



# Opening the Bay to Everyone

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS





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## FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIR



*Outgoing Board Chair  
Laura Ryan Shachoy*



## BECAUSE, THE COALITION WORKS HARD TO STAY FOCUSED AND GET BIG THINGS DONE.

This was the defining attribute and consensus of 78 current and past Board Members, staff, and close supporters when asked last fall why they are so excited about the Coalition today. We can't agree more with the sentiment. The Coalition works hard to be strategic in our actions, and we do our best to stay focused on delivering results for the Bay and the communities we serve.

Recent years at the Coalition have been defined by Big Ideas and significant organizational growth, some of the fruits of which you will read about in the coming pages of this Annual Report. But progress requires leadership first and foremost and on that score, the Coalition is immensely thankful to Laura Ryan Shachoy who stepped down last year after serving seven years as Chair of the Board of Directors – the longest serving Chair in our history. Laura's heartfelt dedication to our mission and limitless reserves of support and encouragement have been amazing.

After five years (plus a one year covid extension), the Coalition closed the books in 2021 on the Buzzards Bay Generations Campaign – a \$50 Million fundraising effort which exceeded all of our expectations. As you will read on pages 2-3, the Campaign made possible major land conservation acquisitions, new facilities and programs and endowment growth designed to position us for success as we enter the next generation. We are deeply indebted to the incredible private and government financial support that made all of it possible.

We hope that you will be inspired and energized by the projects, initiatives, and vision for the future described in this 2021 Annual Report. It has been a strange past two years for everyone but the work of Saving Buzzards Bay has moved forward and expanded despite the challenges. We can't wait to see you – our wonderful supporters and friends – on the water and in the watershed in the coming year.

Thank you!

Mark Rasmussen  
*President / Buzzards Baykeeper®*

Michael Angelini  
*Chair, Board of Directors*

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## BUZZARDS BAY COALITION RECOGNIZED WITH 2021 NATIONAL COASTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

The Coalition was proud to be the recipient of the 2021 National Coastal Stewardship Award from the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF).

“The breadth and depth of its programs and progress makes the Buzzards Bay Coalition an exemplary steward of coastal resources and a very effective organization,” CERF officials said in



announcing the award. The award is intended to celebrate organizations whose work advances understanding and wise stewardship of coastal ecosystems worldwide.

In receiving the award, Coalition President Mark Rasmussen reflected that the organization's effectiveness comes from its grassroots origins.

“This award belongs to everyone on the South Coast and Cape Cod who has been a part of the effort to restore and protect Buzzards Bay and its watershed,” Rasmussen said. “The progress we've made is only possible because of the many thousands of people, including our members and our partner organizations, who value the incredible natural resources of the Buzzards Bay region and are willing to act with us to preserve them for the future.”



## BUZZARDS BAY GUARDIANS HONORED IN WEST FALMOUTH

The Coalition returned to an in-person format for its 33rd Annual Meeting on August 20 in West Falmouth. The meeting was held on the campus of the College Light Opera Company (CLOC) in order to highlight the Coalition's ongoing work to reduce nitrogen pollution in the harbor. Over the past four years, the Coalition has worked with homeowners and the town to install 30 nitrogen removing septic systems on waterfront properties. By far the largest such system was installed on the CLOC campus where more than 100 actors attend summer theater camp each year. Before working with the Coalition, the hundred year old facility had four nearly as old cesspools and two septic leachfields - a lot of people, no nitrogen removal, right on the edge of the Harbor. Today, CLOC's wastewater is treated by a Nitroec septic system which removes >90% of all nitrogen and has become a model for retrofitting older, large systems.

