

# The Heron

Summer 1999

The Newsletter of the Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.

## Nasketucket Bay State Reservation A Reality

*In the 1980's, the*

the former Nunes property was eyed as a golf course. In the 1990s, it almost became an upscale residential subdivision. Now, its future seems so much simpler. It will be what it once was: a pristine, ocean-front expanse open to all SouthCoast residents and visitors.

At the annual meeting of the Mattapoisett Land Trust on May 22, DEP Coastal Access Planner Geordie Vining said that final plans for the newly named Nasketucket Bay State Reservation may include rejuvenating some old trails. The waterfront, he said, will likely be reserved for

walkers, beach-combers, birders, and environmental study – not swimming. Detailed plans are deferred pending the results of a four-month, \$50,000 ecological study by Epsilon Associates, which will produce an inventory of wildlife, habitats, forest types, and rare and endangered species.

What is clear, according to Mr. Vining, is the important role the Mattapoisett Land Trust and the Fairhaven-Acushnet Land Preservation Trust played in the state's acquisition of the 212-acre property,

*No time is more important to MLT's success than now – our annual membership drive. Please, be as generous as you can.*

one of the last of a fast dwindling number of undeveloped coastline properties in Massachusetts. Jointly, the two land trusts pledged \$150,000, without which the purchase of the property by the state would not have been possible. "Everything would have stopped," Mr. Vining said.

The \$150,000 was the difference between the \$8 million appraised value, the maximum the state can pay for conservation land, and the seller's lowest price of \$8,150,000. The trusts borrowed the \$150,000 from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, the agency that sells whale license plates, on a three-year note. Each land trust plans a fund-raising drive to repay its portion of the loan. Both will serve as consultants to the state for park usage.

## Sea Horse Sees Better Days Ahead

*Not only is the*

famous Mattapoisett sea horse here to stay – it's going to get a much needed facelift.

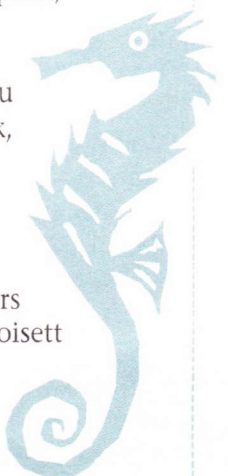
Bequeathed to the Mattapoisett Land Trust 10 years ago, the former Henry Dunseith property at the corner of Route 6 and North Street is about to undergo some major improvements. First, the Dunseith house itself, built in 1809, will be moved to another location in Mattapoisett. MLT directors voted to sell the house after failing to secure a non-profit charitable organization as a tenant, as stipulated in

Mr. Dunseith's will, and after Max Ferro, a leading preservation architect, determined that the house had no historical significance.

Plans are also underway to identify and catalog both the unique and common trees and shrubs on the property – a project which will involve a local landscape architect and area school children. Paths to the brook and inner meadow will be maintained, and to the brook on the east end of the property, near the Sawyer Funeral Home, will be maintained. When completed, the 3.5-acre park will offer a perfect spot for picnics, chatting with

friends, reading, or a quick, quiet, sylvan respite from life's faster pace.

No matter why you decide to visit the park, our 38-foot fiberglass sea horse will stand guard – with a complete face-, no, full-body lift. After 25 years of neglect, the Mattapoisett monogram needs extensive structural remediation and a fresh coat of paint.





## Growing a Greenway

The Mattapoissett Land Trust is now working with five other SouthCoast Land Trusts, an affiliation known as Bay Land Center. Among our more ambitious projects is the construction of a Greenway – a continuous walking trail – from Lakeville to Wareham. Help us make this green-dream a reality. Call 758-2966 and ask one simple question: "What can I do to help?"

## Down By The Ol' Mill Stream

With the help of a generous gift from the Frank Silvia estate, MLT entered into an agreement to purchase the 3.5-acre Tub Mill site on Route 6, where a water-powered sawmill operated in the 19th century.

Though the mill was destroyed during a lightning storm in 1911, the still-intact dam, millrace, field, and cedar trees are a "perfect picture" of old Mattapoissett. Soon, we'll take steps to protect the existing stone work and install a plaque which commemorates the history of the old mill – all to ensure Tub Mill remains part of our history and the open space we enjoy each day.

