



The NLC NEWS

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Left: These fields and the abutting shrub habitat were preserved in 2007 when Karen Borchert gave a permanent Conservation Restriction to the NLC. Middle: Two of the horses in the barn at the Borchert farm. Right: Heathland and grasslands as well as a half mile of scenic views along Madaket Road were preserved by a CR given in 2007 by the Birges.

NLC ENDS YEAR WITH RECORD NUMBER OF NEW CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS!

The NLC's Conservation Restriction Program added nine new Conservation Restrictions in 2007 totaling 331 acres, including three CR's recorded last April when the Loring land was preserved. We now hold 69 CR's and protect more than 1055 acres on both Nantucket and Tuckernuck.

► Six Generous Landowners Donate CR's

Perhaps it had to do with the publicity associated with saving Linda Loring's fabulous 270 acre tract last April, or perhaps the 2007 changes to federal tax law, but for whatever reason, the Land Council was very busy for the rest of 2007 working with six generous landowners who all wanted to permanently protect their Nantucket land.

We are grateful to these 2007 donors for their gifts of Conservation Restrictions from July to December:

- Nancy J. Sevrens
- Susan and Walter W. Birge III, as Trustees
- Washing Pond Conservation Trust
- Karen K. Borchert, as Trustee
- Joan Pratel
- David C. Todd

► Nancy Sevrens Protects Lot Next to Cemetery

For fifty years, Nancy Sevrens owned, maintained and paid taxes on the fields just west of the Cottage Hospital. The land is next to the Colored Cemetery, the historic name used reverently by some descendants of those buried there. Last summer, Nancy protected her two acre vacant parcel by giving a Conservation Restriction to the Land Council and selling the property to the Land Bank. The agreement allows a shed to be built near Vesper Lane and for the land to be used some day as playing fields.

► Birges Preserve Half Mile of Madaket Rd.

It's that nice stretch of pine trees and other vegetation, which extends about a half mile along the north side of Madaket Road after you pass the turn off to Eel Point, which Walter and Susan Birge preserved last August by donating a permanent conservation restriction on their 15.1 acre lot to the Land Council. Their property might have been subdivided into as many as 6 ANR lots, but they love their land and chose to protect it predominantly in its natural condition with its unparalleled scenic views.

Contact Lynn Zimmerman at the Land Council at 508-228-2818 or lynn@nantucketlandcouncil.org for more information on Conservation Restrictions.

► **North Liberty St. Tract Saved by Joan Pratel**

Have you driven past 12 North Liberty Street and peeked down the drive in awe at the enormous old stately elms? If so, thank Joan Pratel for saving that public scenic view. Joan exemplifies the Nantucket property owner who has been coming to the Island for decades and who wants to leave her property in its open and vegetated condition. Joan subdivided her lot and then granted a Conservation Restriction to keep the new 1.4 acre lot vacant. It contains the old elm trees on the north and a lovely overgrown area to the south which abuts several other large, undeveloped in-town areas. We hope her generosity and vision will inspire her neighbors to follow her conservation initiative.



The historic stately elms on this North Liberty Street property were protected by Joan Pratel's 2007 Conservation Restriction donation.

► **Washing Pond Conservation Trust Grants CR**

Boaters and beachgoers along the north shore will enjoy permanent scenic views of a vacant waterfront parcel off Washing Pond Road, which was preserved last fall when the owners granted the NLC a Conservation Restriction. At a time when most waterfront lots are being developed into large new house sites, it is fortunate that this land, with an unusual eighteen foot high dune form, has been protected in its natural condition. The old cottage and garage were removed from the property last spring, and the disturbed area was vegetated with native plants.

► **Surfside Habitat Preserved by David Todd CR**

Stands of huckleberry, bayberry, arrowwood, pitch pines and scrub oaks grow together so thickly you have to twist and turn and get scratched as you make your way through the vegetation on David Todd's Pochick Avenue parcel. It is typical of the mix of coastal heathlands and maritime shrublands still found growing wild in Surfside, and the habitat as well as the scenic views have been preserved by David's December 2007 CR grant to the Land Council.

