



Nantucket Land Council, Inc.

Planning ~ Protecting ~ Preserving

NLC NEWS Winter 2010-2011

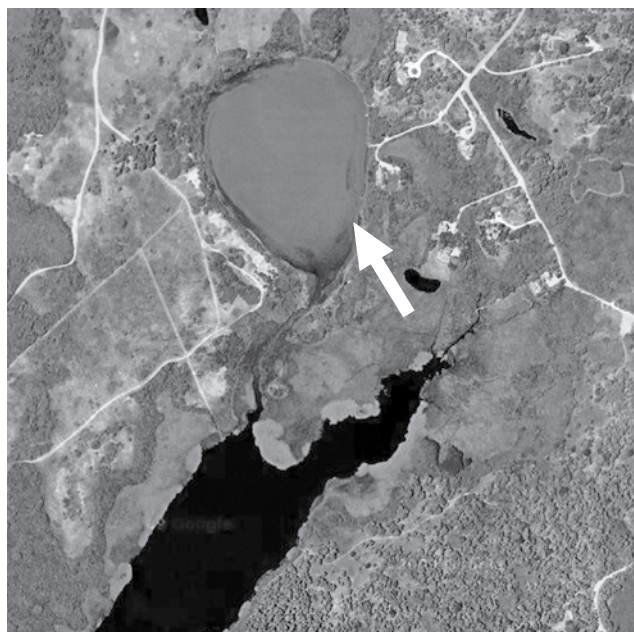
Repairing Our Ponds: Can it Be Done?

Every August, the NLC hosts its Annual Meeting at the Coffin School on Winter Street. The keynote speaker this past summer, Dr. Jim Sutherland, gave a presentation on the health of Miacomet and Hummock Ponds. The NLC sponsored Dr. Sutherland's investigation of the ponds in 2009 and continued to support his work focusing on the Head of Hummock Pond in 2010.

The results in his reports from the 2009 investigations were even more surprising than we had anticipated. In addition to confirming that the ponds have degraded water quality, Dr. Sutherland identified the presence of a particular blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) which is known to produce neurotoxins. The primary cause for the poor water quality is nutrient contamination from atmospheric deposition, fertilizer use, and septic systems in the watershed.

Frighteningly, the presence of these bacteria in other communities in the United States has been linked to high diagnosis rates of ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.) Fortunately this particular type of cyanobacteria (*Microcystis aeruginosa*) was only found in 2009 and not this past summer. However, the water quality of Hummock Pond, and particularly Head of Hummock Pond, continues to be in a very poor state. A tremendous blue-green algae bloom of different species completely takes over the

continued on page 4



Above: The Head of Hummock Pond is so overwhelmed by algae that it resembles a manicured lawn in this aerial photo.

NLC Applauds Renewal of Conservation Tax Incentive

At year-end 2010 Congress renewed a tax incentive for private landowners—especially working family farmers and ranchers—who protect their land with a voluntary conservation agreement. The increased incentive, which was adopted in 2006 and expired at the end of 2009, helped the Land Council work with willing landowners on Nantucket to conserve 335 acres of productive natural areas during that time period. The NLC now holds a total of 75 conservation restrictions on almost 1,300 acres of land throughout Nantucket, Tuckernuck, and Muskeget Island.

Conservation-minded landowners now have until December 31, 2011 to take advantage of a significant tax deduction for donating a voluntary conservation agreement to permanently protect important natural resources on their land. When landowners donate a conservation restriction to the NLC, they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs, while foregoing future development rights.

The enhanced incentive applies to a landowner's federal income tax. It raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%; allows farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

continued on page 5



Nantucket Land Council, Inc.
 P.O. Box 502, 6 Ash Lane
 Nantucket, MA 02554
 508.228.2818
www.nantucketlandcouncil.org

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STAFF

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cormac@nantucketlandcouncil.org
 Emily MacKinnon, *Resource Ecologist*
emily@nantucketlandcouncil.org
 Linda Spery, *Development Director*
linda@nantucketlandcouncil.org
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OF COUNSEL

Peter R. Fenn & Associates

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Changes: Staff & Board

The Nantucket Land Council would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of its retiring Associate Executive Director, **Lynn Zimmerman**. Lynn has worked for the NLC since 1984, spearheading our conservation restriction program. She recorded our first conservation restriction in 1986. The NLC now holds 75 conservation restrictions protecting more than 1,300 acres of land through Nantucket, Tuckernuck, and most recently the entire island of Muskeget.

