



# Exploring Nantucket's Natural Environment

## About The Nantucket Land Council

The Nantucket Land Council, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Nantucket's natural world and rural character. Since its founding in 1974, the Land Council, in its role as an environmental watchdog and advocate, has pushed back against unbridled growth and made significant strides in protecting open space. In addition to holding and enforcing conservation restrictions, commissioning scientific research, monitoring development proposals, and engaging in legal proceedings to protect natural resources, the Land Council educates the public on important environmental issues.

## Year-Round Learning Opportunities

One of the Nantucket Land Council's important roles is to provide learning opportunities for residents, students, and visitors of all ages. We focus on vital issues related to the preservation, restoration and improvement of the island's natural environment.

An extensive program of **field trips and tours**, **hands-on participatory experiences** and **classroom collaborations** is scheduled throughout the year. These educational opportunities are led by the Land Council's staff science professionals or by off-island experts brought to Nantucket to address specific topics.



**Annual educational grants** have been awarded by the Land Council for close to 20 years to fund local organizations and schools that foster an appreciation of science and nature. Recipients have included teachers from Nantucket Public Schools, the Nantucket New School, the Lighthouse School and others.

The Land Council also provides recommendations and opinions on **Annual Town Meeting articles** under consideration by citizens each winter. We focus upon those proposals which could affect the island's valuable natural resources, including water, scenic views and open space.

We invite you to join us in exploring Nantucket's natural environment. To find out more about our educational program, please visit [www.nantucketlandcouncil.org](http://www.nantucketlandcouncil.org) or call us at **508-228-2818**.

"With the groundwater model you showed us where pollutants come from and how they spread. I will certainly think twice now about what I am putting into the ground. Thank you again for your patience to teach us valuable information so that we can help protect our water."

— Nantucket High School student

"Thank you so much for taking time out of your day to come with us to Eel Point. I really liked learning about how people used to flood the ditches to get rid of the mosquitoes. I also liked being there instead of just learning about it in the classroom."

— Nantucket New School student

"I discovered and learned many things at the vernal pool. I found lots of isopods. I learned that these are one of the creatures that eat lots and lots of decomposing leaves and so they are a great food source for other creatures in the vernal pool."

— Nantucket Elementary School student



Nantucket Land Council, Inc.

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Photo by Cheryl Beaton



Photo by Dan Driscoll

“I loved the groundwater model. It showed me what was really happening with pollution because I never really thought about it before. Seeing it makes me realize that it isn’t just something that we can ignore, but something we ourselves have to deal with.”

—Nantucket High School student

“Vernal pools support a lot of life and we need to take more responsibility to protect them.”

—Nantucket Elementary School student



**NANTUCKET LAND COUNCIL, INC.**

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### Trips and Tours

The Land Council leads exploration trips to Nantucket’s **vernal pools** each spring with students and families studying intriguing animal species. Our summertime **tree walks** offer new insights into the magnificent elms, sycamores and other specimens comprising the downtown landscape. In collaboration with the Town of Nantucket shellfish biologist, we conduct **shellfish propagation facility tours** to inform participants about the vital work taking place at Brant Point. We talk about land use practices that will help keep Nantucket harbors clean. Other in-the-field explorations focus on invasive species, water quality, native habitat and eco-systems.

### Hands-on Experience

“Learning by doing” experiences offered by the Land Council include opportunities for **butterfly tagging**, restoring habitat by **planting dune grass**, and **removal of invasive species** such as Japanese knotweed or garlic mustard.

### Collaborations

Cultivating an appreciation of nature starting at an early age ensures the legacy of an environmentally-minded community in the future. NLC educators partner with Nantucket K-12 school teachers to team teach lessons on topics such as **groundwater** and **wetlands science**. Professional development opportunities are also provided offseason for island landscapers, focusing on **invasive plants**, **composting** and **organic gardening**. The Land Council also works closely with many island non-profits on classroom programs, field trips and collaborative efforts such as the Nantucket Biodiversity Initiative.

### Annual Educational Grants Program

The Land Council’s **annual grants program** encourages Nantucket students’ understanding of their local environment through direct involvement in projects with the island as a classroom. Projects and classroom equipment funded in recent years include scallop research, marine science scalloping gear, water quality test kits, wetland ecology, composting and gardening, microscopes, and sustainable energy kits.