► **Karen Borchert Donates CR on Farm**

At one time, Nantucket supported more than seventy relatively self-sufficient family farms. Today, they are nearly all gone, their names now oddly memorialized by subdivisions. Within this context of rapidly disappearing agricultural land and pursuant to a clearly delineated local policy in *The Nantucket Comprehensive Community Plan* to protect farmland, the gift of a Conservation Restriction by Karen K. Borchert on her 9.66 acre farm at 14 Burnt Swamp Lane is truly a conservation victory. This property abuts 11.2 acres protected in 1996 with a CR given by Karen and her late husband Carl F. Borchert, and six acres to the south also preserved via a CR by Eileen McGrath.

► **Protecting Nantucket Harbor's Resources is NLC's Goal at Great Harbor Yacht Club Site**

In 2004, when the Conservation Commission approved Great Harbor's application to dredge the harbor and construct docks, piers and floats in sensitive eelgrass habitat, an appeal was filed, and it was joined by the Nantucket Land Council. The case currently is before an adjudicatory law judge at the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP), where the NLC will provide expert testimony to defend Nantucket Harbor's resources against impacts from the project as proposed. An appeal filed in Nantucket Superior Court still must be heard, and the state must decide on the project under Chapter 91 of Massachusetts General Law. In addition, the new yacht club also must obtain an Army Corps of Engineers permit. **The nonprofit Land Council has nothing to gain but protection of the Harbor, which is a public resource.** The NLC is convinced that viable alternatives to the proposed configuration exist and would both protect the eelgrass beds and ensure ample private facilities for Great Harbor Yacht Club members. The NLC seeks to resolve this matter and would welcome a meeting with the proponents and the members to find a solution which protects the resources.

► **NLC Files Complaint In Tuckernuck ANR**

In December, the Nantucket Land Council and the Tuckernuck Land Trust, Inc. filed a Complaint in Land Court, stating that the Planning Board had improperly approved an Approval Not Required (ANR) subdivision on Tuckernuck's north shore. The Complaint specifically contends that the 1977 decision of the Planning Board which created the lot being subdivided failed to set conditions for construction of the road. The road was not constructed, and it fails to meet the ANR standards.

► **Biodiversity Initiative Week Scheduled on Nantucket May 25-31, 2008**

Biologically, Nantucket harbors a wealth of species. Because it is an island, isolated for thousands of years, Nantucket supports a unique diversity of plants and animals. The Nantucket Biodiversity Initiative (NBI) is a collaborative of Nantucket's conservation groups, along with universities, non-governmental organizations, and other partners on and off-island. NBI's purpose is to record and monitor the myriad species of plants and animals found on the island and to educate the community about Nantucket's rich biodiversity. During the last week in May this spring, scientists and naturalists from on and off-island will conduct biodiversity surveys in their areas of expertise. Programs, field trips and workshops will be open to the public that week. For more information, visit <http://www.nantucketbiodiversityinitiative.org>.

► **Monarchs on the Move**

The annual fall Nantucket visit of the brightly colored orange and black Monarch butterfly gives us a special first hand glimpse during this insect's annual migration. This past fall, however, the number of Monarchs moving through the Northeast was lower than normally expected. According to Chip Taylor of "Monarch Watch" at the University of Kansas, small numbers of Monarchs were observed entering the Northeast this year. Nevertheless, the drop in numbers of the butterflies did not stop many Nantucket students from participating last fall in the national Monarch tagging program. **The NLC's Emily Molden led groups of students from the Nantucket Lighthouse School, Nantucket New School, Nantucket Elementary School, and home-schooled students on field trips to identify, catch, tag, and release Monarchs during their great migration south.** Tagging the butterflies with a tiny numbered paper tag on their wing enables researchers to monitor the Monarch butterfly population, promote conservation, and protect their international habitat. Chip Taylor has predicted an over-wintering population at their roost in Mexico of between five and six hectares in size, a drop from last year. (A hectare is an area of 100 meters by 100 meters, and six hectares equals about 14.8 acres.) For more information visit <http://www.monarchwatch.org>.

