



The Heron

Fall 2000

The Newsletter of the Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.

Eel Pond

lessons:

Eel Pond was lost to six homes. But did we learn something? Yes! State "Self Help" aid will cover 50% of the appraised value of a land purchase if acquired by the town through the Conservation Commission. Also, we learned these things should "surface" early, even before a large landowner makes a final decision to sell. We need awareness of the possibilities as these large properties first become available.

The Land Trust Board can provide coordination and sponsor petitions for town acquisition. We can also work with landowners in compromise dispositions which allows them to retain title but still achieve some cash through sale of development rights. For high profile tracts, due to ecological, visual or political significance, the Land Trust may be able to raise the funds needed.

What is the Land Trust anyway?

Mattapoisett Land Trust is an independent, non-profit organization committed to land preservation and education of the public on conservation and the enjoyment of nature. We are totally independent of town government, although we work closely with many town officials and volunteers. In addition, we are a totally volunteer organization -- no one gets paid.

We hold about 350 acres of upland, woodland, fields and wetlands in 38 tracts. Some are as small as an acre and some are in excess of 85 acres. There are trails on some, lawns and benches on others and a large opportunity to enhance and improve facilities on all of them.

Leap of Faith

almost up to date:

Thank you for keeping your pledges up to date. We're close to "on schedule" for all the promises made during our "Leap of Faith" fund drive with only a few people who like to write checks at year-end to go for this year. Thanks again for your generosity.

Salty gives us "The Eye"

Salty Seahorse again casts a green eye on all his/her surroundings. This is a solar powered light contributed in part by Mark Van Dini of NSTAR and John Doherty of Coastal Lighting and installed with the aid of Alan Schubert and several local volunteers. After spending a "small fortune" to rehabilitate Salty, MLT is pleased to announce a significant perpetual care donation for future seahorse maintenance. This gift came from the Herman family who summered here as children, in memory of their parents who were full time residents later in their lives. Thank you Bruce, John, Gwenn & Mark Herman.



Dunseith Garden

is happening:

The house next to the Seahorse is gone! Not an easy decision but a necessary one. The foundation hole is filled, obsolete driveways removed and grass seeded, courtesy of Bob Gingras and Dupont Landscaping. As you'll remember, we were constrained by Henry Dunseith's will to use the house for "charitable, non-profit" purposes. None of the many charitable organizations we worked with could afford to meet the disability access and other code requirements necessary to make it work.

Greatscapes Nursery donated 350 tulips which are planted on the property by one of our new directors, Ozzie Ostenskowski. These will be a great addition to our early spring experience. More help is needed to reinstate Henry's perennial beds and enhance the rest of the 3.5 acre property. Your help is needed.

Bequest Request

Please remember MLT when you update your will. All our gifted properties retain the name of the giver. This perpetuates your memory in Mattapoisett and gives all who come later a sense of continuity and history. Funds are always welcome as well. We'll be happy to recommend impartial legal and accounting help on request.

Guarding Nasketucket

Land Trust members funded our share of the Nasketucket Bay State Reservation (the Nunes Farm). Now you can participate in deciding how it should be restored. DEM is holding a planning meeting at Old Hammondtown School on December 6 at 7:00 PM which is open to all. Please come with your ideas.

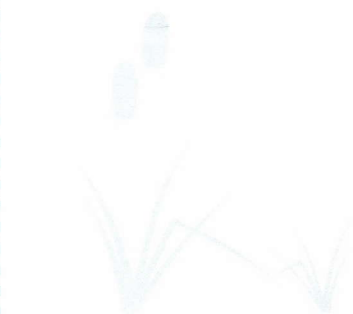
Community Association Support

MLT can assist community associations acquire vacant land or achieve conservation or view restrictions to perfect or protect association objectives. For properties which meet our profile, we can offer our 501 (c) 3 Federal Tax status to assist with deductibility of assessments to your association members, and the resulting property can be managed as your association prefers.

Orientation

Opportunity

MLT is planning a series of neighborhood meetings to solidify community understanding of our objectives and potential contributions. We want you to understand the full range of opportunities and challenges. We also want you to know where our current 38 properties are and how to enjoy them. If you are not invited, it's because of the tyranny of calendar and availability of hosts; please call one of our directors and we'll be sure to include you.



Ideas for Christmas

Tub Mill at Route 6 and Mendell Road was owned by members of the Dexter family for most of the nineteenth century. To commemorate the Land Trust's ownership of this special property, we've had a water color painted from an 1890 photograph in that period entitled "Dexter Mill circa 1890 at Tub Mill Brook". The painting shows extensive buildings and the reservoir full of water. Signed and numbered prints of this water color are available at \$65 or matted and framed at \$150. In addition, there are note cards with envelopes with the painting on the front in sets of 5 for \$10. Both prints and note cards are available at Rogers Gallery and all proceeds go to the Land Trust as the artist has been paid and the prints were done courtesy of Reynolds DeWalt Printing in New Bedford.

The Dexter Mill used water power from the brook which feeds Eel Pond to saw barrel staves for the marine trade, and later to make shingles. This was an extensive operation until 1911 when part of the building burned during an electrical storm in August. The balance of the building was used for an ice house for several decades thereafter.

Quadruple your money

New legislation will match "Community Preservation" fund raised by increasing property taxes up to a 3% increase. To get this deal, the town must adopt the program at a town meeting and establish a "Community Preservation Committee" to manage the funds and make acquisition recommendations to town meeting. The town meeting makes the final decisions on each purchase.

Based on total property taxes during fiscal 2000 of about \$9.0 million, and assuming town adoption of the program at the maximum of 3%, this would mean \$270 thousand annually. The state will match that or another \$270 thousand, and for most projects the state "Self Help" fund will match that total. This makes a grand total of \$1.1 million per year for open space, historic resources, recreational use or community housing. For the average property tax bill in Mattapoissett of \$3 thousand a year, this would cost an additional \$90 per year. For each \$90 the state will send us a matching \$90.00.

There is another option. A surcharge is attached to property transactions, paid by the buyer, and assessed on amounts above some threshold level. Funds raised this way also enjoy quadrupling!

What's the incentive to do this? It can actually hold the tax rate down! Assume a development with one acre lots and every other house has two school age kids. Each of these creates a \$8 thousand deficit annually (\$5K for each kid plus

\$1K for town services, less \$3K in taxes paid). The other lots are a \$2K positive impact (\$1K for town services and \$3K taxes paid). A 200 acre project would add about \$1 to the tax rate (about \$600 thousand) and it would stay there year after year. If the two hundred acre tract could be bought for \$2 Million, we'd pay one quarter of this or \$500 thousand and it would be fully paid for in about two years. And, we'd have the property for open space, soccer fields, etc.

Please help us think about these options and whether or not we should propose that the town adopt one of them. Please call an MLT director with your thoughts.

Big Bucks

for You

We'll pay big bucks for selected sight easements. You keep the property for personal use only and get significant property tax relief. If you have a property with a view the public enjoys, we want to protect it for all of Mattapoissett. Please call our general counsel at Schaefer & Kunz, attorneys-at-law, for details.



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, Dana Coggins, Julie Craig, Robert Coquillette, Elise Coyne, Brad Hathaway, Beth Kunz, George Mock III, Paul (Ozzie) Ostenskowski, Martin Smith, Kristen Waring, Susan Watjen, and Randall H. Kunz, President.

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

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The painting



Now

