

The Osprey



Mashpee
Land
Stewards

Recent Acquisition: Chop Chaque Bog

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The Conservation Commission recently acquired Chop Chaque Bog and the surrounding upland parcels after being approved at October Town Meeting through Community Preservation Act funds.



Special points of interest:

- Snowy Owls
- Bamboo Removal
- Mashpee River Woodlands Rejuvenation

We are looking into performing wetland restoration on this bog, abandoned as of 2019. This will enhance the wildlife habitat value of the site, and may help to improve water quality in Santuit Pond and in the watershed associated with Shoestring and Popponeset Bay. The restoration efforts may include assessment of the site to determine layers of sand and peat, hydrology alteration, screening for fish passage, plugging of ditches, removal of sand, roughening of bog surfaces to expose peat, creation of topographical features, and

Town Update

Town Hall is still closed to the public as of January 2020.



Herring Fry Exodus

An annual event, it is the tail end of the season for herring fry to exit the spawning grounds as the young of the year. The river herring adults migrate upstream during April and May, where they spawn in the ponds and rivers. There are two species of



river herring: alewives and bluebacks. After the eggs hatch, the “fry” (or young herring) grow to a few inches in length and eventually return to the ocean. It is an incredible cycle of nature one can observe year after year. These juveniles will spend about 2 years maturing out at sea, then will return to the same spawning grounds, attracted by the chemical “scent” of the river.

Featured Creature: Snowy Owl

Snowy owls are a welcome addition to the landscape when they arrive in late fall and early winter on Cape Cod. Our beaches mimic the Arctic tundra where this species breed, where the owls rest, preen, and hunt for ducks. They are white and blackish-brown, with the females sporting more spots than the males. Snowy owls hunt during the day, often from a perch. They have a varied diet consisting of lemmings (main food in the Arctic), rabbits, squirrels, ducks, geese and fish. They are often observed at locations such as Sandy Neck, West Dennis Beach, and our very own South Cape Beach! Check it out!



Photo Credit: Doug Hitchcox

Featured Habitat: Salt Marsh



Did you know that salt marshes are one of the most productive ecosystems on Earth? Salt marshes are abundant on Cape Cod, consisting of peat and salt-tolerant grasses, *Spartina alterniflora* and *Spartina patens*, with an upper zone of shrubs such as marsh elder. Marshes are superbly adapted to inundation twice a day by incoming tides. They act as a carbon sink, helping to offset climate change, by sequestering carbon directly into the peat. Salt marshes also provide important nursery habitat for a wide variety of fishery species, protect shoreline from erosion, filter runoff, and absorb excess nutrients. Salt marshes are a real asset to the Cape environment!



Conservation Land Improvements



The Troop 36 Eagle Scout project this past year involved re-establishing the Grotzke Grove trail within the Mashpee River Woodlands—West parcel. This trail affords views of the beautiful Mashpee River while traversing the pine-oak forest upland. It ends at a beautiful freshwater cattail marsh. They used a brush mower to make quick work of the trail widening. Great work Troop 36!

Florence Avenue Conservation Land in Johns Pond Estates is a small parcel of land in the middle of a subdivision. It's only a couple acres in size but it is receiving some major attention! Invasive bamboo and wisteria were taking over this area at a rapid pace, smothering and outcompeting native trees and shrubs. The Mashpee Conservation Department contracted with Crawford Land Management to remove these invasive species and ultimately re-establish native vegetation to this neighborhood conservation land. Invasive species can be introduced into local open spaces from the dumping of landscape debris. It may seem harmless to dump leaves, grass clippings, and other biodegradable materials into the woods, but many times landscape debris contains ornamental plants with viable seeds, which can become established and spread like wildfire. It is for this reason that dumping of landscape debris (in addition to any other form of dumping) is prohibited on Mashpee's conservation lands. Accumulated leaves and grass also contribute to fuel loading in wooded areas, increasing the danger of wildfires. Please think twice before you dump landscape debris into the woods, it can have unintended consequences, spread the word!



Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge Updates

NEW: Parking area off Red Brook Road leading into the Jehu Pond Conservation Area. There is a new kiosk located in the parking lot, as well as native pollinator friendly plants. Check it out!

NEW: Rabbit Brochure. The Friends have created a Rabbit Habitat, or "Rabbit" brochure outlining how to create a brush pile on your property for the New England Cottontail, the native rabbit whose numbers have suffered from habitat loss. They are in the final stages and it will be published soon.



Conservation Land Improvements

AmeriCorps Cape Cod performed trail work at the southern portion of the Mashpee River Woodlands property., including brush cutting, lopping, and hedge trimming. Widening the trail makes for a better outdoor experience, and less chance to contact tick habitat. They plan to finish the work in the west sections of the trail system. Thank you AmeriCorps for your continued work to keep Mashpee Conservation Lands accessible and enjoyable!

