



The NLC NEWS

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Aerial View of Loring Land



The white outline on the aerial map shows 270 acres along Eel Point Road which will be preserved by permanent conservation restrictions if the NLC can raise \$14 million in the Loring Campaign.

A PRIME NANTUCKET INVESTMENT NLC Buys Options to Purchase Conservation Restrictions

► NLC Goal—\$14 Million to Exercise Options

In June 2004, remarkably, Linda Loring and The Linda Loring Nature Foundation, Inc. signed Options which give the NLC a short time to raise \$14 million to buy permanent conservation restrictions on the 270 acres they own from Eel Point Road to Madaket Road.

Your generous tax-deductible donations are key to our taking advantage of this rare opportunity and completing this Nantucket conservation project.

For information, go to www.nantucketlandcouncil.org, email nlc@nantucket.net, or call us at 508-228-2818.

► Loring Land is Biological Jewel

This extensive tract is extraordinary biologically. It features several important upland plant communities, including sandplain grasslands and heathlands, both globally threatened ecosystems, and pitch pine forest and coastal shrub forest. A number of rare plants, including Nantucket shadbush and sandplain blue-eyed grass, thrive there. Wetlands communities in excellent condition are found east of Head of Long Pond. Two vernal pools were certified by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program after the Land Council's research documented in both pools the presence of fairy shrimp, an obligate species.

► In Defense of Scallops, Eelgrass, Salt Marsh, NLC Joins Appeal of Great Harbor Yacht Club's Permit

After a public hearing which lasted nearly a year, the Nantucket Conservation Commission last November approved Great Harbor Yacht Club's application for water-based activities: fixed and floating dock systems at 96 Washington Street; dredging of approximately 800 cubic yards of ocean floor; demolition and reconstruction of a travel lift; and a marine refueling station. (An Order of Conditions issued last summer for land-based activities was not appealed by NLC.)

Throughout public hearings on the water-based proposals, the Land Council, the Nantucket Marine Department, concerned citizens and professional scallopers raised concerns about potential effects on essential eelgrass beds, scallop habitat, harbor water quality, and the adjacent Creeks salt marsh ecosystem. The location of new docks and piers, particularly seasonal floats, will affect healthy eelgrass beds and essential finfish and shellfish habitats. We asked the applicant to explore alternatives to lessen proposed dredging, such as keeping the travel lift in its present location, reducing the length of the piers, and relocating them to better utilize the existing channel.

The applicant did propose mitigating impacts to protected resources by planting approximately eleven square meters of eelgrass. However, the Land Council and others stated several times during the hearing process that the cumulative impacts to eelgrass will affect an area greater than one half acre and, so, the proposed area for mitigation is grossly inadequate.

After careful review of the permit, the Land Council along with several citizens, most of whom are commercial scallopers, chose to appeal the waterside permit because the project will directly impact scallops, eelgrass beds, and other shellfish resource areas. Adequate mitigation strategies were not proposed by the applicant and alternatives that would minimize negative environmental impacts were not addressed. In an effort to lessen the project's potential damage of natural resources, the NLC along with twelve Nantucket citizens, most of whom make their living as scallopers, filed an appeal in Nantucket Superior Court and, in addition, requested a Superseding Order of Conditions from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Oldsquaw Ducks



A pair of oldsquaw ducks in winter plumage, a female on the left, and a male on the right. Sketch by Emily Molden

► NLC, Andrew Family Sign Settlement Agreement

The Nantucket Land Council reached an agreement in January 2005 which settles an appeal with Stephanie Coffin Andrew and her family regarding her approved subdivision off Milestone Road in 'Sconset. The NLC joined the Massachusetts Audubon Society, an abutter to the north of Andrew's land, in its appeal of the Planning Board's decision to approve the cluster. **The Agreement gives the NLC a right to purchase lots in the subdivision for conservation, and it preserves in its open and natural condition a significant portion of the 25 acre property, which provides habitat for endangered species, including the northern harrier hawk and several rare Nantucket plants.** The NLC thanks the Andrew family for reaching an agreement.

► NLC and 'Sconset Bluff Owners Reach Agreement

The Nantucket Land Council is pleased to have settled litigation last fall with four property owners on the coastal bluff south of Sankaty lighthouse in 'Sconset. The Nantucket Conservation Commission granted them a permit to armor the bluff with plastic and fiberglass duneguard fencing and coconut fiber logs. The NLC along with ten Nantucket citizens were concerned that the permit did not adequately protect the ocean environment. **The settlement agreement provides Mass. Department of Environmental Protection ability to revoke or amend the permit if there are significant impacts to the environment, such as loss of duneguard fencing into the sea.** The agreement provided no decision on whether the duneguard fencing and coir log system constitute a coastal engineering structure, so this could not be a precedent-setting decision.