► **Life in "Spring Pools" Full of Mystery**

As winter fades and signs of spring appear, groundwater rises and precipitation collects in topographic depressions, bringing back life to Nantucket's many vernal pools. The word "vernal" literally means "belonging to the spring." **Vernal pools, which fill with water in spring and dry up later in the year, are ephemeral isolated wetlands.** This isolation prevents the presence of adult fish, making vernal pools thriving nurseries for other animal species. Vernal pool creatures can be very diverse and include state listed endangered and rare species. Terrestrial invertebrates with an aquatic larval stage, such as dragonflies and caddisflies, begin their lives in vernal pools and other wetland ecosystems. **Fairy shrimp are small crustaceans found only in vernal pools. Their eggs remain on the bottoms of the vernal pools after they dry up and will hatch only when re-exposed to water the following spring.** Reptiles and amphibians are also integral players in the mysterious web of life of vernal pools. Some species of salamanders and frogs slither and hop to these pools in spring to breed and to spend the first stages of their lives. Turtles and snakes are opportunistic, and they follow to feast on eggs, larvae and other invertebrates; carnivorous birds and mammals come to prey on whatever they find. **These aquatic life and death cycles, which spring mysteriously from dry, seemingly lifeless depressions, play out every spring in vernal pools on Nantucket.**



► \$7,715 Awarded in Seven Grants to Schools

For the 15th year, the NLC awarded science project grants to local students and their teachers. The 2007-2008 grants went to stereo microscopes for Nantucket New School teacher Matt Liddle; funding for a Science Fair project on the long life span of the bivalve, *Artica islandica*, for which Stephen Estabrooks is advisor; waders and other marine ecology unit materials for Nantucket Elementary School teacher Mike Girvin; materials for an educational organic garden at the Nantucket Lighthouse School; microtome and histology equipment for Nantucket High School teacher John Bennett; general support for the Nantucket High School Science Fair; and microscopes for the Nantucket Homeschool group. **The NLC's goal in providing these annual grants to Nantucket's schools is to increase educational opportunities for local students, specifically in areas of science and Nantucket environmental studies.** For information on these grants or to obtain an application for next year's grants, please contact Emily Molden at the Land Council at 228-2818.

APRIL 22 IS EARTH DAY!

Tips to Keep Nantucket "Green" Every Day

- Walk somewhere every week instead of driving.
- Turn off lights when you change rooms, and turn electronic devices off at night.
- Buy local produce to eliminate energy in shipping.
- Use cloth bags when grocery shopping.

► Town Reviews Subdivision Rules and Regs NLC Hopes to Strengthen Open Space Provisions

This winter the Nantucket Planning Board opened a series of public hearings to review and revise its Subdivision Rules and Regulations, the foundation used by the Board when determining Nantucket's growth. Scott Horsley, of the Horsley Witten Group, is working with the NLC to review the Rules and Regulations of other towns across Massachusetts, to note provisions which effectively protect natural resources, and to draft specific proposals for Nantucket. **Strengthening open space and natural resource protection measures in Nantucket's Rules and Regulations effectively enhances certain public benefits associated with residential subdivisions.**



Enjoying the NLC's Galley Beach Benefit are, clockwise from upper left, Cormac Collier with Marion Meader; Wendy and Mike Morris with Eli and Peggy Kaufman; Jean Bennett, Karen Borchert, Joan Barnes, and Lynn Zimmerman; Chris Mortenson, Chris Donelan and Michael Karlson

► Galley Beach Benefit Celebrates Conservation Restriction Program

The sunset was lovely, the food fabulous, and the evening last September a stunning success, as the Land Council and its generous supporters celebrated the environmental nonprofit's 20 year program to preserve open space and natural resources by means of Conservation Restrictions. **Executive Director Cormac Collier thanked outgoing president Larry Breakiron for his years of leadership, and Associate Executive Director Lynn Zimmerman recognized the CR donors who attended the dinner, including incoming NLC president Karen K. Borchert.** The NLC is grateful to our hosts at Galley Beach for providing their fabulous setting for our fundraising event.

► NLC "Rallied" with Land Trusts in Denver

In early October 2007, Cormac Collier, Emily Molden, and Lynn Zimmerman attended the three-day national "Rally" of land trust professionals held by the Land Trust Alliance, this year in Denver, CO. Workshop sessions were quite varied and highly informative, and networking with others in the land conservation field and sharing professional experiences made the trip very worthwhile.

► Appeal Filed for Gardner Road Subdivision

The NLC joined several abutters and the Shimmo Pond Homeowners Association, who appealed the Nantucket Planning Board's approval of a nine lot subdivision off Gardner Road. The permit requires that Gardner Road be paved to a width of 20 ft. and stormwater infrastructure be built. The bulk of this massive construction project would be on a portion of privately owned land where so-called "Gardner Rd." traverses in the form of an easement. The appeal contends that the road improvements overburden the easement and therefore are not permissible. The Land Council holds several Conservation Restrictions in the neighborhood, two of which directly abut the lot being subdivided. We are concerned that the development will impact wildlife, wildlife habitat, and significant wetland resources throughout the fragile site. All interested parties are to attend a court requested mediation session in April.