Elisabeth Hazell, the NLC's outgoing Development Director, has left the Nantucket Land Council office to relocate with her husband, Eric Crawford, to Vancouver Island in Canada, to be closer to family. Elisabeth worked for the NLC for just over 5 years, and dedicated much of her time to increasing our public profile. In particular, she focused on using events, online outreach and social media to attract a younger constituency.

The NLC thanks Lynn and Elisabeth for their dedication and many years of service.

Linda Sonnonstine Spery joined the NLC staff as Development Director in November, ensuring a smooth transition with colleague Elisabeth Hazell before she departed for Canada. A year-round island resident since 2006, she has held development and public relations positions at the Maria Mitchell Association and the Nantucket Arts Council. Prior to moving to Nantucket with her husband, Craig Spery, she held corporate and agency positions in Southern California.

New Board Member **Nancy Gillespie's** many summers on Nantucket have fostered her love of the island's natural resources and her interest in the nexus of science research, public policy and land management. She is delighted to join the Nantucket Land Council's board. Nancy is a former senior economist in the social protection group at the World Bank. She has worked in the Africa, Middle East, and Latin America and Caribbean regions, as well as in the Bank's policy and strategy group. Nancy has been an officer and director of Sayles Finishing Plants, Inc. since 2001. She received an A.B. in economics from Brown University and a M.Phil. in economics from Oxford University. She makes her winter home in Miami Beach.

Also new to the NLC Board is **Laurel Ried Langworthy**, who has been a volunteer and supporter of the Land Council for years. She has helped with the NLC's "Young Friends" events, and served on the Brewery Barbeque committee this past year. She has spent summers on Nantucket for the last 25 years. Laurel is a Principal at Grove International Partners, a real estate investment firm based in New York. She is responsible for the firm's global capital raising efforts. Prior to joining Grove, she held positions as a Vice President at Westbrook Partners and at Merrill Lynch & Co. Laurel received a BA from Brown University. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Sconset Trust.

Welcome, Linda, Nancy and Laurel!



Lynn



Elisabeth



Linda



Nancy



Laurel

NLC Provides Support for Town Projects

Through the generous support of our many donors, the Nantucket Land Council financially supported two Town projects this past year. The NLC gifted \$5,000 to the Town to help in the formation of a Shellfish Management Plan. Executive Director Cormac Collier is participating on the steering committee that is providing guidance to the consultant, Urban Harbors Institute (UHI), the lead agency in developing the plan. UHI previously helped the Town develop a Harbor Plan and is familiar with many of the issues surrounding the Nantucket shellfishery.

The NLC also supported the Town's water quality monitoring program throughout the island with a \$5,000 gift. The Town partnered with the University of Massachusetts School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) to investigate the health of all the major ponds and harbors. SMAST has worked with the Town in the development of the Estuaries Report for both the Nantucket and Madaket harbors. SMAST provided guidance, training, and water analyses services for the town this past summer. In 2008 the Town's water quality program was suspended due to staffing and budgetary concerns. Although we believe that this important work should first be fully funded within the Town's operational budget, we are pleased to be a temporary source of funding for this extremely important endeavor.

Fertilizer in Our Waters

The Nantucket Land Council has been actively engaged in a major public awareness initiative to highlight the connection between our land use strategies and the currently degraded state of our ponds and harbors. In particular, Nantucket's waters are exceptionally vulnerable to the application of excess fertilizers. Our sandy soils allow excess nutrients from fertilizers, particularly nitrogen to leach quickly into our groundwater, eventually making their way into our harbors and ponds or the Atlantic Ocean. Water with excessive concentrations of nutrients rapidly degrade and create conditions harmful to the native flora and fauna. As a result of a fertilizer regulation filed at the last Annual Town Meeting, the Board of Selectman established a Committee to make recommendations to reduce nutrient pollution from fertilizer applications. Executive Director Cormac Collier and the rest of the Committee is perfecting Home Rule legislation language along with new Board of Health regulations that would limit the type and quantity of fertilizer used on the island and require all commercial applicators to obtain a license. The Committee is also writing a Best Management Practices document for fertilizer use to educate the professional and homeowner community. The Committee expects to make their full proposal to the Board of Selectmen later this spring.

SCIENCE NEWS

Eelgrass Restoration Project

Last spring, the NLC secured permits for an eelgrass restoration project in Nantucket Harbor. NLC consultant Dr. David Burdick of the University of New Hampshire designed a protocol to transplant healthy eelgrass shoots from a donor bed to an area that is devoid of eelgrass.

A donor bed was selected based on eelgrass cover and shoot density. Eelgrass shoots were harvested by hand along transects. Eelgrass shoots were tied onto frames and staked to the bottom at designated planting sites. Six weeks after planting, the frames were removed from the bottom, leaving the eelgrass shoots rooted in the sediment. The donor bed and planting sites will be monitored through 2011.

