



SANDWICH CONSERVATION TRUST
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 The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc.
 Member of the Land Trust Alliance

**SUPPORT LAND PRESERVATION IN SANDWICH
 RENEW YOUR SCT MEMBERSHIP FOR 2009!**

WHAT IS THE SANDWICH CONSERVATION TRUST?

The Sandwich Conservation Trust, founded in 1985, is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization staffed by volunteers. The Trust's purpose is to preserve and maintain woodlands, meadows, wetlands, beaches, wildlife habitats and scenic views for the public. The Trust acquires land by gift or purchase and manages the properties using sound environmental practices. Other goals of the SCT are to assist landowners desiring to preserve their property through the use of conservation restrictions and other techniques, educate the public about land preservation, and to stimulate a public conscience on land use.

SANDWICH CONSERVATION TRUST

Newsletter

Spring 2009



Spring Hill Marsh

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 East Sandwich, MA 02537
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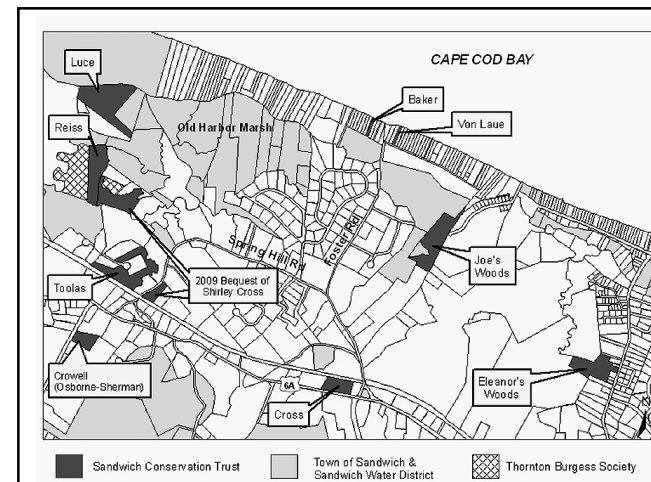
www.sandwichconservationtrust.org

TWO NEW SPRING HILL PRESERVES ENHANCE THE CONSERVATION LEGACY OF SHIRLEY G. CROSS

One year ago in our spring Newsletter we described the gift of 2.56 acres of waterfront land on Route 6A given to the SCT by Peter N. Cross of Boxford, MA in honor of his parents, Drs. Chester and Shirley Cross. Both were early (late 1960s-early 70s) leaders in Sandwich land conservation, and remarkable citizens. Chet died in 1988, followed by Shirley in July of last year, at the age of 92. Through a trust which she created, Shirley left the SCT two very fine pieces of Spring Hill land for preservation. Anyone familiar with Spring Hill Road can locate the two parcels.



Shirley G. Cross 1916-2008, Spring Hill botanist, conservationist.



The two parcels given to the SCT by the Shirley G. Cross Trust are indicated, along with other Spring Hill preserved lands.

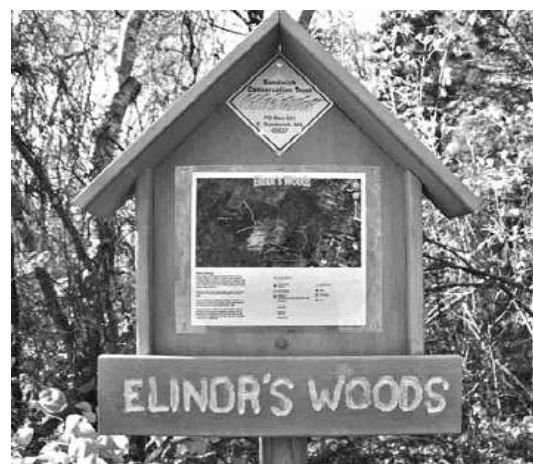
The first lot is 1.22 acres of wooded upland just across the railroad tracks and uphill from the 1837 3/4 Cape at 10 Spring Hill Road, where the Crosses lived. 100 years ago this piece was a field, and once part of the farm settled by Benjamin and Katherine Nye in the 1640s.

Now the piece is forested with an interesting mix of native trees: white and black oaks, pitch pine, black cherry, red maple and tupelo, as well as a sprinkling of non-natives: locust, bird cherry, and one fine American elm. From the northern end, peering through the leafless trees and bushes, Spring Hill Marsh, Great Island, Pine Island, the barrier beach and a bit of Cape Cod Bay can be seen.

