



# WELLFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST

Summer 2016 • [www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org](http://www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org)

## TALES & TRAILS: YOUNG EXPLORERS HIT THE TRAIL WITH WCT



When talking of land conservation for the sake of future generations, the conversation often includes phrases like, "Someday our grandkids will be able to enjoy this . . ."

Thanks to some brainstorming by retired Wellfleet Elementary School teacher Heidi Clemmer and WCT trustee Mark Gabriele

that "someday" is now. They were pondering how to get more of the younger generation to enjoy our preserved lands. Clemmer had already started writing a series of books for children incorporating the natural surroundings of Wellfleet. After a few site visits, it became obvious that the diversity of WCT holdings covered most of the spectrum of her topics.

The result is a new program called "Tales and Trails: Nature Walks for Young Explorers." A test walk was conducted last fall at Hamblen Island Park. Based on the success of that trial, a set of six walks has been scheduled for this year.

After postponement due to early-April snow, the first walk this spring was held on Wednesday April 20th. Ten young explorers took to our Walker Trail in search of vernal pools. They listened to and observed nature as they walked to the access site. Dip nets in hand, they enthusiastically searched for signs of life. The key find was a fairy shrimp — a species that only exists in vernal pools. Many other live organisms were found in the brown waters. Explorers then listened attentively as Clemmer and local artist/illustrator Marisa Picariello read a story centered on vernal pool life. The children then created a yarn figure of a spotted salamander to remember the day.

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## THE 2016 ANNUAL MEETING: COYOTES AND SHARKS AND HAWKS ... OH MY!!



Author and naturalist Peter Trull will give the keynote address at this year's Annual Meeting on August 13 at the Wellfleet Council on Aging at 9:30 a.m. He has written five books about the natural history of Cape Cod and never lets his pen stay idle too long. Perhaps you have seen a copies of his books at the library: *Closer to the Great Whites*, *Coyotes in the Neighborhood* and *The Gray Curtain*.

In addition to writing, he has worked in science and education for more than 35 years.

He was education director at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History and the Center for Coastal Studies, where he developed and taught classes related to whales and marine ecosystems, and currently teaches science at Cape Cod Charter School.

As always, all are welcome at the Annual Meeting, and refreshments will be provided.



### Saturday, August 13

Annual WCT Meeting, 10 a.m.

Wellfleet Senior Center

Featured speaker – Peter Trull,  
Naturalist, Educator and Author

### Saturday, September 10 (Rain date September 11)

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Guided Walk

9 a.m. Lieutenant Island (gathering place)

Closer to the date, more information will be provided  
on our website and by our e-mail blast.

Want to receive emails from WCT?

Send an e-mail to [info@wellfleetconservationtrust.org](mailto:info@wellfleetconservationtrust.org)

# BEST TIME EVER FOR CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS

by Mark H. Robinson, The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc.

If you have ever thought about preserving your land, now is the time to act. Congress renewed a remarkable piece of tax legislation, enabling private landowners to reap enhanced incentives for donating permanent conservation restrictions (CRs) on their properties.

A primer on these restrictions: you do not give up title to the land; you still own it; you can sell it or give it to heirs; you agree to relinquish the right to build houses on some or all of it, or agree to preserve resource areas (such as buffer zones to wetlands or a scenic view); you negotiate the terms of the CR to retain your customary uses or future needs; you do not need to allow public access; the CR must be done in perpetuity to receive tax breaks; some outside entity must hold the CR, usually a non-profit land trust. The new tax law accelerates and extends the tax benefits, thus allowing greater use and extension of these tax benefits.

Qualified properties may also receive up to \$75,000 in a refundable Massachusetts income tax credit for CR donations or bargain sales - regardless of your state of residence.

Many landowners wish never to develop their property and argue the town assessor should not treat their land for its subdivision potential. But the assessor is bound by law to value it for its "highest economic use" without regard to intention. A CR enables the owner to express his intentions legally and obligates the assessor to consider a reduction.

Please contact WCT ( [info@wellfleetconservationtrust.org](mailto:info@wellfleetconservationtrust.org) ) or our advisor, Mr. Robinson, if you wish further information on this useful conservation technique.