## Preservation Maneuvers

Recently, MLT placed its Old Field Property, 90 acres of which stretches into Rochester, into a joint Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) with Olaussen Christmas Tree Farm.

In 1977, the APR program was established by the Massachusetts legislature to curtail the rapid loss of farmland resources to non-agricultural uses. Administered by the Department of Food & Agriculture, the APR program enables the Commonwealth to purchase from farmers the "development rights" to their property. The farmers still own the land but, if sold, leased, or willed to heirs, it must be used for agriculture in perpetuity.

Since its first acquisition in 1980, the APR program has protected over 40,000 acres in 123 towns across the Commonwealth, ensuring that they are not converted into housing lots, shopping malls, and

industrial parks. By working closely with the Rochester Land Trust, the MLT has helped bring the benefits of the APR program to the SouthCoast. (Some information for this article was taken from the web site of the Mass. Department of Food and Agriculture)

## Seawall Should Be Seen

The Munro property seawall on the "founding property" of the MLT is complete and fully funded thanks to the generosity of many friends and residents of Mattapoissett.

In April, a group of volunteers completed the fence and prepared for the replanting of sea-grass by children from the Center School. The scents of newly planted Rosa Ragoza and honeysuckle will soon fill the air at this picturesque spot.

*To become a volunteer, call Bob Atkinson at 758-4401, Brad Hathaway at 758-3579, or Randall Kunz at 758-2966.*

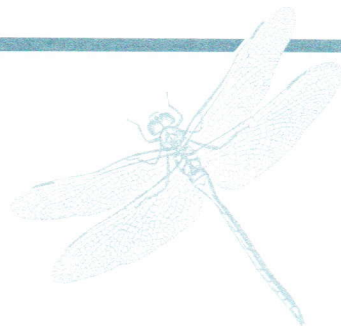
## Give Now, Give Later

No time is more important to MLT's success than now – our annual membership drive. We depend on your membership renewal and the recruitment of new members to continue our valuable conservation efforts. Please return the enclosed pledge form with your check – and, please, be as generous as you can.

Then, in a quiet moment, consider how you can make the preservation of open space part of your legacy. The ways are many, though they fall into three broad categories: conservation easements, land donation (now or as a bequest), and the bargain sale of land.

The Land Trust Alliance offers several publications discussing these personal conservation techniques. LTA can be reached at (202) 638-4725 or at [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).

The MLT can recommend local and impartial accounting, financial planning, and legal advisors who are familiar with the laws, tax advantages, and income opportunities that can derive from the conservation of land.



## Up for the challenge?

Can you identify flora and fauna? Blaze trails? Make signs? Plant gardens – or just weed them? Plan events? Involve school children or adults in the beauty of nature? Raise money? Stuff envelopes? Lick stamps?

Whatever skills you have, put them to good use at the Land Trust.

We're always looking for new volunteers and new ways to help fulfill our mission.

And with 337 acres to manage, we certainly could use some help now. We can "give you a job" or you can carve out your own niche.

Either way, you'll be welcome to share the personal rewards of knowing that you played an active role in preserving open space for future generations.

Become a MLT volunteer today. Call Bob Atkinson at 758-4401, Brad Hathaway at 758-3579, or Randall Kunz at 758-2966. Just say, I'd like to volunteer. We'll take it from there!



*The Heron is published periodically by the Mattapoissett Land Trust.*

The Mattapoissett Land Trust was formed in 1974 to preserve open land for the enjoyment of Mattapoissett residents and visitors and to educate SouthCoast residents about the value of natural beauty and the urgent need for conservation. Our membership consists of annual contributors, our only source of revenue, and a volunteer board of directors, namely, Robert Atkinson, Ruth Bates, Dana Coggins, Robert Coquillette, Elise Coyne, Brad Hathaway, Beth Kunz, Gil LaFrance, George Mock, III, Martha Peterson, Allan Schubert, Martin Smith, Bob Walter, Pat Walter, Kristen Waring, and Randall H. Kunz, President.

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