► Species Highlight—Oldsquaw (Long-Tailed Duck)

Wintertime on Nantucket is for the birds. Check it out! **Oldsquaw, or the Long-Tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalia*), breeds in the arctic tundra during summer, then winters along the United States coast.** Hundreds of thousands of oldsquaw fly daily at dawn over the west end of Nantucket to feeding grounds around Nantucket Shoals, then back again at dusk to spend the nights in Nantucket Sound. Oldsquaws, one of the deepest diving ducks, feed primarily on mollusks, insects, and crustaceans. The male's winter plumage is mostly white head and body with dark wings; the female's is mostly white head with a dark cheek spot and dark wings. A distinguishing feature when on the water is their long central tail feathers that stick up jauntily at a forty-five degree angle. If you've never seen Oldsquaws blanket the Madaket sky, it is well worth a trip west where the spectacular flights can be seen at dawn and dusk throughout the winter.

► Nantucket Lepidoptera—Monitoring and Management with Mark Mello

Mark Mello, Research Director of The Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies, continued his Nantucket Lepidoptera research last summer with continuing support from the Land Council. His 2004 work furthered several long-term goals. Mello hopes to complete an island-wide inventory of macrolepidoptera ("larger" moths) and establish long-term monitoring plots to study the effects of various land management practices on shrubland/grassland moth species. This year he began studying the state-listed *Hemiluca maia*, Barrens Buck Moth, a representative scrub-oak feeding species. With the help of Cormac Collier, Mello also used light traps to sample in various habitats across the island on 54 nights from April until October. The survey documented 17 species listed under the Mass. Endangered Species Act. In addition, pit-fall traps were set up in several plots by Mello to begin sampling beetles, and one state-listed species *Cicindela purpurea*, Purple Tiger Beetle, was found. Digital photographs of Nantucket's macrolepidoptera will be eventually available on-line. Mello plans to continue studying Nantucket's moths in 2005 with support from the NLC.

American Copper Butterflies



Two American Copper Butterflies on Yarrow flowers photographed by Cheryl Creighton on Tuckernuck.

► Tuckernuck Butterflies Surveyed in 2004

Last summer, prior to joining the Land Council staff, Emily Molden conducted an initial survey of butterflies on Tuckernuck. Data on the abundance and distribution of flora and fauna will prove a valuable tool in future conservation decisions. In association with Tuckernuck Land Trust, data was collected on numbers and locations of 14 butterfly species. Most common were *Phyciodes tharos*, Pearl Crescent, and *Cercyonis pegala*, Common Wood-Nymph. Tuckernuck was divided into a grid of sampling blocks, each 500 square meters, which were surveyed nineteen times between 16 June and 23 August. The number of each species observed on a given day was recorded for each block. The data is the beginning of an on-going study. Emily will incorporate the continuation of this survey with her work at the Land Council. The current data is purely anecdotal, but with the collection of several more years' observations, it will begin to tell a story.

Volunteer Counts Barrens Buck Moths



Karen Borchert in the Moors not far from Alter Rock where she and others volunteered in October to help researcher Mark Mello count Barrens Buck Moths.

► **Elizabeth Van Duyne Preserves Quidnet Property**

In December, Elizabeth Van Duyne and remainder interest owners Doug and Don Denninger granted a conservation restriction to the Nantucket Land Council on their 2 acre Quidnet property. **The CR will keep the modest buildings from becoming “trophy homes,” conserve undisturbed wetlands and upland along Squam Road, provide scenic views to the public along Quidnet and Squam Roads, and preserve the two acre Quidnet Village property as it has been for decades—harmoniously in scale with an historic New England fishing village.** The property abuts three acres owned by Margaret McElderry who granted a CR to the NLC in 1990. We congratulate Ms. Van Duyne and the Denningers for their vision and thank them for their important gift. The NLC now enforces 59 CR’s to protect 732 acres.

► **Voters Defeat Sewage Plant and Airport Expansion**

Unabated growth over the last two decades came home to roost at the Special Town Meeting called in fall of 2004 to consider spending millions of dollars on a new wastewater treatment plant and on the expansion of Nantucket’s airport. **An article to appropriate funds to upgrade Surfside’s wastewater treatment plant was defeated overwhelmingly.** Impacts on future growth and tax implications were not fully explained by the Board of Selectmen. **Voters also failed to approve an expanded terminal at Nantucket Airport, stating that the size and scope of the proposed design were inappropriately large and that a larger terminal would facilitate unwanted and expensive growth.** The NLC understands that improvements to the facility are necessary and hopes the Airport revises its plans to scale down the size and scope of the project before returning to the voters.

► **NLC Works With Town to Upgrade Septic Regs**

The Land Council has served on the Town’s Septic System Advisory Committee for the past five years. During 2004 the Committee worked to improve the Town’s Health Regulations to better protect ground water and harbor waters on Nantucket. This fall the Committee recommended several new septic system regulations, including expanding the requirements for denitrification systems in ecologically sensitive areas. The NLC applauds the Nantucket Board of Health, which adopted new regulations in December.