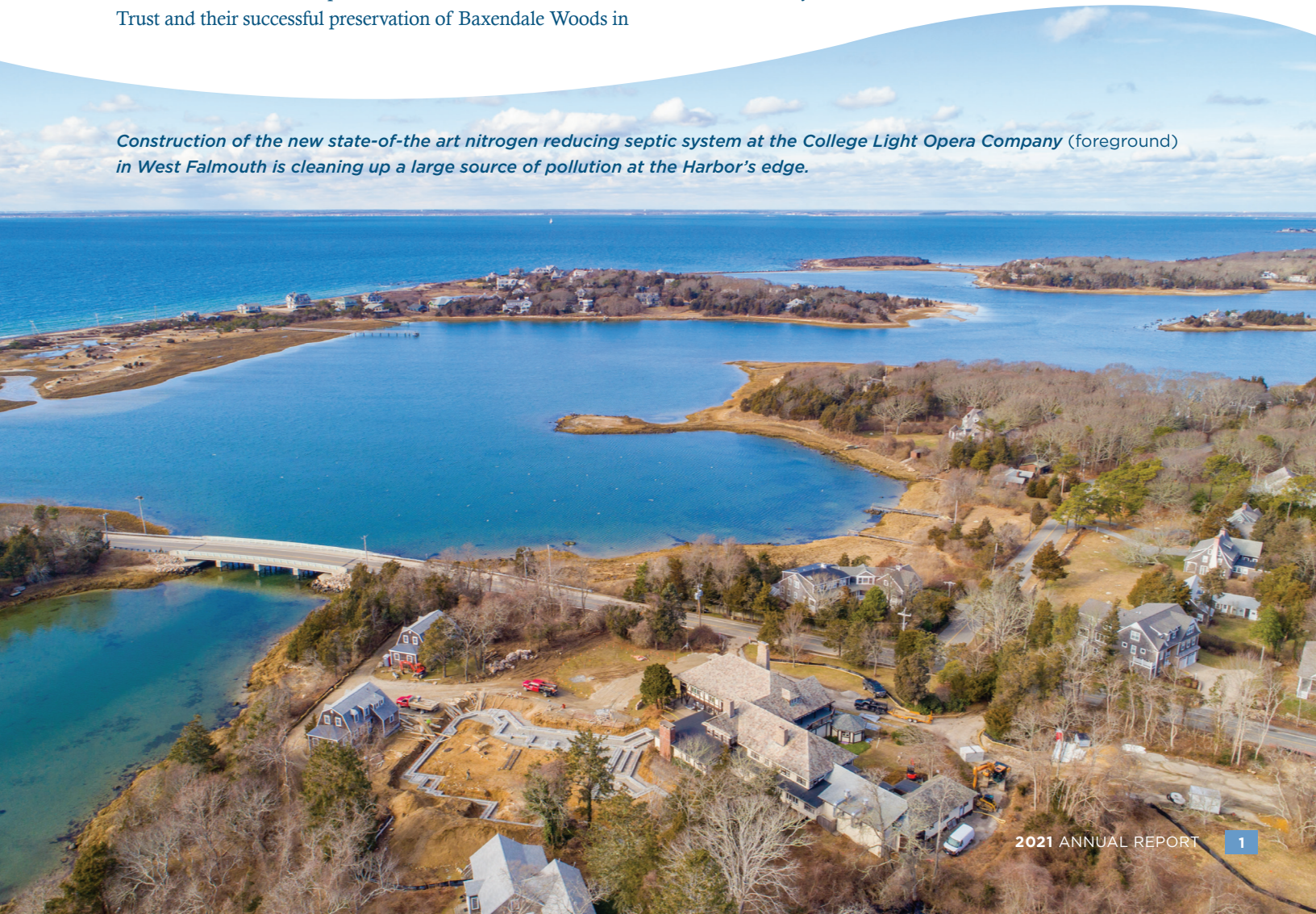
The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Coalition's highest honor, the Buzzards Bay Guardian Award, to Steve Ballentine of Cataumet, Dot Brown of Marion, and Tanja Ryden of Westport. Steve was recognized for a lifetime of service as founder and president of the Bourne Conservation Trust and their successful preservation of Baxendale Woods in



2021. Dot and Tanja were celebrated for their work as members of the Boards of Health in Marion and Westport respectively to pass new regulations requiring that all new growth in those towns utilize nitrogen-reducing septic systems.

New Board members recently elected to three-year terms were announced: Julius Britto of Rochester, Ginny Clark of Bourne, Chris Neill of Falmouth and Christine Parks of Fairhaven. Outgoing Chair Laura Ryan Shachoy was thanked for her seven years of leadership, as was long-time Member and Treasurer Russ Keeler of Rochester who retired from the Board after 11 years.

*Construction of the new state-of-the-art nitrogen reducing septic system at the College Light Opera Company (foreground) in West Falmouth is cleaning up a large source of pollution at the Harbor's edge.*









# Protecting the Bay for Generations to Come

## BUZZARDS BAY GENERATIONS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES THE COALITION INTO ITS SECOND 35 YEARS.

In 2016, on the eve of the Coalition's 30th Birthday, the Board of Directors launched a bold capital campaign to secure the future of the organization as it entered its second generation. The effort followed the adoption of an equally-ambitious Strategic Plan that highlighted the needed to do and become much more if we were going to live up to the promise of our founders to *SAVE BUZZARDS BAY*. Decades of hard work and significant resources would be needed to tackle not just the unfinished work of reducing pollution and saving vital watershed lands; but also to make our Bay more resilient in the face of climate change.