Eelgrass transplantation has been successful in other parts of Massachusetts and along the northeast coast. We hope to determine if it is a feasible means of restoring the eelgrass habitat on Nantucket.



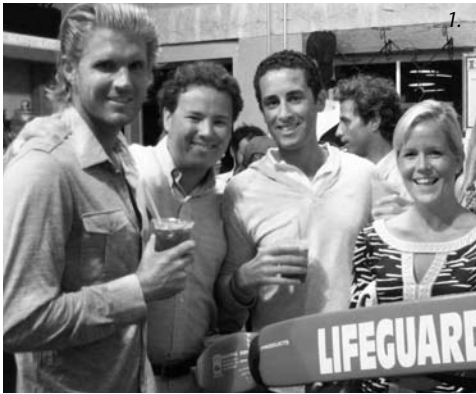
Top: Dr. Gregg Moore with a frame of eelgrass ready for planting. Left: Dr. David Burdick harvesting eel grass shoots.

Brewery Barbeque

On Saturday, August 7th, the Nantucket Land Council hosted its first ever Brewery Barbeque at Cisco Brewers. The NLC has held a Conservation Restriction on Cisco's property for many years and we were very pleased to be able to host the new event at this location.

Attendees were treated to a full eco-friendly evening, with entertainment provided by the eco-activist musical group Salem. Additionally, Bobby King of Nantucket Solar installed a series of photovoltaic panels, allowing the musicians to perform entirely off the power of the sun.

Kendra Lockley of Simply With Style provided fresh and local seasonal barbeque fare, and all disposable products were 100% compostable, right down to the cups, plates, and the corn-based plastic cutlery. The NLC would like to thank everyone who participated for their support.



1. Kevin Herrington, Casey Kilcullen, Chris LaFrance and Mandy Johnson.

2. Todd Anders Johnson and Sandy Walsh.

3. Back row: Kerri Silva, Allison Leahy, Kelly O'Donnell, Mike Stack. Front row: Stephanie Couture, Matt Risher and Christina Hunchard.



Repairing Our Ponds: Can it Be Done? *continued from page 1*

pond for most of the summer months. It is clear that some type of intervention is necessary in order for the ponds to be restored to a healthy state.

This past fall, the NLC and Dr. Sutherland applied for a grant from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to install a solar-powered circulator in the Head of Hummock Pond. The CPC subsequently recommended the NLC for funding, which will be voted on at the 2011 Annual Town Meeting in April. By far the most degraded area of the study, Head of Hummock Pond provides an excellent site for research into the potential restoration of the ponds' ecosystems.

The circulator will help disrupt the stagnant conditions conducive to blue-green algal growth. By promoting conditions that favor a more diverse set of biota, the blue-green algae will not outcompete other species of algae, thereby preventing the excessive blooms that starve the system of oxygen light and other important ecological factors. We hope to install the system sometime this summer and assess the water conditions throughout the season.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Wildlife Art Exhibition

For the fifth year in a row, the NLC held its annual "Love of the Land" art exhibition of works inspired by Nantucket's natural world. Each year the exhibit has had a different theme, with this year's works being inspired by Nantucket's wildlife. Over 50 works of all different media were shown at The Studio, Nantucket's new ballroom dance and yoga studio on Main Street. Artists are given the option of donating between 50% and 100% of the sale price to the Nantucket Land Council.



Jessica Manning, Virna Gonzalez and Andrey Stanev, owner of The Studio.

Galley Dinner

On a beautiful Labor Day evening, loyal supporters of the Nantucket Land Council gathered to celebrate the end of summer and the NLC's accomplishments over the past year. The occasion was a sunset dinner at Galley Beach chaired by NLC board member Karen Clark.



Top: The Moran Family
Right: Board President Karen Borchert and board member Eileen McGrath



NLC Awards Land Care Scholarships

The NLC is pleased to announce that ten island land care professionals have been awarded \$1,000 each in the NLC's annual scholarship program. The newest scholarship winners are Heather Leisher Coffin, Gregg Smith, Jo Perkins, Steve Gibson, Lori Kunz, Michael Peraner, Eric Shurm, Rachel Labbee, Julie Wood and Barry Byrne all of Nantucket.

The funding will help offset costs associated with enrollment in the North-east Organic Farming Association (NOFA) five-day accreditation course held in Newburyport, New Haven and Providence during January and February 2011. The course is recognized nationally as the preeminent accreditation process for organic land care professionals. The NOFA *Standards for Organic Land Care* is the first set of comprehensive organic standards for landscape services and has been recognized as a model across the country. A total of \$39,000 in scholarships has been awarded by the NLC since the program began four years ago. Nantucket now boasts the highest number of NOFA-accredited organic land care professionals per capita of any community in the United States, according to NLC Executive Director Cormac Collier.

