



CHATHAM CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BULLETIN

Spring
2019

The Chatham Conservation Foundation preserves land for the benefit of the people, plants, animals and ecosystems of Chatham.

CCF's New Executive Director Dorothy Bassett

*by Carol Odell
Board of Trustees*

CCF is delighted to announce that Dorothy Bassett is the new Executive Director of Chatham Conservation Foundation.

Dorothy was born and raised in South Chatham, attended Chatham schools and Cape Cod Community College. She then left Cape Cod to further her education in Environmental Science and Management at U. Mass Boston and Harvard University Extension School. In May she will have earned a Certificate in Leadership and Nonprofit Business Management from Tufts University.

She has had oral communications training and a great deal of Public Speaking experience making her an excellent ambassador for CCF. Her previous position was Director of Operations for the Marconi Maritime Center where she did grantwriting, outreach, and created exhibits and STEM classes for children.

Dorothy's experience with recruiting and training volunteers will be a wonderful asset to the Foundation. She



Photos by Carol Odell

says she is eager to begin bringing the community in to help CCF follow its mission to preserve land for the people, plants, animals and ecosystems of the town.

Matt Cannon, the previous part time Executive Director also served as Land Steward. When Matt relocated to Maine in February, CCF decided that a full time Executive Director was needed to carry the organization forward. In addition, CCF will be hiring a part time Land Steward. Although Dorothy will be spending most of her time at the Mayo House, she is currently out walking the land to familiarize herself with the 233 properties stewarded by CCF.

CCF is fortunate to have Dorothy as its new Executive Director not only because she is well-

educated in environmental science and has good experience working for a nonprofit, but because she is a local person with a knowledge and deep passion for her home, Cape Cod.

Peter Trull to speak at Annual Meeting



CCF is looking forward to having the accomplished author, photographer, educator and naturalist, Peter Trull as the featured speaker at its Annual Meeting this year. Peter has studied, researched, and taught about wildlife on Cape Cod for over thirty years. He has written five books on various subjects, including Eastern coyotes, humpback whales, and local birds. His latest book is [The Gray Curtain: The Impact of Seals, Sharks, and Commercial Fishing on the Northeast Coast.](#)

Annual Meeting

Monday, August 5 @ 5:30

Wequassett Inn

Guest speaker: Peter Trull

Chatham's land trust since 1962

President's message: It's an exciting time at the Foundation.

*By Oonie Burley
President, Board of Trustees*

With summer just around the corner (fast approaching) there is much excitement at the Mayo House! Early in March we welcomed our first full time Executive Director, Dorothy Bassett, and plan to have hired a part-time land steward by now. Dorothy is bright, energetic and engaging. (see article pg.1) A warm welcome to both.

Establishing our headquarters in the Mayo House at 540 Main Street has had amazing results. We have increased our visibility for residents and visitors alike enhancing awareness of CCF and our mission. We also have established appropriate offices and a meeting space. Dorothy has settled into the main office and Evelyn Burekhart, our secretary, is well established in the reception room. Our front room is now used many days each week for committee meetings, for trustee and community consultations as well as for impromptu gatherings. These spaces have offered an opportunity for more and better communications and interactions between trustees and others. Restoration work is nearing completion with work on our windows and some interior painting. We anxiously await the awakening of our 'Mini Meadow on Main'. Please stop by to say 'hello'!

I welcome Cathy Weston and Gary Toenniessen our two new trustees and look forward to working with them. I wish to thank all of our committees for their diligence and hard work to meet the needs of our growing organization. Great progress has been made.

Lately we have been working very closely with the Nickerson Family Association. They have been conducting archeological digs on our property adjacent to the Caleb Nickerson House on route 28 in North Chatham. More information can be found on their article on pages 4-5. Their final dig is scheduled for this summer: July 29-September 20th. Please feel free to stop by for a peek – totally fascinating!! After that time we plan a complete restoration of this parcel see article on page 6.

CCF greatly appreciates our members increased and continued support. We strive to earn and deserve this support and trust. Once again I wish to thank our trustees, employees and volunteers for their dedication to our conservation vision.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual Meeting and Celebration of our Members at the Wequassett Inn on Monday, August 5, 2019 at 5:30!! We are pleased to have Peter Trull as our speaker this year.



Oonie Burley

Executive Director's Message:

*by Dorothy Bassett
Executive Director*



After one month in the beautifully restored Mayo House office, serving as the new Executive Director for the Chatham Conservation Foundation, a few words clearly stand out about this wonderful organization: dedication, value, and opportunity.