The Generations Campaign was designed to expand the reach of the Buzzards Bay Coalition and ensure our permanence. It would empower us with the people, facilities and financial resources needed to save our Bay for generations to come. Five years on, the Campaign's audacious goals - saving the most important and threatened places; securing the future of the bay science that lies at the core of our mission, connecting more people to the Bay through outdoor exploration, and building the facilities and endowment needed to support all of our work – have all been exceeded.

As the dust settles on this extraordinary five years of effort, more than \$50 Million has been raised with an amazing \$33 Million of that coming from private donations. Cornerstone achievements of the Generations Campaign include:

**Landmarks Preserved Forever:** 2,700 acres of vital lands were preserved including iconic places like Cuttyhunk Island and Allens Pond in Dartmouth; coastal farms and watershed forests from Mattapoisett to Westport; and lands to expand public access to the outdoors from Falmouth to Wareham to Acushnet.

**Facilities:** The Campaign built the science, land stewardship, collaborative meeting and office space, and community spaces needed to support the Coalition's work. The Marion Science & Field Operations facility (2018), Headquarter renovations in New Bedford (2019), the Onset Bathhouse rehabilitation in Wareham (2020) and the Wheeler Forest Reserve in Woods Hole (coming 2022) are all providing the foundation for growth across the region.

**Endowment:** The generosity of donors to the Campaign also grew the Coalition's Endowment to more than \$11 Million during this period. \$5 Million of the endowment was raised specifically to support the collection and analysis of water quality data that is so fundamental to our work. Other aspects of the endowment now also support scholarships for low-income youth to participate in programs at the Onset Bay Center and stewardship of our growing portfolio of open space reserves.

**LEFT** *Preservation of the Allens Pond (foreground) and Cuttyhunk Island (background) landscapes were key successes of the Generation Campaign.*

**INSET** *New BBC facilities at Wheeler Forest in Woods Hole (left) and the Marion Science & Field Operations Center are critical to the Coalition's growth and effectiveness. And, Coalition staff are installing boundary markers and welcome signs on thousands of new acres preserved forever (center).*





# ON THE WATER

**WE ALL SHARE THE SAME VISION FOR BUZZARDS BAY: A SCENIC SHORELINE WITH** safe swimming beaches, clean shellfish beds filled with quahogs, and healthy waters where fish and wildlife thrive. Our Bay is resilient; with sound science, the right laws, and proper enforcement, it can bounce back from the harmful effects of pollution.

Through science and advocacy, the Coalition is leading the way to protect and restore our local waterways for fish, shellfish, wildlife, and most importantly, people like you.

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## CHALLENGE

The most serious and difficult challenge facing the Bay is nitrogen pollution: the vast majority of which leaches from our home septic systems and underperforming sewer plants into sensitive harbors and coves. The Bay is also threatened by bacterial contamination, oil spills, toxic pollution, and increasingly by climate change.

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## STRATEGY

For 30 years, the Coalition has kept a watchful eye on the Bay's health through our nationally recognized Baywatchers monitoring program. But we don't just study the Bay; we put this science to work. Sound science forms the foundation of all of our advocacy efforts to restore and protect clean water.

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## RESULTS

We pursue Bay restoration and protection at all levels of government—local, state, and federal—and in court when necessary. Through strong advocacy, we're securing limits on nitrogen pollution, working with towns to update wastewater treatment, and always defending laws to make the Bay safer from oil spills.



# The Upper Bay Regional Wastewater Option

## REGIONAL APPROACH TO WASTEWATER FOUND TO BE CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING HUGE REDUCTIONS IN POLLUTION.

Supported by over five years of research, engineering and technical assessments, the Coalition released the Upper Bay Regional Wastewater Feasibility Assessment. The report finds that a highly effective regional wastewater treatment facility in Wareham discharging to the Cape Cod Canal is a promising alternative for improving water quality for the region.

Currently, Wareham, Bourne, Marion, Plymouth, and Massachusetts Maritime Academy all face several critical issues relating to wastewater management: severe nitrogen pollution in their coastal waters from septic systems, limited system treatment capacity, and difficulty finding ways to discharge treated wastewater responsibly on their own.

The report finds that an expanded Wareham treatment facility which reduces nitrogen by more than 90%, can meet the sewer needs of all the communities and reduce pollution to their sensitive coastal waters and restore habitats, eliminate cost and maintenance redundancies, and benefit from economies of scale in construction and design. Discharge to the Cape Cod Canal will ensure that highly treated wastewater will flow through the well-flushed canal rather than into nearby shallow coastal waters that are sensitive coastal habitats.