Gardner Road, now a lovely country road, will be paved and widened if the approved subdivision goes forward as permitted by the Planning Board.

► Point Breeze Proposes to Build on Wetlands

This winter, work has moved along on the previously approved "phase I" Point Breeze Hotel—a large looming replica of the original structure from the early 1900's. Unfortunately, the developer decided to not stop there. A "phase II" application is currently under review by the Conservation Commission and the Nantucket Planning Board. New plans include another huge hotel of about 25,000 square feet, five cottages, three new tennis courts, a swimming pool, and underground parking for 100 cars. The "phase II" application proposes to destroy and fill a wetland, which provides high quality wildlife habitat and exceptional flood storage capacities. This area has always had a very high water table. The proposed development would disrupt the natural hydrology and alter surrounding wetlands and potentially impact surrounding properties with additional flooding. The NLC is opposed to all activities that will destroy wetland ecosystems and will advocate for their protection before the review boards.

► Conservation Commission Still Considering Proposal to Pump Sand onto 'Sconset Beaches

It was April 2007, when the Conservation Commission first opened the public hearing for the Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund's (SBPF) beach nourishment proposal. The application is for dredging sediment from an offshore borrow-site, pumping in tons of sand, and nourishing the beaches from Sesachacha Pond south to Codfish Park. The scope of the project changed since SBPF first filed its Notice of Intent. **The overall size of the project has been reduced from 2.6 million cubic yards of dredged material to 1.8 million cubic yards, and SBPF is now proposing to nourish 2.5 miles of coastal beaches, not three miles.** SBPF also has eliminated the coastal bank terraces from the project. Instead, they are proposing to nourish the bank with sediment dredged from offshore, dress the bank with loam and filter fabric, and re-vegetate it with native vegetation. The NLC and our consultants have been reviewing the applications and attending all public hearings. We have a number of specific concerns about the project's various impacts on the island's natural resources, including how the proposed addition of tons of sand might negatively impact the pristine, hard bottom, underwater "cobble habitat" located just offshore.

The Siasconset bluff is made up of poorly sorted, glacial moraine. As it erodes, smaller and finer sediments are washed away by wave action leaving behind the larger pebbles and cobbles. **Over time, the cobble habitat is colonized by benthic flora and fauna, such as algae, sponges, mollusks, crustaceans, and eventually fin fish.** The hard bottom habitat off the Siasconset coast has been characterized as a rich and diverse natural community providing habitat for all these organisms. If the beach is "nourished" as proposed, a portion of this vital habitat will be buried. Another significant portion of this cobble habitat will be buried in the first year after nourishment, as the beach equilibrates and sand spreads offshore. With the volume of sand reduced, the nourishment is likely to wash away sooner, and the beach is expected to need re-nourishment after only three years. But, a cobble habitat like that off Siasconset is likely to need five to ten years to recover from this type of impact. Consequently, the proposed cycle of beach re-nourishment could lead to a permanent loss of a vital benthic community and fish habitat. The NLC will urge the Conservation Commission to protect these invaluable offshore natural resources.

► **NLC Gives Scholarships to Local Landscapers to Attend 5-Day Organic Land Care Courses**

This winter the NLC gave 12 scholarships, each up to \$1000, to Nantucket landscapers to attend an Organic Land Care Course run by the Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA). The five day intensive course is geared to the landscaping professional who wants to broaden her/his knowledge of organic land care strategies. Participants may take a test to become NOFA accredited. Congratulations to **Dylan Wallace, Kate Hemingway, Sarah Sylvia, Cora Stover, Scott Waldie, Emily Dutra, Jason Sullivan, Kate Haigh, Ashley Erisman, Sarah Van Lieu, Baranda Wilcox, and David Huehner.**

SAVE THESE DATES

May 25-31—Nantucket Biodiversity Initiative Week
Programs, workshops and field trips open to public.
Go to <http://www.nantucketbiodiversityinitiative.org>

August 7th, 5PM—Land Council Annual Meeting
Egan Institute, Winter Street, Nantucket

September 14th—NLC's Gala Benefit Dinner at Galley Beach, Nantucket

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