearly \$800 in contributions to T3C were collected at the door and donated by the band. Special thanks to board and outreach member Stephanie Madsen who headed up this fun event, all the helpers who greeted folks at the door, and of course the band, who kept the joint hopping!



The February Speaker Series Talk was held on Valentine's Day to a full house. “Lovebirds” featured Mike Tucker discussing the “strange and often humorous relationships of our feathered friends.”

The Winter-Spring Speaker Series featured educational talks on Cape Cod rivers, courtship behavior in birds, plastics pollution in our oceans, and edible plants. We are grateful to our

Annual Stewards Meeting

On February 28, T3C hosted a gathering to celebrate our stewardship efforts and thank the volunteers who make it all possible. FHS junior Alden Thomas kicked off the meeting with a presentation about his Eagle Scout bog bridge project at Two Ponds Conservation Area (see cover story and photos). Stewardship Coordinator Alexandra Zollo followed with updates on T3C's wildlife enhancement and habitat restoration efforts. Through the strategic installation of nest boxes and gourd rack systems, we have had excellent results in attracting American kestrels and purple martins to conservation lands. Alex also talked about the fencing project underway at the Breivogel Ponds Conservation Area and the progress of T3C's public access improvements at Two Ponds and Shallow Pond Woodlands.

The evening's guest speaker was Mark Faherty, whose Weekly Bird Report airs on the Cape & Islands NPR station, WCAI (90.1 FM). Mark has been the Science Coordinator at Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary since 2007, and has led birding trips for them since 2002. His T3C talk, wide ranging and often humorous, covered a variety of Mass Audubon projects, and he offered his congratulations to T3C for its many accomplishments.



T3C's Alexandra Zollo (center) is flanked by members of the Town's Parks Department, whose help has been instrumental in installing the fence at Breivogel. From left: Matt, Joe, Leroy, Shawn, Alex, Jenn (T3C's AmeriCorps member), Rachel (WBNERR AmeriCorps placement) and volunteer land steward Barry.



The new parking area at Shallow Pond Woodlands.



New fencing will delineate and protect the new vernal pool habitat at Breivogel Ponds.



Tom Parker presents a special grant to T3C at the Annual Stewards Meeting.

dynamic speakers: Max Holmes (Woods Hole Research Center), Mike Tucker (T3C volunteer and bird enthusiast), Jessica Donahue (Sea Education Association) and Russ Cohen (botanist and author), our presentation partner, Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries, our host, Falmouth Museums on the Green, and our eager and attentive audiences. Everyone's collaboration helped make this another successful series.

Nature & Bird Walks are taking place more often and at a wider range of conservation lands, thanks to our growing number of walk leaders. Valerie Butcher, Molly Cornell, Marcy Klattenberg, Cathy Kligler, Alex Lancaster and Mike Tucker eagerly share their passion for conservation and their knowledge about birds, plants, Cape Cod geology and natural history. Too numerous to list, the walk areas span all parts of Falmouth. We post walks on T3C's website and send periodic eblasts to our email list of nearly 2,000. Email lhelfrich@300committee.org if you'd like to be added to T3C's email list.

T3C launched the Beebe Woods Series, a collaboration with Highfield Hall, and by all accounts it was a winning endeavor. Walks were scheduled every other Friday, January to April. Seven took place, each with 20 or more participants, even in the rain! The five walk leaders chose their own routes, so repeat walkers had the opportunity to explore a wide variety of trails in Beebe Woods. After each walk, the group was welcomed into Highfield Hall for a short visit and snack, which everyone agreed was a fine way to wrap up each session. We hope to plan a similar series for next winter.