MacKinnon to Present at Cape Cod NHC

On March 12, 2011, Resource Ecologist Emily MacKinnon will be presenting at the Cape Cod Natural History Conference (CCNHC). Her talk, entitled *An Evaluation of Seed Viability After Heat Treatment for Nine Invasive Plant Species*, will outline the results of a seed study that she, Dr. Ernie Steinauer of Massachusetts Audubon Society and Dr. Sarah Oktay of the UMASS Boston Nantucket Field Station performed last year. They determined, based on a series of heat treatments, that the digester at the Town of Nantucket's Waste Options facility reaches high enough temperatures for a long enough period to kill all seeds and propagules of the invasive plants tested. It is, therefore, a suitable means of disposing of invasive plant refuse that is removed by homeowners or land care professionals. The CCNHC will be held on the Cape Cod Community College campus in West Barnstable, MA.

NLC Applauds Renewal of Conservation Tax Incentive *continued from page 1*

"The entire island wins when thoughtful landowners conserve their land this way, protecting wildlife habitat, clean drinking water, scenic landscapes, recreational spaces, and productive agricultural lands," said NLC Executive Director Cormac Collier. "Conservation restrictions have become an important tool nationally for protecting our watersheds, farms and forests, increasing the pace of private land conservation by a third—to over a million acres a year. The NLC joins America's 1,700 land trusts and their two million supporters in thanking Congress for making this important conservation tool available," he said.

According to the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization that provides a voice for land trusts in Washington, DC, bills to make this incentive permanent have 274 House and 41 Senate co-sponsors from all 50 states, including majorities of Democrats and Republicans in the House. The legislation is supported by more than 60 national agricultural, sportsmen's and conservation organizations. For more information, contact NLC Executive Director Cormac Collier at (508) 228-2818.

EDUCATION NEWS

School Grants

Since 1993, the Nantucket Land Council has awarded environmental awareness and science project grants to local students, educators and teachers.

The NLC is pleased to announce its eighteenth year of financial assistance to students and teachers in grades K-12 to conduct science and environmental projects. Our goal is to encourage students' understanding of their local environment through direct involvement in project-related activities.

To date, the NLC has committed over \$60,000 to various educational projects. This year's recipients include:

- Dr. Steve Estabrooks, for a Science Fair project on the bay scallop with a Nantucket High School student
- Dauna Coffin, for an educational garden at Cyrus Peirce Middle School
- Mike Girvin, for materials to build a potential and kinetic energy model with Nantucket Elementary School 5th graders
- Matt Liddle, for marine science equipment at Nantucket New School
- Jo Slavitz, for science books at Nantucket New School
- Chris Getoor, for materials to expand the educational garden at Strong Wings
- Sunny Daily, for sustainable energy kits to use with home school students
- Janet Brannigan, for funding toward the Nantucket Elementary School 5th grade trip to Nature's Classroom
- Suzanne Fronzuto, for materials to support the Nantucket High School marine science project creating algae biodiesel.

We are excited to see the school grants program growing to encompass so many of Nantucket's educational institutions and to support such a diverse group of worthwhile projects.





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6 Ash Lane
Post Office Box 502
Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554
www.nantucketlandcouncil.org

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The Nantucket Land Council, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) environmental nonprofit dedicated to the protection of Nantucket's natural resources. 6 Ash Lane, P.O. Box 502, Nantucket, MA 02554
nlc@nantucketlandcouncil.org ~ www.nantucketlandcouncil.org ~ 508.228.2818

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Planning ~ Protecting ~ Preserving

Established in 1974, the Nantucket Land Council is the only environmental watch-dog group on Nantucket Island. The NLC works to protect Nantucket's natural resources in three major areas—planning, protecting, preserving.

PLANNING: The NLC monitors development proposals, offers educational programs, grants and scholarships, and makes recommendations to voters on issues which affect the environment.

PROTECTING: The NLC conducts scientific research to support the protection of our natural resources such as native species, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

PRESERVING: The NLC specializes in holding Conservation Restrictions. CR's allow the property to remain in the owner's hands, while ensuring that the land remains preserved.

SAVE the DATE

LANDSCAPER'S COURSE

Wednesday, March 9
Bartlett's Farm Hayloft
9 a.m.

VERNAL POOL WALKS

Saturday, April 16
Saturday, April 23
9 a.m.

TREE WALKS

Tuesday, June 21
Tuesday, July 5 and 19
Tuesday, August 2, 16 and 30
1 p.m.