



MANCHESTER ESSEX CONSERVATION TRUST

PRESERVING NATURAL BEAUTY, WILDLIFE, AND RESOURCES AT THE GATEWAY TO CAPE ANN

FALL 2019

A Nod to Essex's Shipbuilding History

A Conservation Project That Retains an Historic Use of the Essex Woods

What do shipbuilding and land conservation have in common? At first glance it may seem that the two endeavors are at odds with one another, but for centuries people have been managing the Essex woods to support shipbuilding while retaining the conservation values inherent in the land. One local family has just committed to supporting both conservation and shipbuilding on their land, forever.

The Essex woods were divided into hundreds of woodlots in the 1700's in order to provide local families with timber and firewood. One of the historic uses of the timber harvested from these woods was shipbuilding. In fact, Essex produced more wooden fishing schooners between 1668 and the twentieth century than anywhere else in America. One of the families long woven into the



The schooner "Ardelle" built by Charles and Maria's son, Harold Burnham, at his shop in Essex in 2011.

history of shipbuilding in Essex is the Burnham Family. Charles and Maria Burnham have combined their family's maritime history with their commitment to conservation by donating a conservation restriction on their woodlot to MECT.

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Kettle Cove Restoration Project

MECT is participating in a habitat restoration project on land located in the Kettle Cove salt marsh in Manchester. Plant species that are not native to the area have taken root along the fringes of the marsh and have begun to degrade the ecosystem. These plants, called invasive species, behave in ways that reduce the health and vigor of surrounding native plants, and as a result, are successful in colonizing and eventually dominating habitats. The goal of the Kettle Cove restoration project



Aerial view of the Kettle Cove marsh. The project area is in the lower left side of the photo.

is to re-establish the native plant community within the project area to restore biodiversity and the ecosystem services that the marsh provides.

The Kettle Cove marsh is located between Summer Street and the ocean. It is part of a larger estuarine system, where fresh water meets the sea. Estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems in the world. Here Wolf Trap Brook empties behind Black

Kettle Cove Restoration, continues on page 5

Come Sit and Enjoy a Beloved View

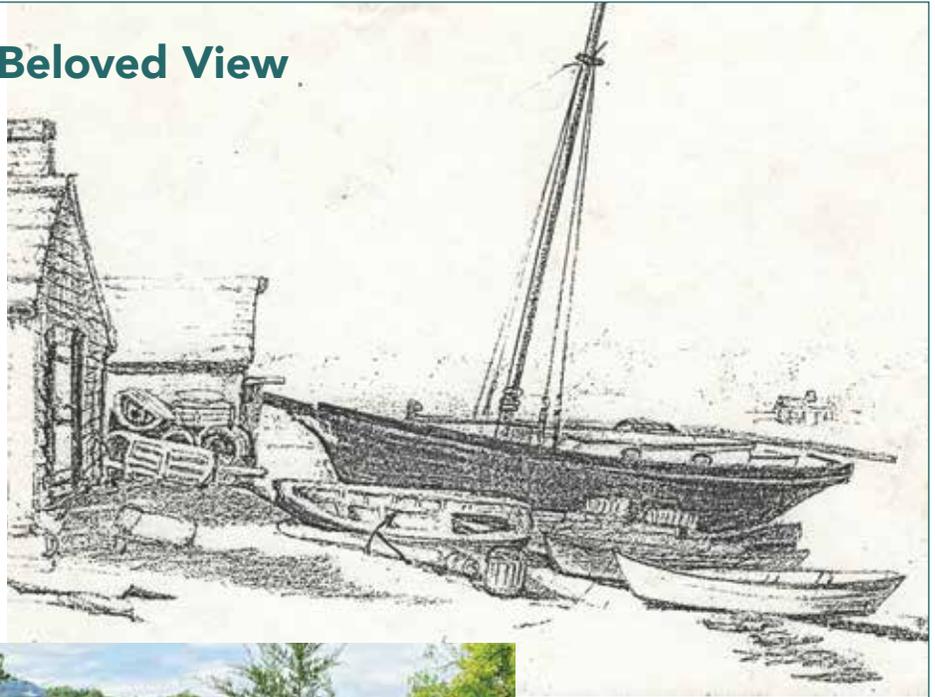
Longevity Bench in Honor of Adele Q Ervin

MECT has partnered with the Longevity Bench Project to place a bench on Ocean Street in Manchester in memory of Adele Q Ervin. It's a place to rest while taking a walk and to enjoy a magnificent view of Black Beach and Kettle Cove beyond.