The Chatham Conservation Foundation is an organization whose name and reputation carries significance. Since 1962, the mission of saving land has been executed by dedicated trustees, members, supporters, donors, and volunteers. I am honored and filled with gratitude to have the opportunity to work with this dedicated and well-respected organization, in one of the most beautiful places in the world.

The benefit of CCF to the community is invaluable: walking trails for families, preserving fish and wildlife habitats, and protecting slices of woodlands, and stretches of wetlands for water quality and vistas. Every day I see the woods and marshes, which were saved as conservation land. This ecosystem is the home to lady's slippers, otters, box turtles,

spotted salamanders, coyotes, deer, and an incredible variety of beautiful and impressive birds. Marshes and ecosystems are healthy and vibrant because of local conservation efforts.

My experience working with nonprofits has given me an understanding of the day-to-day tasks required for the bigger picture of fulfilling the mission of saving land. As I've gotten up to speed, I am more and more impressed with how far CCF has come, and how much has been advanced in the past five years. I have been impressed with the Poetry Walk, the collaborations with Harwich Conservation Trust for the Muddy Creek Headwaters Project, and the beautiful trails for public enjoyment. To build on these great programs, I see a wealth of opportunities for public outreach. I hope you will be a part of this vision.

Thank you all for the warm welcome as I have begun this new role. Preserving the ecosystems of Chatham and Cape Cod has been a dream of mine and the focus of my education and professional development. I look forward to leading this organization and helping it thrive.

Dorothy Bassett

Ben Cockrell - CCF Americorps Volunteer

by Scott Tappan
Interim Land Steward

CCF is privileged to be able to participate in Americorps Cape Cod, a federally funded service program focused on addressing the critical environmental needs of Cape Cod including improving disaster preparedness. Towns and non-profits benefit from the efforts of young people who are willing to give their time to conservation efforts. This year the Land Stewardship and Management Committee (LSMC) has been working with Ben Cockrell from Pennsylvania.

Ben Cockrell, graduated from Cuachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas with a BA in Political Science and a BA in Social Justice. As in other years, CCF has shared a volunteer with Harwich Conservation Trust. Ben works one day per week for CCF, and one day for Harwich Conservation Dept.

While working for CCF, Ben has performed baseline reports on 35 CCF properties, monitored and improved our trails, conducted boundary marking and implemented our new steward database. Ben is not only skillful, but he has been a willing and pleasant co-worker.

After his year of Americorps service, Ben plans to marry and move to Austin, TX. CCF thanks Ben for his contributions and wishes him a bright future.



Photos by Carol Odell

Ben Cockrell
2018-2019 Americorps Volunteer

Trustee Candidates

The Board is pleased to welcome two Interim Trustees who were elected by the board last fall and began serving in January. Their names will appear on the ballot at the Annual

Meeting to begin their first terms.

Gary Toenniessen recently retired to Chatham following a long career with the Rockefeller Foundation where he was the Managing Director for Agricultural Sciences and Food Security. His career focus was on crop improvement and sustainable land management for worldwide

agricultural development, targeting tropical food crops such as rice, maize and cassava. He received the Adolph Gude Jr. Award from the American Society of Plant Biology for outstanding service to the plant sciences and the Golden Cassava Prize for his contribution to strengthening research and development of cassava. He was a Board Member of the Lower Hudson Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and of the New York Botanical Garden. In Chatham, Gary and his wife, Janet, are active members of the Chatham Marconi Maritime

Center and enjoy participating in the Learning Series at the Eldredge Library. At CCF Gary would like to work with the Land Stewardship Committee and the Advancement Committee.

Cathy Weston is no stranger to CCF. She and her husband, Craig, have been long time supporters of CCF.

Cathy has served as a docent in the Mayo House and was the lead designer / installer of the meadow landscape at the Mayo House. Cathy says, "Love of the outdoors and concern for the environment has been a constant thread of my life". She earned a certificate in Native Plant Horticulture and Design from New England wildflower Society, is a volunteer for the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston and is Vice President of the Friends of Sylvan Gardens here in Chatham. She also brings her skills in software design, management, marketing and customer relations from her career with technology companies. Cathy will be working with the Advancement Committee and Membership.



Photos by Carol Odell

Cathy Weston

Nickerson Homestead Archaeological Dig.....

by Debra Lawless
Executive Director, Nickerson Family Association, Inc.



Photo by Matt Cannon

Nickerson Homestead dig site during the first excavation of fall 2018.

2019 Season of Nickerson Homestead Dig Begins July 29th

This summer will begin the second full season of the archaeological excavation of William and Anne Nickerson's c. 1664 homestead.

The site of the pioneers' homestead proved so significant during the 2018 season that the board of the Nickerson Family Association, Inc. (NFA) voted unanimously to extend the dig for an additional month in 2018 and for an additional two-month season in 2019.