The project would eliminate an estimated 100,000 lbs. of nitrogen per year from the most sensitive waters in Buzzards Bay. While the cost is significant, an estimated \$150 million, local communities would likely share those costs with state and federal funding. Local communities will also face significant costs associated with “going it alone.”

To learn more about the Upper Bay project and what happens next for wastewater planning in these communities, visit [savebuzzardsbay.org/upper-bay-project](http://savebuzzardsbay.org/upper-bay-project)



*Buttermilk Bay is one of the estuaries that would benefit most from a regional sewer approach.*



### UP CLOSE: A NEW BAYKEEPER: THE R/V HELEN K

On a raw spring day, Board and Staff gathered around the Coalition’s new Baykeeper vessel which was officially put into service and christened the

*R/V Helen K*. The 31’ Steiger Craft boat was the gift of Russ and Wendy Keeler in honor of Russ’s mother Helen. Buzzards Bay Yachts at Kingman in Cataumet arranged for the Coalition to buy the boat at cost and outfitted her with all of the latest equipment.

The *R/V Helen K* replaces the original Buzzards Baykeeper, a 1985 Coast Guard Auxilliary boat which provided 20 seasons of access to the Bay for Coalition water quality monitoring, advocacy and outreach.

In honor of the hallmark breezes that sweep up Vineyard Sound and Buzzards Bay each summer, the *R/V Helen K* was christened with elements from the southwest – a bottle of sparkling wine grown on the shores of the Westport Rivers, carefully placed in a (used) oyster bag from Cuttyhunk Shellfish Farms. And to ensure that she always returns home safely, a bough of our watershed’s signature Red Maple Trees and apple blossoms from the woods of Rochester adorned her bow.

**LEFT** *The R/V Helen K on her first visit to Cuttyhunk Harbor*

**INSET** *Russ Keeler breaks a bottle of Westport Rivers on the bow at the christening.*



In 2021, we continued our ongoing fight against nitrogen pollution in Buzzards Bay, defended the Bay against threats and worked to prevent new sources of pollution from fouling our waters. You can learn more about these projects and all our work to protect clean water through science and advocacy at [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



### Legal wins in Falmouth and Mattapoisett

It's finally 'Case Closed' on the 5 year legal battle to force a Mattapoisett homeowner to restore the coastal wetlands they destroyed on sensitive Eel Pond. The state Superior Court sided with the Coalition and the Town on all counts and ordered a full restoration. And on West Falmouth Harbor, the Coalition settled an appeal of the town's wastewater permit after achieving a new firm standard for town compliance with nitrogen limits.



### Demonstrating solutions for threatened saltmarshes & eelgrass habitats

The Bay's saltmarshes are racing to adapt to rising sea levels and 'runneling' is one technique that can delay the loss of these vital habitats. This year Coalition scientists co-authored a landmark paper summarizing the state of this practice in order to accelerate action to restore marshes. And underwater in West Falmouth, we took action to replace 51 boat moorings in the Outer Harbor with new 'conservation moorings' which do away with the chains that scour the bay floor and destroy critical eelgrass beds.



### Finding Wastewater Retrofit Solutions in Westport neighborhoods and septic tanks

Nitrogen pollution from residential septic systems remains the greatest threat to the Bay. The Coalition expanded on its work to demonstrate solutions for wastewater treatment launching a new effort to test real-time sensors for home septic tanks that report nitrogen removal performance. And at the neighborhood scale, we coordinated a feasibility assessment for two 50 home clusters of existing homes in Westport to aid the town in developing townwide solutions.



### Science for Action on Red Brook Harbor and Apponagansett Bay

Coalition-led research to create a nitrogen cleanup plan called a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study for Red Brook Harbor took a leap forward this year with new funding from the MA DEP. And in New Bedford and Dartmouth, the Coalition launched another 5-year, EPA-funded effort to complete the science needed to cleanup heavily degraded Buttonwood Brook and downstream Apponagansett Bay. The 'Buttonwood-to-Bay' project will create a path forward for one of the region's most neglected urban waterways.