Adele was well known for her commitment to the town of Manchester, having served on the Finance Committee and as an active participant at Town Meeting. She was also a former Trustee of MECT. She was a dedicated conservationist and a committed member, generous donor, and reliable volunteer for the Trust.

The Longevity Bench has been installed on a parcel of land that Adele donated to MECT in 1998. The land borders Black Beach to the south and includes part of the Kettle Cove salt marsh to the west. The property had been in Adele's family for many years and once included a small fish house known as the Crow Shack where Adele spent much of her time in the summer months enjoying peace, quiet and a beautiful view before she gave the land to MECT. Prior to donating the land, Adele had the Crow Shack removed and the property restored to its natural condition. She entrusted MECT to maintain the land for the magnificent beauty and ecological value that it provides.

Adele's longtime friend and neighbor, Doug Hotchkiss, approached The Longevity Bench Project—a local non-profit that aims to enhance the social, healthy outdoor experiences of walkers in Manchester by placing benches throughout the town that people can use as a meeting place or a spot to view the town and



Above: 1870 sketch of Greely Stevenson Curtis's sailboat "The Dream" at Kettle Cove, Manchester, MA by Mrs. Greely Stevenson Curtis. At the left side of the drawing is the "Fish House" which is believed to be Adele's "Crow Shack" and beyond it, the house of the Heath family. Many years after the drawing was made, the cove road—Ocean Street—was extended passing directly through the center of the area depicted. ■ Left: Adele Q Ervin Longevity bench sponsors and friends (standing l to r): Greg Crockett, MECT Vice President, John Filias, Jeffreys Creek Land Contractors, Lisa Bonneville, Longevity Bench Project Founder, (seated l to r) Mike Dyer, MECT President and Doug Hotchkiss.

nature—with the idea of dedicating a bench in Adele's memory. The Longevity Bench Project managed the project and Hotchkiss spearheaded the fundraising effort to support it. MECT agreed to place the bench on the Crow Shack lot, as it was a place that was dear to Adele.

"The bench sits where the entrance of Adele's fish shack used to be." said Hotchkiss, "She loved the spot and it will be a nice place where people can sit, enjoy the beautiful surroundings and remember her."

There will be a reception on-site to dedicate the bench in Adele's memory later this fall. Details will be posted on the MECT website when they are available.

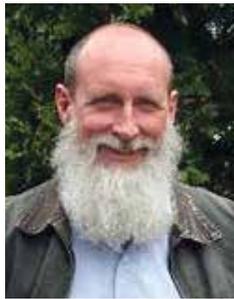
Please Join Us at Annual Meeting

Featured Speaker: Tom Wessels, Noted Ecologist

The MECT Annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 10 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Magnolia Library and Community Center. Members are encouraged to attend for a brief business meeting followed by a talk by ecologist Tom Wessels. The business meeting will include a summary of organizational accomplishments over the past year, as well as a proposed bylaw amendment and a slate of trustees and officers for 2020 for the membership to consider.

Thanks to the generosity of The Echo Charitable Foundation, the business portion of the meeting will be followed by a presentation by Tom Wessels, professor emeritus at Antioch University New England where he founded the master's degree program in Conservation Biology. Tom has conducted workshops on ecology and sustainability throughout the country for decades and is the author of numerous books with his latest being *Granite, Fire, and Fog: The Natural and Cultural History of Acadia*.

Tom Wessels' talk will examine the principle of self-organization from an ecological perspective as a model for creating human systems that will not only sustain themselves but thrive. Self-organization is a



Tom Wessels, professor emeritus at Antioch University New England, will be the featured speaker at Annual Meeting.

process in which complexity and interdependence develop within natural systems—like the human body or a forest ecosystem—resulting in energy efficiency, resiliency, and stability. The talk will focus on how this process works in ecosystems via co-evolution to generate the incredible biodiversity we see in nature. Many examples of regional co-evolved relationships will be used to illustrate how co-evolution works. The talk then shows how this process is a wonderful model for creating sustainable human systems.



ALISON ANHOLT-WHITE

MECT Trustees, Staff and guest speaker, Greenbelt President, Kate Bowditch at the 2018 Annual Meeting.

Please join us at Annual Meeting to reflect on 2019 and look forward to 2020. Come learn more about the Trust's activities, help guide its initiatives, and possibly discover a project to which you would like to lend your skills. **November 10, 4:00 pm, Magnolia Library and Community Center, 1 Lexington Avenue, Magnolia. RSVP at mect.org.**



ALISON ANHOLT-WHITE

Trail Work Helpers Wanted

Please join us for our fall trail work day on **Saturday, October 19, 1:30-4:30 PM** to clear away summer growth encroaching on our trails. Meet at the Wilderness Conservation Area parking lot off of Upper Pine Street in Manchester. Please wear appropriate work clothes. We also ask that you bring your own branch lopper, pruning shears and/or a bow saw if you have them. Rain Date: Sunday, October 20, 1:30-4:30 PM.

