



The Heron

Fall 1999

The Newsletter of the Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.

"Leap of Faith" Campaign Brings Out The Best in Local Land Lovers



Just four months

after announcing its ambitious fundraising program, the Mattapoisett Land Trust has received more than \$135,000 in cash and pledges, putting the organization more than half way towards its goal of \$220,000.

"From the outset, we have had a lot of faith in the generosity of our community and its commitment to preserving open space," said MLT president Randall Kunz. "A sincere 'thank you' goes out to everyone who responded so quickly. It has been very gratifying. We are hopeful that this momentum will continue to put us over the top before year's end."

"Leap of Faith: A Campaign to Preserve Open Space" was introduced last June. The name of the campaign refers to MLT's "Leap of Faith" in committing a total of \$220,000 for three projects – before it had raised the cash. MLT and the Fairhaven Land Preservation Trust jointly borrowed \$150,000 in a

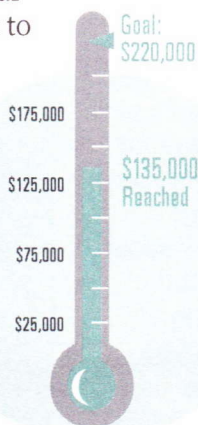
three-year note to ensure the former Nunes farm on Brandt Island Rd. became the Nasketucket Bay State Reservation.

MLT also added \$50,000 to a leadership gift from Doreen Nelsen to purchase and preserve the three-plus acre Tub Mill site on Route 6, which had

been slated for house lots. Finally, MLT committed \$20,000 for the refurbishment of the Seahorse and the Dunseith property at the intersection of Route 6 and North St.

As of November 1, MLT received \$89,000 in cash donations and \$46,000 in pledges. But there's a long way to go – another \$85,000.

Residents and friends of Mattapoisett who have not yet responded to the Leap of Faith campaign are encouraged to participate now - before the busy holiday season arrives. Cash, pledges, and securities are welcome. Please use your Leap of Faith contribution form, or simply mail your contribution or pledge (over one or two years), to Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc., P.O. Box 31, Mattapoisett, MA 02739.



Tub Mill — It's Yours At Last!

The Mattapoisett

Land Trust took title in August to Tub Mill, the three-and-a-half acre site on Route 6 where a nineteenth century barrel stave business once operated.

With years of brush and vines removed, and the old mill race visible once again, the property is open for walking, contemplating the beauty of nature - and imagining the industry that used to thrive in this part of town.

Tub Mill sawed staves for tubs and barrels used in the marine

trades. Unusable wood from the mill was transported to the next lot, where it was burned to make steam. The steam was piped to the barn behind Fisher & Rocha's facilities, where the staves were bent and formed into barrels.

MLT plans to replace the "Posting Elm" which stood on this property for many generations. Notices were posted on the elm, which also offered its shade to those who waited for the trolley to New Bedford. MLT will also erect a plaque to document the mill's

history. George Mock, III, is coordinating that project with the Mattapoisett Historical Society. He welcomes contributions of historical fact and anecdotes about Tub Mill. In addition, a memorial to Frank Sylvia is planned by the Sylvia family. Frank loved this property and personally reconstructed its stonework in the 1970's.

Stop by this newest addition to the Trust. Park on Mendell Road opposite the Town Barn. There's a path directly behind the parking area leading to the mill race.

Where, O Where, Has Our Seahorse Gone?

The famous Mattapoissett Seahorse is taking a well deserved winter vacation.

The ravages of time have weakened both the Seahorse and its stand, so the Town mascot will "winter" at a local fiberglass hospital. When it returns next spring, it will have a new support frame, a substantially reinforced skin, and a new coat of paint.

MLT board member Allan Schubert and many others, notably Field Engineering, Paula Cobb, Dupont Nurseries, Roger Thompson, and Marshall Pryce, deserve special commendation for the time and effort they have invested in this project.

Also at the Dunseith property, forestry and landscape professionals have identified many unusual trees and shrubs, and recommended the removal of about 30 trees that are crowding out these unique specimens. Behind the house, MLT has repaired the grape arbor, which makes a nice place to enjoy the site even before the balance of the Dunseith Gardens takes shape. The planned relocation of the house to another part of Town will free the site for grass and benches – for small gatherings or just a brief visit to enjoy what Henry gave to all of us.

Studying Nasketucket

Epsilon Associates recently completed its four-month ecological study of Nasketucket Bay State Reservation (the old Nunes Farm). Findings are now being catalogued.

However, a preview of the findings can be seen by simply walking this incredible 215-acre tract of land that leads to 3,500 feet of waterfront – a beautiful retreat with trails, upland woods, large fields, some truly wet wetlands, and all sorts of tiny, sprouting oak, maple, and beech trees.

Soon, MLT plans to host community meetings in conjunction with the State to determine a management plan for this new passive park. Your attendance and participation is invited and encouraged.

Trailblazers Wanted!

Trails and old woods roads are essential to the enjoyment of most of MLT's properties. When they get overgrown, access is reduced and so is the pleasure of tramping.

Unfortunately, this overgrowth happens with astonishing speed. We need volunteers to reopen the roads on the Martocci property, the Oldfield Farm property, and our "new" trail behind the Route 6 water tower on the Emerson property. Please call Ruth Bates at 758-6279 to volunteer.

A Surprising Math Lesson

Although a land trust's motivation is retention of natural beauty for current and future generations, open space can actually help the tax rate – contrary to popular belief that taking property off the tax rolls does just the opposite.

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

Consider this. The Town has to budget about \$1000 per home per year for municipal services such as police, fire, and Town Hall – plus about \$5000 for each school-age child. So, for a typical, fancy new house, valued at about \$350,000, with mom, dad,

two kids, and a dog, the Town's "expenses" increase by about \$11,000. \$5500 of that \$11,000 would be covered by the family's property taxes. The other \$5,500 ... pushes up everyone's tax rate!

Conclusion: Saving open space which we've all come to enjoy doesn't have to be seen as a money-losing proposition.

Green Light for the Greenway

An alliance of government agencies and conservation groups, including MLT, is trying to generate support for a 50-mile greenbelt and hiking trail from Plymouth to Fall River.

This alliance is planning a series of workshops for land trusts, community planners, and outdoor enthusiasts. For more information, please call Michael Labossiere at the Bay Land Center at 999-6363.

Bequest Request

Please remember MLT in your estate planning. A tract of land, a conservation restriction, or more liquid resources will help us preserve open space. Need skilled, impartial accounting, financial planning and legal advisors? Please call MLT for referrals!

Forestry Plan for Oldfield Property

MLT is currently working with a professional forester under a State Grant to develop a forestry plan for the Oldfield Property, 90 acres of which was recently placed in a joint Agricultural Preservation Restriction with the Olaussen Christmas Tree Farm.

The plan will detail optimal forest management, as well as the most appropriate ways to keep the 10-acre field from reverting to woods. We anticipate brush removal from the field and liming to sweeten the soil. We also plan selected harvesting of older, past-maturity trees in the 80 acres of woods, to allow full growth of the more vital, younger specimens.



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. Although we work closely with the Town of Mattapoissett, we are an independent organization, neither funded by nor a part of Town government. 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.

The Mattapoissett Land Trust is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. All contributions are fully tax deductible.

Mattapoissett Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 31
Mattapoissett, MA 02739
Telephone: 508-758-2966