**ON THE WATER** | *Looking Ahead*

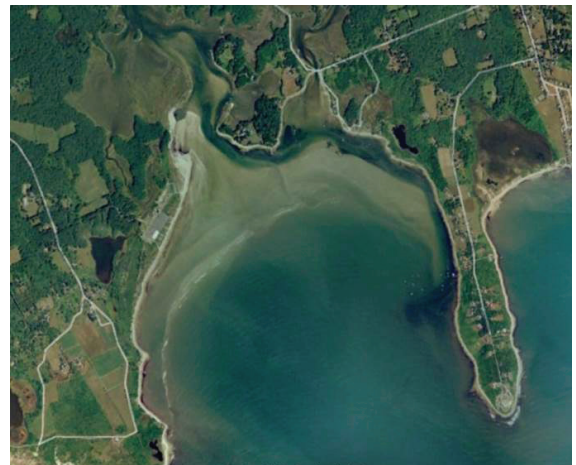
## A Complicated and Changing Coast

**LOWER BUZZARDS BAY SEDIMENTATION & GOOSEBERRY CAUSEWAY IMPACT STUDY AIMS TO PROVIDE ANSWERS AND CHART A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE.**

Jutting out a mile into the mouth of Buzzards Bay in Westport, the Gooseberry Causeway has long been considered by locals as the source of a multitude of problems plaguing this section of the Bay coast. Built by the US Army during World War II, the construction of the causeway appears to sync with the acceleration of sand loss along East Horseneck Beach. Others note that the mouth of the Slocums River updrift of the causeway has been filling in with sediment in recent decades blocking tidal flushing of the river and degrading water quality. The list goes on. Are these coincidences occurring in a dynamic area of waves, reefs and barrier beaches or are these changes related?

The Coalition has launched a three-year intensive oceanographic study and modeling effort to answer these questions once-and-for-all and provide possible solutions. Partnering with us in this investigation – the largest of its kind ever undertaken on the Bay – will be Boston University, Woods Hole Group and the

Virginia Institute of Marine Science at the College of William & Mary. The \$1.3 Million effort was jumpstarted in 2021 with a \$1 Million grant from the Rathmann Family Foundation.



**ABOVE** Gooseberry Neck (photo: Latitude Image) **INSET** The mouth of the Slocum River with extensive shoaling visible (image courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey/USDA Farm Service Agency)



# IN THE WATERSHED

**WATERSHED PROTECTION IS ABOUT CONSERVING ALL OF THE PARTS OF THE** Buzzards Bay ecosystem—forests, wetlands, rivers, streams, and groundwater, as well as harbors and coves. These critical areas provide important habitats, protect our drinking water sources, and act as natural pollution filters for the Bay.

Through watershed protection, the Coalition safeguards the region’s forests, streams, and wetlands, and it works to restore damaged areas so the Bay ecosystem can thrive.



## CHALLENGE

Nearly half of the land in the 432-square-mile Buzzards Bay watershed is undeveloped and unprotected. The fate of these lands is fundamental to our efforts to protect clean water. Without saving the most important forests, streams, and wetlands from poorly planned development, the Bay cannot survive.

## STRATEGY

We pursue a Bay-focused land protection strategy to conserve the watershed’s most vulnerable forests and streams—natural areas that the Bay cannot afford to lose. We also restore damaged rivers, wetlands, and streambanks and help towns and land trusts preserve land in every corner of our region.

## RESULTS

The Coalition manages the largest land conservation program in southeastern Massachusetts. Since 1998, we’ve protected more than 9,000 acres throughout the Buzzards Bay watershed. We’re also restoring damaged streams, rebuilding wetlands, and creating better access for people to explore the outdoors in their community.



# Saving Doggett Brook Farm

**BOLD ACTION TO SAVE A TREASURED ROCHESTER VIEW PROVIDES A BOOST TO LOCAL AGRICULTURE AND HELPS RESTORE AN IMPORTANT STREAM**

It started with an important stream that needed some help, as many Buzzards Bay Coalition land protection projects do.

Doggett Brook in Rochester is an important tributary of the Sippican River, and is the only branch of the river where fish passage and cool water flow is not blocked by a dam. Locals talk about the brook trout they used to catch here as kids.

In front of the brook, between it and Route 105 as you enter the town from Marion, lie nearly 60 acres of rich, open farmland. For many, it's a view that defines the rural character of Rochester. So when a 'For Sale' sign went up on the farm, the Coalition moved quickly to secure a deal to purchase and permanently protect the Doggett Brook Farm property from development.

We knew that protection of these lands would play an important role in supporting fish and wildlife habitat and keeping clean water



flowing to the Bay. But this land deal was also important as one that could provide a boost to local agriculture. A farm needs a farmer, so we set out to find a farmer who would purchase the protected land, commit to environmentally-responsible agricultural, and work with the Coalition to restore floodplain forest where past practices had drained and pushed the fields too close to the brook.

