

T3C Any Time Pedal to Parcel Route Fall 2020
Parcel descriptions...Look for T3C signs with “Conservation Stop #s”

(Please note: property addresses are approximate!)

1. START/FINISH....Andrews Farm & Andrews Grove
392 Old Meeting House Road

The preservation of Tony Andrews Farm and associated family lands along the Coonamessett River for farming and conservation was an opportunity that The 300 Committee seized as one of Falmouth's most significant open space projects ever. A complex and multi-faceted project, The 300 Committee worked closely with the Town and the Andrews Family to negotiate and coordinate the linked land acquisitions of 35 acres of farmland and nearly 11 additional acres of riverfront land. These deals closed in February 2018, with the town buying the Farm for \$2 million and T3C purchasing the waterfront parcels for \$950,000. Funding for the town's purchase came from Community Preservation Funds (\$800,000), a MA LAND grant (\$400,000), town free cash and a contribution from T3C. The land trust raised more than \$1.4 million through gifts and grants to support the acquisitions. We are grateful to our loyal and generous friends and members for supporting this landmark project!

Located in East Falmouth at 398 Old Meetinghouse Road, the farm has offered locals and visitors the opportunity to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables since its establishment in 1927. During the height of strawberry farming in the 1930's, Tony Andrews maintained 23 acres of strawberry plants, which thrived due to the farm's coarse, highly acidic and sandy soil. Since the passing of Tony Andrews and his wife, Marina, son Jeff, the youngest of the seven Andrews brothers, has continued to farm the land, keeping the farm stand open to the public during spring, summer and fall seasons.

The farmland together with the waterfront parcels provide farm fields, riparian corridor and wooded buffer to Pond 14 and the river. Keeping these 46 acres undeveloped will forever protect water quality as well as important fish and wildlife habitat, including the well-known Coonamessett herring run. The preservation of the Andrews lands also complements the Coonamessett River restoration project, which got underway in 2017. The Andrews lands link to existing open space both to the north (Bartolomei Conservation Area) and the south (lower Coonamesseett River Conservation Lands) and fill a key puzzle piece in the Coonamessett Greenway,

While protecting these 46 acres in perpetuity, the intent is to keep the farm parcels as working agricultural lands and to preserve the waterfront parcels for conservation, passive recreation, habitat and water quality. With the farmland under town ownership, Jeff Andrews will continue his family traditions at least through 2023, with pick-your-own strawberries in June, abundant produce at the farm stand through the summer and pumpkins in the fall. Looking ahead, it is anticipated that the town will continue to lease the farmland, perhaps to a nonprofit group that will oversee a new farmer, or group of farmers, who will tend the fields, grow and sell crops, and run educational programs. We encourage everyone to visit the beautiful farm and to take a walk or enjoy a picnic at Andrews Grove, the T3C-owned land along the Coonamessett River, which is open to the public year-round.

2. Coonamessett Greenway Heritage Trail (Coonamessett River restoration)

John Parker Road (about midway) where it crosses the river

More than 500 acres of permanently protected land link along both sides of the Coonamessett River to form a north-south corridor or “greenbelt” of open space. Efforts to protect the River itself began in 1964 when the town purchased a small parcel bordering the river that contained a key herring run.

In the subsequent decades more land was acquired for the conservation of natural resources including upland, bog, wetland, riverfront and the watershed. The town and T3C identified completion of the corridor as an important goal, creating a continuous wildlife and recreational greenway and enabling public access and a walking path along the length of the Coonamessett River from Coonamessett Pond south to the Lower Coonamessett River Conservation Lands.

The 3.5-mile trail has numerous shorter loops including a 1-mile wheelchair-accessible section. Two wetland boardwalks cross the river to provide better access to the variety of habitats. With the restoration of the lower Coonamessett River that began in 2017, the vegetated wetland buffer zone of protected land hosts a range of natural systems including wetlands, forests and meadows that are home to a diversity of plants and animals. The cold water river itself supports five species of migratory fishes including river herring, American eel and brook trout, as well as many other animals like otters and ospreys.