The second lot is nearly 5 acres of salt marsh known as Great Island Meadow, and this includes the ancient dirt causeway connecting Great Island with the shore. It is part of the beautiful salt marsh vista seen from Spring Hill Road looking towards Sandwich Village. The old deed description refers to this as “a five load lot, more or less”, alluding to its former value as a salt hay meadow, yielding five farm wagon loads of hay. From the time Sandwich was settled, until the late 1800s, salt marsh hay was considered valuable for livestock feed, bedding, and later, material used for packing Sandwich glass in barrels. The hay was mown in late summer by men with scythes, who suffered with the flies, mosquitos and heat. Salt hay was typically stored out in the marsh on a few boards set on staddles, groups of cedar posts which kept the hay out of the reach of high tide.

Today we still regard salt marsh as valuable, but for different reasons. The marshes serve many useful purposes within the web of nature: salt water fish nursery, habitat for shore birds and many other creatures, water cleanser and ocean buffer. As landscape features, marshes are visually refreshing - damp, level “prairies” that don’t fill up with forest - always providing, along with the ocean nearby, a sense of wide open space.

Shirley and Chet were leaders in preserving some very important conservation properties which enhance our town, notably Brady’s Island, The Briar Patch, portions of the Maple Swamp Conservation Lands, The Ryder Property, and 27 acres of Sandy Neck. To this legacy are added the two properties gifted by the Shirley G. Cross Trust. Long may the Crosses be remembered for their preservation work for the town and their conservation gifts.



A new trail head sign at Elinor's Woods. Of interest is a laminated GIS aerial photograph of the property with trails indicated.

ELINOR’S WOODS - IMPROVEMENTS ARE COMPLETED - ENJOY! A big thank-you goes from our organization to Troop 47 scout **Chris Hall**, who organized a group of scouts and adults to work on the trails and signs at the 5 acre SCT preserve Elinor’s Woods, on Ploughed Neck in East Sandwich. Chris carried out the project in his effort to gain the rank of Eagle Scout, which he has achieved. As a result of his work, we feel proud to invite the public to enjoy this quiet neighborhood preserve. The SCT held its 2008 Annual Meeting and property re-dedication there on November 9th. Present were family members of Robert A. Sprague of Palm Harbor, FL, who donated the preserve in 1994 in memory of his late wife Elinor. Bob also served as an SCT trustee for eleven years.

Elinor’s Woods is on the left hand side of Ploughed Neck Road, about half way to the beach. Look for the Green SCT sign and a split-rail fence next to a small grassy parking area. You will enter an interesting trail system that winds around under a canopy of tall trees, and out towards the marsh edge. The land is low - a bridge spans a ditch draining a tiny wetland. Further along more ditches can be seen - there used to be cranberry bogs on an adjacent property. Walkers often comment that the preserve seems bigger than it really is. It’s a great place to take a fairly brief but satisfying looped walk.



Chris Hall, center, poses with a group of Troop 47 Scouts he organized to work at Elinor's Woods. Sandwich Troop 47 Scoutmaster Richie Guild is at left.

The preserve is a marsh-side forest, with great specimens of red maple, oak, red cedar, pitch pine, and tupelo. The tupelo is notable for still bearing its Native American name, and for taking on some curious growth habits, often in grove situations. For what ever the reasons, some specimens will grow straight and mast-like, whereas others adopt incredibly curlicued shapes. Many limbs tend to grow quite perpendicular to the tree and old trees often become hollow. The leaves are small, shiny, and take on a beautiful shade of red in the fall. Enjoy them at Elinor’s Woods.

ESTATE PLANNING AND PLANNED GIVING The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts is sponsoring a free public seminar: **“Plan Ahead & Leave a Legacy”** on Saturday, May 9th at 2 PM. The location is at the Harwich Community Center, 100 Oak Street, Harwich. The seminar will feature Brooks Thayer, Esq, facilitated by Robert F. Smith, Esq., and will explain basic estate planning. Topics will include wills, reserved life estate, health care proxy, power of attorney, special opportunities for painless planned giving in these turbulent times, and other topics of interest to people making long-term decisions about their quality of life, property, and other assets. Please RSVP for the May 9th seminar by calling Mike Lach at the Compact: 508-362-3422.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE SCT is extremely important to us. We realize times are tough, but we hope our work is important enough to you to continue your membership at whatever level you can. Your dues help us to pay for insurance on our lands, technical assistance, surveying, printing, postage, and other similar costs for a non-profit such as ours. Thank you so much for your continued interest.

DID YOU KNOW....That land conservation (other than the Shawme-Crowell State Forest) began in Sandwich in 1964 when the recently-formed Conservation Commission acquired three parcels: a gift of East Sandwich salt marsh and swamp from Mrs. Ruth Mara; a gift of the 36 acre upland peninsula (with 74 acres of marsh) in East Sandwich known as Talbot’s Point, a gift of Dr. and Mrs. Fritz B. Talbot of Osterville; and 3 acres of upland with 14 acres of marsh known as the Blueberry Patch. This was purchased from the estate of J. Foxcroft Carleton, a pioneer blueberry grower of Scorton Neck.