News of Doggett Brook Farm's availability made it to Dee Elliott of Elliott Farm in Lakeville. She, and her brother Ken, had been looking for a farm to expand their

successful Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model and Doggett Brook was just the right fit. They will own, live on and develop a wide variety of produce at the farm. Beyond the rows of vegetables, a trail will allow the public the opportunity to walk down to Doggett Brook where tree plantings will restore the forested edge of the stream and where all of us will be looking for the return of those brook trout.

The nearly \$1 Million project was made possible by more than \$400,000 in private donations, including \$100,000 raised by our long-time partner in this and other efforts – the Rochester Land Trust. Additional grants were also secured from the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program.

**INSET** Ken Elliott (left), his children Ken (middle) and Dee (far right) and their families. (photo: Edible South Shore & South Coast)

**SAVE THIS FARM**

Learn More and Make a Donation at:

[savebuzzardsbay.org/Doggett-Brook-Farm](https://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/Doggett-Brook-Farm)

or mail: Rochester Land Trust, PO Box 337, Rochester, MA 02770

**buzzards BAY COALITION**

Farmer interested in owning this land?  
Call 508-999-6363 x.201

Rochester Land Trust



## IN THE WATERSHED | *Highlights of 2021*

In 2021, we actively pursued new opportunities to protect and restore the Bay's most important forests, streams, and wetlands – the natural filters that support clean water. You can learn more about these projects and all our work to conserve land and restore damaged natural areas at [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



### Free-flowing Weweantic centerpiece of new Reserve

Surrounded by local, state and federal officials and after nearly a decade of real estate negotiations, fundraising, engineering, and construction, the Coalition celebrated the completion and opening of the Weweantic River Reserve at Horseshoe Mill in Wareham. Once a large, industrial site for manufacturing nails and horseshoes, the property has been transformed into a public reserve to improve river health, and offers new canoe launches and trails. The hallmark of the effort was the 2019 removal of the dam on the property which had blocked the Weweantic River for centuries.



### The Hundred(s) Acre Woods surrounding Tinkham Pond

The forests that surround Tinkham Pond lie just a few miles from New Bedford streets and are critical to the health of the waters and wildlife that flow from the pond to the Mattapoisett River. This year, the Coalition acquired 100 acres of these woodlands from the Hawes Family, owners of the former Acushnet Sawmill Company who have preserved thousands of acres of their family's timber holdings. This new acreage will be managed along with the adjacent 400 acre Mattapoisett River Reserve with miles of new trail to come.



### First reserve in Carver expands access to Sampson Pond

A 32 acre stretch of woodlands along Indian Brook is now permanently protected by the Buzzards Bay Coalition. The property is the first land that the Coalition will own and manage in Carver. In addition to protecting water quality and wildlife, this centrally-located reserve off of Route 58 provides important access to Sampson Pond.



### Deep Fall River forests protect drinking water and the Westport Rivers

More than 10 miles north of the Westport River estuary, the deep forests of Fall River's eastern wilderness provide the clean freshwater that form the source of this large river system. Working in close partnership with the City of Fall River Water Department, the Coalition acquired 53 acres of new Conservation Restrictions on two private properties which will protect public drinking water as well as the downstream Westport River.





**IN THE WATERSHED** | *Looking Ahead*

## Natural Wetland - Cranberry Bog – Restored Wetland

**RESTORED NATURAL FLOWS AND AQUATIC HABITATS ARE RE-CREATING POWERFUL WATER POLLUTION FILTERS AT MATTAPOISETT AND ROCHESTER BOGS.**

In the fall of 2022, the Buzzards Bay Coalition will begin the process of removing two large cranberry bog complexes at our Reserves in Mattapoisett and Rochester. In their place, will return a version of the natural wetland that existed there a hundred years before, with all of their biological diversity and water cleansing features.

Many cranberry farmers in southeastern Massachusetts are choosing to let go of early, older-style cranberry bogs that were developed in natural wetlands to control water long before irrigation. As such, these older bogs are often the most polluting and damaging to local drinking water supplies, river health and wildlife. To encourage this transition to higher yielding/less polluting bogs, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages a grant program to buy and restore these bogs – a win for economically-struggling growers and the environment.

Working with the NRCS, the Coalition will restore 118 acres of cranberry bog at its Mattapoisett River Reserve and new Stuart Bog property in

northeastern Rochester. Unique features like Tripps Mill Brook and a rare Atlantic White Cedar Swamp will be enhanced for fish, wildlife and people. And new trails, boardwalks and scenic overlooks will provide access for birdwatchers, fishermen and hunters alike to enjoy these natural wonders.