## CHIP BRUCE JOINS THE TRUST

WCT welcomes its newest trustee, Chip Bruce.

Bertram (Chip) Bruce is a graduate of Rice University (BA in Biology) and of the University of Texas (PhD in Computer Sciences).

After teaching at Rutgers and working for Bolt, Beranek, and Newman in Cambridge, Mass., Chip became a professor at the University of Illinois. He taught in departments including Library & Information Science, Curriculum & Instruction, Bioengineering, the Center for Writing Studies and the Center for East Asian & Pacific Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During 2007-08, he held a Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the National College of Ireland in Dublin.

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## CHIP BRUCE JOINS THE TRUST, CONTINUED

Chip and his wife Susan moved to Wellfleet five years ago. Susan is involved in many local organizations including Friends of the Wellfleet Library. They have two adult children, Emily and Stephen. The Bruces were drawn to Wellfleet for many reasons, including family connections, but access to outdoor activities, the rural character of the town and local concern for the natural environment were especially appealing to them. After arriving in Wellfleet, they joined WCT and began to help with several of its projects.



Chip's interest in nature started as early as he can remember, through a local children's museum which offered exhibits, courses, and clubs about insects, fossils, astronomy and other natural phenomena. He pursued his interest in the natural world as a biology major in college and later through a variety of school- and community-based science education projects which he led as a professor at the University of Illinois. He loves outdoor activities such as hiking, canoeing and cross-country skiing. He has especially enjoyed helping with citizen science projects such as those at the National Seashore and the Friends of Herring River. He writes a blog with entries on nature, history, literature and other topics (chipbruce.net).

Chip hopes to help the Trust with trail building and maintenance, education and writing. We are thrilled to welcome him aboard as a Trustee.

## YOUNG EXPLORERS, CONTINUED

Each walk is offered free of charge to the first ten children to register. It includes a chance



to explore a local eco-system, a story appropriate to the natural surroundings and the chance to create a souvenir inspired by nature. Materials for the craft project are provided by a grant from the Wellfleet Cultural Council.

The remaining walks will be: "Heathland Habitat," "Barrier

Beach Bums," "White Cedar Swamp Gang," "Tidal Flat Friends" and "Dune Dwellers." More information can be found at:

[www.facebook.com/WellfleetConservation](http://www.facebook.com/WellfleetConservation) or [www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org](http://www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org)

To register, send an email which includes the name and date of the walk, your name, the children's ages, names and your contact information to [ecotales@aol.com](mailto:ecotales@aol.com).



# DRUMMER COVE LINK LOT: CROSSING THE FINISH LINE

On December 31, 2015 the WCT reached a long sought after goal – completing the acquisition of the Drummer Cove “Link Lot” in South Wellfleet. Your contributions were essential to making this possible. Thanks to you this beautiful spot is now protected and open for all to enjoy.

## Drummer Cove – Trails



Individual donations were the largest source of our funding, but the WCT also received grants from the Massachusetts Conservation Partnership Program, the Bafflin Foundation, the Fields Ponds Foundation and the Cape Cod 5 Saving Bank Foundation. Thanks to these organizations and your generous support, we were able to assemble all of

the funding needed to close on the property by year end.

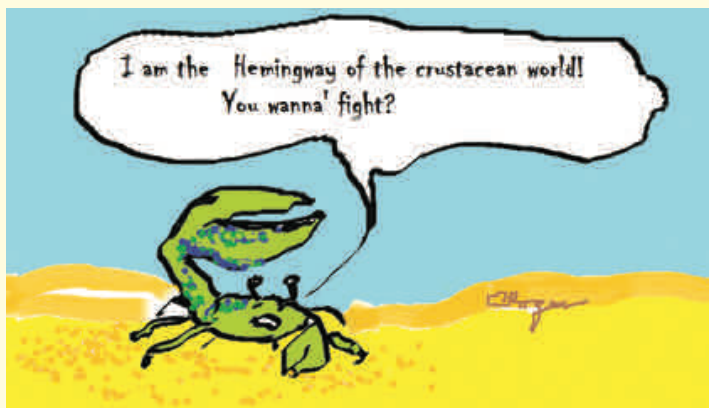
The lot is located on the northwest shore line of Drummer Cove and provides a vital "link" between several conservation properties. Since it preserves critical coast line habitat, this land is of the highest conservation priority. Additionally, there are valuable public and historic benefits to preserving this parcel. Once part of a historic and picturesque walking trail that led from Pleasant Point to the Pond Hill School, public access to this land had been restricted since 2001 by an infamous spite fence. With our acquisition of this property the fence has been razed, and the Drummer Cove trail is now restored for public enjoyment.