Pictured: 2018 Fall Trail Work Crew

Come Take a Walk with Us!

The MECT fall walks and hikes are well underway. Perhaps you've already joined us on the trails. If not, there are still several hikes to choose from as well as a fall trail work day for service-oriented folks. We hope to see you soon!

Sunday, 10/6, 1-4/5 PM—Agassiz to Red Rocks and back via Haskell Pond. This will be our longest hike of this fall, roughly 7 miles with trek leader Steve Lantner. We will walk along old wood lot roads, see the dam that holds back Gloucester's water supply, and climb to the top of Red Rocks for a sweeping view of Ipswich Bay. This hike will be at a brisk pace with some difficult terrain: for hardy hikers only. Meet at Agassiz Rock parking area on Southern Avenue in Essex.

Sunday, 10/13, 3-5 PM—The History of Laurel Notch. Hike the woods, hills and ravines of the Laurel Notch and Hemlock Glen trails in West Manchester led by MECT Trustee George Smith. Be treated to an historical narrative of the area, including 100 year old woodpiles, interesting geologic features, and evidence of raging fires that occurred in the 1950's, 1960's, and 1990's. Park at the end of Crooked Lane in Manchester.

Sunday, 10/20, 3-5 PM—Professional Photography with a Prince. Join noted photographer Michael Prince (www.michaelprince.com) and our own amateur Mike Dyer, as they explore our colorful fall foliage, waters, and granite outcroppings through the eye of the lens. During the walk, they will cover equipment, technique and composition. Bring your cameras! Meet at the WCA Gateway parking lot on Upper School Street in Manchester.

Sunday, 10/27, 2-5 PM—The Fiery Geologic History of Cape Ann. Geologist Robert Buchwaldt will show us evidence of millions of years of hot and sometimes violent history of the land under our feet. Meet at the WCA Gateway parking lot on Upper School Street in Manchester promptly at 2PM. Participants will carpool to various locations.

Look for a popup winter hike to be announced on short notice when the snow flies! When conditions are right, we will announce a last minute winter hike. We'll look for animal activity in the snow and other features more easily seen during winter. MECT Members will get an email with details. Join today at www.mect.org/join.

Sturdy waterproof footwear recommended, as well as water and insect repellent. ■ Registering at www.mect.org/events helps us plan, but is not required. For cancellations due to weather, check www.mect.org after 3 PM the day before.



Essex's Shipbuilding History, continued from page 1

A conservation restriction is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization or governmental agency that permanently protects the conservation values of the land. The landowner either donates or sells the right to develop their land while retaining ownership and many private property rights in the land. The conservation organization takes responsibility to monitor future uses of the land to ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement and to enforce the terms if a violation occurs. As with other real property interests, the conservation restriction is recorded in local land records and becomes part of the chain of title for the property.

In short, a conservation restriction enables a landowner to achieve specific and permanent conservation objectives for their land while keeping the property in the ownership and control of the family for uses that are consistent with their conservation goals.

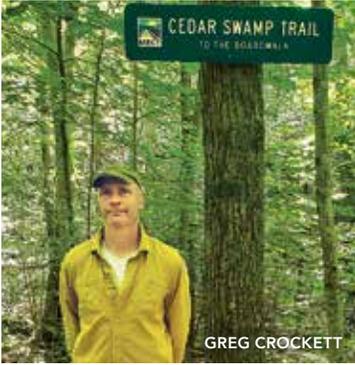
The purposes of the agreement are written into the conservation restriction as are the rights that are retained by the landowner. In this case, the Burnham

family has reserved the right to selectively harvest tree limbs and live trees in order to provide timber for shipbuilding or restoration, thereby retaining an historic use of the Essex Woods.

"MECT is extremely pleased to support the Burnham family in achieving this combination of goals. We appreciate the family's thoughtful vision for making this happen," said George Davis, Chair of MECT's Land Acquisition and Protection Committee. "This is the 23rd conservation restriction to be held by MECT on properties that have important conservation values. Each situation is unique. All form part of the unified goal of preserving key conservation areas for current and future generations."

MECT is dedicated to protecting land important to our two communities. We hope that the commitment that Burnhams have made for the future of their land and their community will inspire others to consider a similar path.

If you would like to discuss conservation options for your land, please contact us at 978-890-7153.