**ABOVE** *Unaltered stretches of Tripps Mill Brook provide nature's template for restoring areas altered by cranberry farming.*

**INSET** *The expansive Bogs at the Mattapoisett River Reserve as seen from Acushnet Road.*



## WITH PEOPLE

**THE KEY TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY BUZZARDS BAY IS AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY THAT** understands the threats the Bay faces and their role in protecting it. The long-term health of our local environment depends upon people knowing, loving and valuing the Bay as important to their lives.

Through community engagement, the Coalition is creating a new generation of Bay stewards: people who understand their place in the Bay ecosystem and will support its protection for decades to come.



### CHALLENGE

Buzzards Bay faces a crisis of disengagement. Fewer people today know the Bay and our local environment; most children grow up in front of screens rather than on sandy beaches. Without connections to the natural world, people have turned a blind eye to the Bay's decline. If we don't address this disengagement, we will ultimately fail to protect the Bay.

### STRATEGY

Connecting people to the Bay is a fundamental part of our work. We tackle disengagement head-on through outdoor programming, engaging events and workshops, and vibrant print and digital communications. These efforts build stronger connections to our local environment to support long-term stewardship.

### RESULTS

Every year, thousands develop new appreciation for the Bay through our outdoor exploration programs. We're expanding a network of Bay discovery sites where all people can get outside, giving local decision makers solutions to pressing pollution problems, and rebuilding connections to the Bay through annual events like the Swim and the Watershed Ride.



# Onset Bathhouse Ribboncutting

**CELEBRATING THE POWER OF AN IDEA TO CONNECT MORE PEOPLE TO THE BAY AND THE GENEROSITY OF MANY WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE.**

On a picture perfect early October evening, surrounded by friends, community partners, government officials and contributors, the Coalition officially cut the ribbon on the completed Onset Bathhouse rehabilitation. The headquarters of the new Onset Bay Center was five years in the making and its completion marked not only the commencement of full-scale community programs, but also the end of \$7.55 Million in fundraising.

The need to expand access to the water for underserved Wareham kids and families provided the original inspiration. The Coalition's now complete Onset Bay Center will provide high-quality, on-the-water exploration programs for thousands of people every year. Centered around bustling Onset Beach and Wickets Island, the Center is designed to engage people of all ages and abilities in a variety of outdoor activities focused on building connection and a sense of stewardship toward Buzzards Bay. Programs include sailing, rowing, fishing, swimming, shellfish aquaculture, and bay ecology.

At the heart of the ribboncutting event was the leadership and generosity of Mary McFadden and Larry Stifler whose \$1.3 Million charitable gift to the Onset Bay Center propelled the project from idea to reality. Five generations of the McFadden-Stifler Family have grown up around and in Onset Bay. And if we needed proof for the theory that a close

connection to place results in a long-term commitment to the preservation of that place, no one need look further than to this family. The main gathering and educational space on the second level will forever be the McFadden Center in their honor.

The challenging, beachfront rehabilitation of the 1890 Bathhouse was designed by architect Richard Renner and built by Falmouth-based The Valle Group.

The last piece of facility improvement to finish the Onset Bay Center vision is the coming spring 2022 restoration of the historic stone pier on Wickets Island and the installation of a float to make it easier for people to visit and enjoy the island.



**LEFT** Mary McFadden and Larry Stifler (center) cut the ribbon on the completed Onset Bathhouse and the McFadden Center upstairs. They are joined (l-r) by Kat Jones of the Onset Bay Association, State Representative Susan Williams Gifford, Coalition President Mark Rasmussen, Wareham Selectman Peter Teitelbaum, State Senator Marc Pacheco and Mass Maritime VP of External Affairs Elizabeth Simmons.

**ABOVE** BBC Board Vice-Chair Sam Gray speaks at the Ribboncutting. **BELOW** Learning to sail on one of BBC's new RS Quests cruising past Wickets Island, now a regular scene on Onset Bay.





Throughout 2021, people like you took action to protect clean water and support the Coalition's work in communities throughout our region. You can learn more about all our opportunities to swim, ride, volunteer, or attend an event at [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



### Bay Adventures in 2021

Bay Adventures are the free outdoor exploration programs that we offer throughout the region to get more people outside and personally connected to their local environment. Back to a full schedule in 2021, we led 76 trail walks, kayak paddling trips, learn to fish and shellfish and other tutorials reaching 1,017 people.