The dig site is located on land that belongs to the Chatham Conservation Foundation (CCF) immediately adjacent to land owned by the NFA at 1107 Orleans Road, North Chatham.

CCF plans to restore the dig site after the dig to create a park-like setting with walking paths extending out to Orleans Road. Both the NFA and the CCF projects have been approved for town Community Preservation Act funding. (See article on p.6).

During the winter, archaeologist Craig Chartier of the Plymouth Archaeological Rediscovery Project processed over 10,000 separate artifacts from the 2018 excavation. Significant

finds during the three-month dig include a bed warmer; the fragment of a sharpening wheel, a unique find in New England; a partial Jesuit ring which would have been used to trade with the Native Americans; a brass button and a thimble; a Trefid spoon handle; an intact spoon; an intact tobacco pipe; a round knife; loads of Sgraffito pottery; an octagonal silver cufflink with the initial "R" and a "bale seal fragment" which would have been used when shipping items from England. A large number of the finds Chartier processed, though, were fragments of



Items such as the intact spoon above and the pottery shard to the right are among the 10,000 artifacts found in 2018.



Photos by Debra Lawless

.....*Will Continue*

shell and brick. After he finished examining the artifacts, Chartier began work writing the comprehensive report, which is due out at the end of April.

A primary focus of the upcoming dig season will be to locate all of the outbuildings, including the barn and stables.

"We have some tantalizing clues at this end," Chartier said at the conclusion of last year's dig.

The dig began last year by expanding the footprint of the homestead out from the previously-discovered hearth. As it turned out, the homestead was larger than Chartier had expected, and therefore took longer to excavate.

Of last year's discoveries, "the most significant thing is the outline of the house," he said. "It's bigger than we thought for just two people in what we'd consider a retirement home."

William and Anne were the parents of nine but their children were grown when they moved from Yarmouth in about 1664 to what became Chatham. William was age 60 and



Gary Nickerson sifting for artifacts.



CCF President Oonie Burley with archaeologist Craig Chartier at the dig site in 2018.

Photos by Debra Lawless

Anne was 55, yet they constructed a house enormous by 17th century standards at 44-by-20-to-24 square feet. One theory is that the house was used as a meeting house as the nearest place of worship at that time was Eastham, an arduous trek.

Another significant find was traces of postholes. These indicate that a palisade or wooden wall up to eight feet high was constructed on the Eastern side of the house, leading to the idea that the house may have been fortified or used as a garrison. It has always been assumed that the Nickersons enjoyed warm relations with the local Native Americans. The palisade may contradict that, at least during the period of King Philip's War from 1675-1678.

The couple was well-to-do. A chimney at each gable end of the house was "very high class," Chartier said. That was a style well-known in England and Virginia but was not seen in New England until the 18th century. Found on the site were fragments of a Dutch ceramic frying pan, never before found in New England. The Nickersons cooked on it in a day when others cooked on cast iron. Other luxury items also found were fragments of a Staffordshire slipware candlestick and shards of Italian marble slipware.

"We're going to be studying the site for years to come," Chartier said.



Photo by Carol Oddi

The dig site today has been covered, seeded and a new CCF property sign and NFA stone plaque installed.

Everyone is invited to visit the dig between July 29 and Sept. 20 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. In addition, the NFA will host an Archaeology Day on Sept. 13 at 2 p.m. A Kids Dig! Day will be held on a date in August.

Cooperative efforts for Environmental Restoration

By Oonie Burley
President, Board of Trustees



Archaeological site seeded with rye grass after this year's dig.

CCF has engaged Teresa Sprague of Blue Flax Design LLC to create and implement a restoration plan for its property located off Rt. 28 in North Chatham which includes the site of the Nickerson Family Association archaeological dig. The entire parcel is overgrown with invasive Asiatic bittersweet, shrub honeysuckle, porcelain berry, black locust and others. These have been removed from the dig site and after completion of this year's dig, the area was seeded with rye grass. The second stage of the project will begin this fall with the restoration of the highly-invaded northern portion of the property. This is an area of 28,500 square feet which fronts Rt. 28 and is one of CCF's most visible, roadside parcels. Removal of invasive vegetation is a several year process followed by seeding the entire area with Grass and Wildflower Mix. When 80% of the control of the invasive vegetation has been achieved, native shrubs such as clethera, bayberry, winterberry, and viburnum will be planted.

For public access, a four foot wide footpath will be maintained by mowing throughout the management areas.