We never would have been able to accomplish this without your support. Thank you!



## SPOTLIGHT ON... THE FIDDLER CRAB

I raise my large claw at you giants passing by as the rest of my colony scurries back into our burrows at the tideline. How would you like it if you had to excavate and rebuild your home twice a day? That's what we do, so please don't make us have to do it again.



I started my life in the water with gills but came ashore in juvenile crab form. There I joined a large colony that lives on the edge of the marsh. Our burrows are recognizable by the balls of sand marking the entry ways. We plug up the entrances for high tide and come back out again as the tide recedes. If necessary, we can live in damp sand for months at a time. In winter we go back underground and hibernate until early spring.

We males can be “lefties” or “righties” with our major claw. We wave them in territorial challenges and in our mating rituals to attract females, who do not have the enlarged claws. Both of their claws and our smaller claw are used for collecting food. We have the ability to regenerate a lost claw, but they are not likely to grow back to the original size.

My shell or carapace is green-brown. Two stalks right in the middle front of it support my eyes. Like the rest of the colony, I scurry sideways on ten legs moving in a group of hundreds of crabs scavenging for food.

We provide a service to the environment by aerating the marsh and devouring organic plant detritus and animal remains. We also supply our hungry neighbors in the marsh with a meal – us!

I never “fiddle” away my time. Our Latin name, *Uca pugnax*, which emphasizes our pugilistic skill is more accurate. You might see me throw another crab over, but sometimes my aggressive stance is just a bluff. However, I am definitely not making music. I am the Hemingway of the crustacean world – “You wanna fight?!”

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER - SUMMER 2016

Dear Members and Friends,

We are in the "vernal" season. In my dictionary, the term has three primary meanings: 1. spring; 2. fresh and new, like spring; and 3. youthful. At our recent Tales & Trails walk at WCT's Walker Conservation property, we had the pleasure of experiencing all three of these primary meanings in one wonderful event.

The Tales and Trails walk was held on a beautiful, blue-skied spring day (having been rescheduled after a spring snow!) The adults attending did feel fresh and renewed by the weather and by being with the children who were participating. Finally, the kids had a great time learning about the vernal pool, even (especially?) with getting their feet wet, all with vernal enthusiasm. The vernal pool on the Walker property is a wonderful example of a fascinating natural phenomenon — organisms live in vernal pools that appear in the spring and then, as the season progresses and the pool shrinks and dries up, the organisms transition to living without water for the rest of the year. Many of the endangered species in Massachusetts reproduce only in vernal pools like this one.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to you for helping WCT in our acquisition of the Drummer Cove Link Lot. The property is now protected and open to the public to enjoy for perpetuity. With the assistance of Cape Cod AmeriCorps members, neighbors and other volunteers from around town, we will soon have the trail fully cleared. I also want to say a special thank you for a particular gift. Just as we were about to take the risk of contracting the link lot purchase, we received notice of a bequest from a former loyal member. She will never know how helpful that was, but we are deeply grateful to her and her family.

In addition to these kinds of financial support, your donations of land are vital to our ability to fulfill our mission to protect this beautiful place that we all love. This is your conservation trust. Thanks for all your support. I hope to see you at our Annual Meeting on August 20th, and please never hesitate to be in touch.

Sincerely,

Dennis O'Connell, President/Trustee  
508-349-2162 • [dennyc@comcast.net](mailto:dennyc@comcast.net)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

We appreciate your donation using the enclosed envelope.



# WELLFLEET CONSERVATION TRUST

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[www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org](http://www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org)

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The Wellfleet Conservation Trust is an IRS  
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