The Coonamessett River corridor has a rich history of land use changes through time as economies have waxed and waned. Southern access to the trail is from two driveways off John Parker Road. Additional access and parking are at Andrews Grove,, Bartolomei, River Bend, Matt Souza Conservation Area and the Coonamessett Reservation.

3. Wald-Fender parcel

Opposite 160 Thomas B. Landers Road,

(the parcel is in the triangle bounded by Turner Road (east) and TBL Rd (south))

Land Bank funds and the state Self-Help program enabled the town to purchase 51.3 acres of a former gravel pit on Thomas B. Landers Road in 2000. The previous owners, David Wald and William Fender, had plans to develop the property.

The parcel is wedged into the triangle formed by Thomas B. Landers and Sam Turner roads, not far from a cranberry bog along the Coonamessett River. The parcel is now part of a large and almost continuous track (other than Thomas Landers Rd.) of open space that includes Breivogel Ponds and Shallow Pond conservation areas. Shallow Pond is the next stop on the ride. Together these three properties comprise 183 acres of valuable wildlife habitat.

The former mining operations are reflected in the regenerating pitch pine and open sandy areas that now support a variety of grasses and wildflowers. There is a mature white pine forest on the east end of the parcel; a short trail winds through the woods.

On the southwest end is a vernal pool. Visitors who stop by at sundown in late spring or early summer will likely hear a chorus of spring peepers. Lucky visitors might also hear the call of a barred owl known to visit the area.

While most of the property is protected by a conservation restriction, the town put six acres abutting Thomas B. Landers Road under selectmen's jurisdiction. The deed states that the six acres can be used for recreation. Ballfields, for example, could be built here.

4. Shallow Pond Woodlands

Between 198 & 260 Thomas B. Landers Road

The 300 Committee purchased this 70-acre parcel in 2017. It was the largest undisturbed parcel left in Falmouth. Its 70 acres connect to both the 68-acre Breivogel Ponds Conservation Area to the west and the 46-acre Wald & Fender property to the north to create a 183-acre linked expanse of open space. This acquisition forever preserves significant upland, wetland and wildlife habitat, frontage along Shallow Pond, and magnificent stands of tall white pines.

An extensive habitat restoration on the adjacent Breivogel Ponds conservation area was undertaken in 2017, creating two types of rare habitat – vernal pools and a sandplain grassland. Together, these parcels represent incredible, rare wildlife habitat. A network of trails provides access to many of these beautiful features. In addition to this new parking area, parking for Breivogel is adjacent to the town leaf dump around the corner on Blacksmith Shop Rd.

5. Coonamessett Reservation

Opposite 323 & 315 Boxberry Hill Road

The first land purchases promoted by The 300 Committee in 1986 included the 212-acre Coonamessett property in Hatchville. Had town meeting and voters not supported the land trust's recommendation, 225 homes would have been built on the property. Instead, the town saved an area that lies in the recharge zone for the Coonamessett and Crooked Pond town well sites, which provides a critical link between the two sections of the state Crane Wildlife Management Area, contains a variety of plant and wildlife habitats and guarantees public access to a beach on the largest pond in Falmouth. The polo field on Ranch Road is a remnant of the sandplain grasslands, now rare, that are one of the Cape's distinguishing critical habitats for endangered species.

The reservation has a rich history. Eighty years ago, when Hatchville was an important dairy center, the land was part of The Coonamessett Ranch Corporation owned by the Crane family in Woods Hole. (The company controlled about 14,000 acres on the Upper Cape.) The family leased the property to Edna Harris in 1930, and under her direction the Coonamessett Inn—predecessor to the inn on Gifford Street—grew in fame and prosperity.

The inn and several derelict buildings on the site were demolished in 1987, but a parking lot of the old inn remains. A year later, The 300 Committee dedicated a plaque placed on a boulder above the pond “honoring the foresight of the people of Falmouth” who voted in favor of the land purchase.