This 1.8 acre parcel was acquired by the Foundation in 1988 and little maintenance has been done on the property

Volunteer Open House

Thursday, May 16th, 4:30 - 6:30

Come to the Mayo House and meet with others to learn about volunteer opportunities with CCF. We will match your passion with our needs:

- gardeners • land stewards
- office helpers • photo archivists
- Mayo House docents • event planners

RSVP by email: executivedirector@ccfinc.org or call Dorothy at the Mayo House at 508 945-4084. Light refreshments will be served.

until now. Funding for this project was contributed by CCF, the Nickerson Family Association and Community Preservation Act funds from the Town. CCF wishes to thank Teresa Sprague of Blue flax Design, the Nickerson Family Association and the Town for for their co-operation on this project which is a benefit for all.



Restoration of this highly visible area will begin this fall.

Photos by Carol Odell

Mayo House



One of the last projects CCF will complete using the CPA grant for the Mayo House is to complete the restoration the old windows which add so much to the charm of the building. Nancy Barrington of Window Restoration Cape Cod in Orleans began the work by removing the old aluminum storm windows and replacing them with wooden, removable ones. Thirteen of

the traditional nine over six windows have been repaired and cracked panes have been replaced with antique glass. A large picture window with colored glass on the east side has also been restored. Please drop by to see the results of the work of the craftsmen who have restored the Mayo House as an historic place of interest on Main Street.

Strategic Plan

The Board of Trustees has created a new Strategic Plan for 2019-2021 that addresses short, mid and long term goals for Acquisition and Stewardship, Community Perception and Engagement, Financial Stability and Governance. There is a copy of the plan on our website.

www.chathamconservationfoundation.org

Just the woods! Or Your Neighbor's yard!

By Paul Chamberlin
Chair. of the Land Stewardship Management Committee

Many of us have fond memories of our childhood vacations in Chatham – when we made the seemingly endless road trip from out of state to spend a glorious week or two on the Cape. Two things we really looked forward to that did not exist in our neighborhoods back home were the beach and the woods.

Ah, the woods - - acres of forested landscape which no one seemed to own where we could be free to play, explore, climb, hide, do battle, build forts, and even a few things outside the bounds of “passive recreation” (an oxymoron to a ten-year-old).

But now, it's 2019 and most of the “ownerless woods” are gone. It turns out they actually belonged to someone who decided to cut them into house lots and sell them. But what didn't seem to disappear with the woods was the idea that undeveloped land must be ownerless and therefore free to use as we

please. And unfortunately, one of those uses is often as a place to dump our yard waste.

Now most of us wouldn't think of taking our Spring clean-up brush pile and tossing it over the fence into our neighbor's yard. But trucking it to our favorite “woods” and dumping it there doesn't seem to be as bad – even though in the back of our mind we know that someone owns that property and is therefore a neighbor. And it's likely that your neighbor doesn't want your brush in their yard for the same reasons you don't want it in your yard: it's unsightly, it smothers and kills what you want to grow, brings in aggressive invasives which choke out native vegetation, and it adds to the fuel load of potential wildfires. We hope people will be mindful and help keep our lands safe and clean.



Tree medallions like this one are placed on many of CCF properties.

Sylvan Gardens ADA Accessible Trail Completed



The Town of Chatham has a new ADA accessible trail to add to its list of walking trails. Almost 15 years after the property was purchased from the Sylvan family, and six years since the Management Plan was adopted, the trail with signage and benches will be completed by late spring for the enjoyment of Chatham residents and visitors. The Sylvan Path, as it is called, is the only ADA accessible trail in town. Sylvan Gardens is located off Old Main Street. Handicap parking is available.



Roadside Attractions

As you drive or walk Chatham's roads, you may have noticed the oval signs indicating properties belonging to CCF.

- Crowell Road
- Morris Island Road
- Chatham Bars Ave
- Rt. 28/Frost Fish Creek
- Stage Neck Road
- Pond Street
- Queen Anne Road

These are a few of the locations that have been designated with hanging oval signs. Other properties have medallion tree signs. Look for these signs and you will become familiar with how much of Chatham's open space CCF is working to preserve. And perhaps CCF is your neighbor.



It is your membership and contributions that continue to benefit the views, the habitat, and the health of the natural environment of our community.



Chatham Conservation Foundation, Inc.

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WE'VE MADE IT EASY!



If you haven't already made your annual membership contribution, you can do so online. Just go to the CCF website and click the DONATE NOW button.

We are grateful for the financial support our members have given to protect over 800 acres of open space in Chatham.

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Office Hours
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 945-4084
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OPEN SPACE PROTECTED TO DATE		
Parcels	Classification	Acres
146	Gifts	359.59
42	Purchases	243.83
46	Easements & Restrictions	215.06
<hr/>		
234	TOTALS	818.48

Recent Donations have been given
 in memory of
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The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and after all our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope. - Wendell Berry