A Sign of the Times

We are in the initial stages of updating trail signs on MECT property. The Stewardship Committee has created a new design template and chosen a durable material for new signs that will be used in place of the wide variety of handmade signs, that while much loved, are in need of replacement. Keep an eye out for the first two prototype signs that have been installed—one along the Cedar Swamp Trail and the other in Hooper Trask Pasture. We expect that the process of replacing all MECT trail signs will take some time, so please be patient!

Pictured, Steve Lantner, MECT Stewardship Committee, with new MECT Trail Sign.

Kettle Cove Restoration, continued from page 1

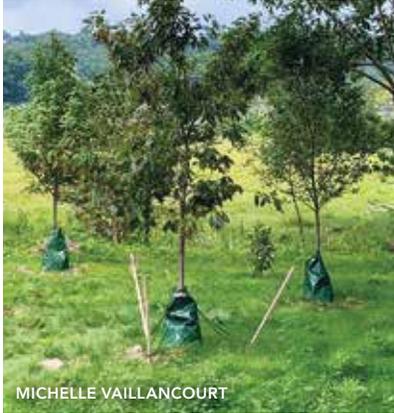
Beach and mixes with the tides that flow in from Kettle Cove, creating a rich and varied habitat for a wide array of plants and animals.

The restoration project area is four and one-half acres in size, and is located in the eastern section of the salt marsh. It includes four separate parcels of land owned by three neighbors, including Stephen Kasnet, James Welch and MECT. Mr. Kasnet and Mr. Welch initiated the project and hired DeRosa Environmental Consulting, Inc. to conduct the restoration work. Mr. Kasnet asked MECT to include a parcel of land owned by the Trust along Summer Street in the project, and has generously provided the funding for the work on MECT's property.

The restoration effort is well underway. It has involved removing the invasive plant species and installing a variety of native tree, shrubs, and grasses in order to re-establish the historic array of species found in the area.

The project began with an inventory of all plant species in September of 2018. Several common invasive plants were found in the upland forested sections of the project area, including Asiatic bittersweet, honeysuckle, Multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, and European privet. Pockets of the invasive common reed, Phragmites, were found along the edge of the salt marsh.

In the upland sections of the project area, whole plant removal techniques were used in order to ensure the best possible long-term result. The entire invasive plant—including roots and rhizomes—was removed to reduce the ability of the plants to re-grow. This work was done last spring.



Newly planted oak trees in the upland portion of the project area.

These upland areas have been planted with a variety of native trees, shrubs, and grasses including oak, red cedar, witch hazel, highbush and lowbush blueberry, several kinds of cordgrass, sea lavender, goldenrod and ferns. The restoration area has been surveyed monthly to remove all sprouting invasive seedlings. Each

month there are fewer and fewer to remove.

The multiple small and isolated Phragmites stands along the fringes of the marsh have been treated using a technique that has proven successful in eliminating this persistent invasive reed. The Phragmites plants were cut and burned on-site last winter and seedlings were removed several times throughout the growing season. Burning returns nutrients to the soil and allows the native seed bank to germinate and grow within the restored areas. Periodic removal of new growth forces the Phragmites plant to use up stored energy to sprout new stems and leaves. The plants become stressed and eventually reach a tipping point where they are so impaired that they can no longer sprout new growth.

Over the next couple of years, the native plants will become established and fill in. The project will be monitored over time in order to ensure that the invasive species do not recolonize the property and that the native species thrive.

MECT is thankful to both Stephen Kasnet and James Welch for their commitment to restoring this important ecosystem. Our expectation is that the project will result in enhancing the ecological health and function of the salt marsh. The view toward the marsh and the ocean is also greatly improved!



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MIKE DYER
Yellow Shafted Flicker

The 2019 Annual Appeal is Calling All Donors!

Protecting land, conserving biodiversity and natural resources, and nurturing young naturalists are three of MECT's most fundamental activities. Your donation to the 2019 Annual Appeal is a contribution to the quality of life that MECT enhances in our beautiful communities. Please reply using the envelope included with this newsletter, or give at our website, www.mect.org/annual-appeal.

Matching Challenge! This fall, several donors agreed to fund a Conservation Leaders' Circle Matching Grant to challenge our donors to stretch their annual support to \$1,000. Can you do it? Your gift of \$1,000 will be matched 100%! And you will become a charter member of the Conservation Leaders' Circle, a special group of donors who recognize the importance of extraordinary annual operating support. All support preserves our local communities' green infrastructure and the countless qualities that make Cape Ann the special place that it is.

Your gift, at a level that is right for you, means the world. Thank you!