### Programs with New Bedford 4th and 5th graders restored

No Coalition programs were restricted more by the covid pandemic than our partnership with New Bedford Public School's Sea Lab to get 4th and 5th graders outside exploring the Bay and watershed around them. With the end of virtual learning and return of visiting educators, we got back out on the city's South End beaches and at the Coalition Acushnet Sawmill in 2022. And this spring, students will visit Cuttyhunk Island with us to see the bay that's not only under their toes, but also on their horizon.



### Clambake Tradition brings people together in Westport

The Westport Fishermen's Association's (WFA) fall tradition of hosting a classic rock and seaweed lobster and clambake returned for its second year being managed by the Coalition following our merger with the WFA in 2019. A sell-out crowd of more than 300 people gathered at Buzzards Bay Brewing to celebrate why we really work so hard to Save Buzzards Bay.



### Mass Maritime Cadets leading OBC summer sailing

A hallmark of our first summer of sailing programs at the Onset Bay Center were not just the smiling faces of the kids, but the strength of the teachers. Through a partnership with Mass Maritime Academy, four Cadets spent their summer teaching and mentoring our young sailors. Plans are already underway to expand the cadet corps to six this coming summer.





**WITH PEOPLE** | *Looking Ahead*

## Growing the Buzzards Bay SWIM and Watershed RIDE

The Buzzards Bay Swim and Watershed Ride are the Coalition's signature fundraising and public engagement events. Collectively, we have raised over \$3 million for Bay protection through these events over the past nearly three decades. But for us, the importance of these events goes far beyond that dollar figure. The Swim and Ride provide an opportunity for some of the most meaningful community and people connections we make while showcasing our beautiful bay and highlighting the importance of our work.

When the Swim started in 1993, a handful of eager swimmers raised just over \$1,000 for the Coalition. Since then, the Swim has grown to well over 300 swimmers, raising nearly \$200,000 each year. After a Covid-reduced capacity swim in 2021, we are excited to return to our full-scale event in 2022, with the goal of eclipsing \$200,000 raised for the first time with more than 300 swimmers in the water.

The Ride started in 2007 with 41 riders, but it has already grown to over 500 riders in 2021, raising nearly \$400,000. While there is a limit to the number of swimmers that event can handle on our Harbor course, the sky's the limit for participation in the Ride. Our goal for 2022 is to reach 600 registered riders while surpassing \$425,000 raised, with our eyes on 1,000 riders in the near future.





**WHERE WE WORK** The Buzzards Bay Coalition works throughout the Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound watersheds to protect and restore the region’s coastal, river, and drinking water quality and the upland forests, wetlands, and streams that support a healthy coastal ecosystem.



*Beginning at Sakonnet Point in Rhode Island in the west, our service area runs along the watershed boundaries for Little Compton’s coastal saltponds, then northeast along the Buzzards Bay watershed boundary until it reaches Nobska Point in Falmouth in the east. From Nobska, our work crosses to West Chop on Martha’s Vineyard along the edge of Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds, then runs up island along the Vineyard Sound coastal watershed boundary to Squibnocket Point and Gay Head. Our western seaward edge is defined by the municipal boundary of the town of Gosnold until it meets the jurisdictional boundary for “MGL 21M, Chapter 251 of the Acts of 2004,” which establishes the edge of compliance with oil spill prevention rules for tank barges entering Buzzards Bay.*

*The Buzzards Bay Coalition also monitors land use and supports water quality protection efforts in the Assawompset Ponds watershed in Lakeville and Middleboro due to the pond’s historical physical connections to Buzzards Bay through the Acushnet and Mattapoisett Rivers and their role as the public drinking water supply for the city of New Bedford.*





Dedicated to the restoration, protection and sustainable use and enjoyment of our irreplaceable Bay and its watershed. We work to improve the health of the Bay ecosystem for all through education, conservation, research and advocacy.

## OUR VISION

- A Bay shoreline defined by safe swimming beaches, open shellfish beds, and stretches of scenic natural areas for all to enjoy.
- Healthy waters that support abundant fish, shellfish, and wildlife populations.
- A Bay safe from the threats of oil spills, industrial and sewer discharges, and ocean dumping.
- A watershed where rivers, streams, inland forests, and wetlands that buffer the Bay are protected.

### STAFF

Mark Rasmussen, *President/Buzzards Baykeeper®*

#### Science and Advocacy

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The Buzzards Bay Coalition is a membership-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to the restoration, protection, and sustainable use and enjoyment of our irreplaceable Bay and its watershed. The Coalition works throughout the Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound watersheds to protect and restore coastal, river, and drinking water quality and the upland forests, wetlands, and streams that support a healthy ecosystem.

[www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org)



#savebuzzardsbay