The reservation was created out of numerous parcels surrounding the golf course, and as a result

there are several points of access. A small parking lot on Ranch Road, off Route 151, provides access to the former polo field as well as to trails on the other side of Ranch Road leading to Little Jenkins Pond. A kiosk at the trail head contains a map of the trails. Parking for the beach on Coonamessett Pond is available on Boxberry Hill Road.

6. Hayway Road Parcel

276 Hayway Road (south side)

This parcel is part of 200 acres of open space put together through several large purchases over decades. Ten years after the state acquired 53 acres on the north side of Hayway Road, the town purchased two large tracts of open space on the south side, an area sometimes called Martha's Bottom. A 90.9-acre parcel was acquired in 1977; an abutting parcel of 38.3 acres, on Carriage Shop Road, was acquired the following year. The latter tract is under the Conservation Commission.

In 2004, the town purchased 71 acres from Dorothea Allen on the west side. This area is an example of how the patient, persistent strategies involved in land conservation pay off.

An elevated water storage tank was constructed on the Hayway Road side of the property in 2002.

7. Crane Wildlife Area

259 Hayway Road (north side)

Operated by the State Division of Fisheries and Game, the Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area in Hatchville was purchased by the state in 1958 with funds provided by hunting and fishing licenses and sporting goods taxes. The major reason for acquiring more than 1,800 acres from the family of Charles Crane was to promote wildlife management and hunting access.

The state took on the ambitious task of developing an intricate trail system, clearing meadows and planting some 5,000 conifers, 30 acres of millet, buckwheat and rye to restore wildlife habitat. As a result, birds, fox and other wildlife returned. Buildings that were part of the extensive Coonamessett Ranch Company, owned by the Cranes, were eventually razed.

The Crane Wildlife Management Area is stocked each year with quail and pheasants. The property is popular not just with hunters, but also mountain bikers, horseback riders, nature walkers and model plane enthusiasts.

The reservation also contains a rare expanse of meadowland. A late-summer stroll attests to this when the meadow wildflowers bloom and attract throngs of butterflies and birds. The largest open area used to be a grass airstrip for the former Falmouth airport; it is mowed regularly to keep the grassland from reverting back to forest. The grasslands provide habitat for a wide variety of birds and wildlife and support more than 15 threatened plant species, including sandplain blue-eyed grass, New England blazing star and sandplain flax.

Small parking areas are scattered along the north side of Route 151, from the Route 28 access east to the former Nickelodeon Theater (Now Hamilton Tree). There is also ample parking on

the road that lies between the parking lot of the old theater and the Joe Allietta softball field. Access to the quail-stocked woods is off Hayway Road is near the entrance to Far Out Farm.

8. Falmouth Country Club
377 Old Barnstable Road

Proposals to establish a municipal golf course in Falmouth had failed in the past, but the availability of Falmouth Country Club in the heart of East Falmouth suggested new possibilities. Not only would the town's purchase of the 177-acre property create a municipal course, but nearby open space could serve as a site for a wastewater treatment plant, which has long been planned for the densely developed areas around the coastal ponds south of the golf course.

In the spring of 2004, Town Meeting approved the acquisition of 238 acres, which included the golf course on Carriage Shop Road and several abutting parcels: 12 undeveloped acres at the end of Timothy Bourne Cartway, and the 48-acre Degnan property, the potential site for wastewater treatment. Funding for the \$15.8 million purchase came from the Land Bank, federal nitrogen mitigation funds, future golf course revenues, and a \$3 million contribution from The 300 Committee. Acquisition of Falmouth Country Club and the 71-acre Allen parcel to the north on Carriage Shop, a total of 309 acres, mirrored The 300 Committee's original goal of preserving 300 acres for the town's tricentennial celebration in 1986.

A conservation restriction was placed on the golf course acreage in 2007, preventing future development on the greens and fairways.

9. Flax Pond Bog
Across from 271 Old Meeting House Road

The cranberry bog on the eastern edge of Flax Pond was one of three bogs near the pond that the town acquired in 1971 with the bogs on John Parker Road.

End: Andrews Fam & Andrews Grove