► **Executive Director Linda Holland Retires, Cormac Collier Promoted to Take Helm**

After 17 years as NLC Executive Director, Linda Holland retired last fall. In November, Land Council President Larry Breakiron said, “As the Land Council celebrates 30 years of natural resource protection on Nantucket, the Board of Directors appreciates Mrs. Holland’s dedication and her many conservation achievements. We are thrilled to have Mr. Collier, who has been with us for four years, willing and most able to head the organization.” **Mrs. Holland will stay with the NLC as Development Director to run the Loring Campaign, which is raising \$14 million to buy conservation restrictions on 270 acres on Eel Point Rd.** Lynn Zimmerman who has been with the NLC for 20 years will continue as Associate Executive Director, Kate Shanaphy will stay on as Membership Coordinator, and in November Emily Molden joined the Land Council as Resource Conservationist.



NLC Staff from left, Lynn Zimmerman, Linda Holland, Cormac Collier, Emily Molden and Kate Shanaphy

► **NLC Works with Town on Electric Co. Land Plan**

Voters approved purchase of the Electric Company property on Fairgrounds Road in 2004, and Cormac Collier has become a member of the Fairgrounds Road Reuse Workgroup. It was organized to consider uses for the property. The group has been brainstorming ideas that include, open space preservation, affordable housing for town employees, a new fire and police safety complex, and a cultural center. The Land Council is advocating conservation of open space and development which will blend in with the landscape.

► NLC Science/Environmental Grants Awarded

The Nantucket Land Council is pleased to announce its twelfth annual Small Grants Program, a way to support local students and teachers who participate in science-based environmental awareness projects. All applicants are welcome to submit proposals which are reviewed by NLC's Education Committee.

The grants for fiscal year 2005 have been awarded. They include support for a series of text books and water testing kits for the Nantucket Middle School's Fifth graders, for the Science Fair at NHS, and for a NHS student's participation in research of bay scallops in Nantucket Harbor. A grant went to Strong Wings for after school nature programs for students in grades K thru 8, and the Nantucket Lighthouse School received a grant for a Marine Biology Unit for 5th graders from both the Lighthouse and New Schools. This new four-week study will involve both in-class and field work and will culminate in group and individual projects.

The grant program is one small way the Land Council is able to stimulate Nantucket students' environmental awareness and knowledge of the natural world around them. We look forward to continuing the program and hope to encourage increased participation. For information contact Emily Molden at 508-228-2818.

► NLC Joins Land Trust Professionals at Rally 2004

Cormac Collier, Lynn Zimmerman and NLC President Larry Breakiron spent the last weekend of October in Providence, RI, attending workshops and presentations held by the Land Trust Alliance at its annual Rally.

*Care about saving Nantucket's natural resources?
Preserving wetlands? Protecting drinking water?
Conserving endangered species habitats?*

**THEN JOIN US,
BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT WE DO!**

*The Nantucket Land Council, Inc. is a
501(c) (3) non-profit, environmental group*

**Send your gifts to:
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Or call us with your credit card information. THANKS!

► Gray Seals Thrive on Muskeget Island

Kristen Ampela, a PhD student at The College of Staten Island in Staten Island, NY has been conducting research on the Gray Seal, *Halichoerus grypus*. Every winter these seals give birth to their young on the shores of Muskeget (*shown below*). Kristen has been studying their diet by analyzing scat samples collected throughout the year. On January 10, there were an estimated 1,800+ pups counted around the island.



► 2004 "Christmas" Bird Count Down From 2003

Over New Year's weekend, the annual Christmas Bird Count was held on Tuckernuck and Nantucket. On December 31st, Tuckernuck bird sightings included a Peregrine Falcon, two Harlequin Ducks, and the usual flocks of Oldsquaw, Eiders, and Scoters. For the first time ever, no owls were observed at night. That total count included 54 species. On January 1, 2005 birds were counted on Nantucket. Conditions were near ideal, but overall numbers were down from last year. 133 different species were identified in 2003, while this year only 113 species were seen. No exceptionally unusual birds were observed, although the Snowy Owl seen at Great Point is very exciting news.

SAVE THESE 2005 DATES & JOIN US!

Enjoy a Wonderful Time & Support the NLC

March 8th—Cocktails in New York City

"Young Friends of Nantucket Land Council" Benefit

July 2nd—An afternoon of music and fun for children,

Linda Loring Nature Foundation on Eel Point Road

July 3rd—'Sconset Evening

Gala Benefit for the Loring Campaign

July 17th—Sankaty Head Golf Club Evening

NLC Encore Benefit Terry Waldo Ragtime Concert

August 11th—NLC's 31st Annual Meeting

5PM at the Coffin School on Winter Street, Nantucket

September 11th—Galley Restaurant Dinner

Gala Benefit for the Loring Campaign

For information & tickets, please call 508-228-2818.

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*Design by: Gioiosa Design, Somerville, MA
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