

Nantucket Land Bank

JANUARY 2023

NEWSLETTER



Conservation,
recreation, and
agriculture for the
benefit of the public
in perpetuity

**CLIMATE CORNER: 19
EAST CREEK SALT MARSH**

**PROPERTY SPOTLIGHT:
LONG POND LANDING**

**STAFF SPOTLIGHT: JESSE
BELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

2022: YEAR IN REVIEW

Marsh Migration & More: Building Resilience through Planning and Design

One year ago, the Land Bank purchased a 1-acre lot at 19 East Creek Road. The property currently contains a private dwelling and a dock extending into the Creeks salt marsh. With the help of SCAPE landscape architecture studio, the Land Bank has big plans to transform this property into an inclusive waterfront park that builds resiliency by restoring and enhancing native coastal habitats.

To achieve these goals, one of the first steps will be to remove the existing house and driveway on the property – a strategy known as “retreat” in coastal resiliency planning. However, this story does not end in retreat. Instead, the

Land Bank is proposing to replace the dwelling with an overlook deck which will include a direct, accessible connection to the adjacent Our Island Home facility. All areas of decking and boardwalk paths will be elevated on pilings to enable salt marsh migration over time. The goal was to utilize the property’s unique vantage point to design an inclusive public space that showcases the spectacular natural beauty of the creeks, thereby creating an intergenerational waterfront experience for everyone to share and enjoy.

This project also includes habitat restoration measures aimed at enhancing the adjacent salt marsh and coastal bank which will, by extension, contribute to the park’s resilience. Given this site’s proximity to the water’s edge, accounting and designing for sea level rise is critical. All boardwalk elevations have been adapted to accommodate projected high tides to the year 2070, which is an increase of 7.5 feet in sea level, as well as inundation from anticipated storm events.



The proposed boardwalk and deck are designed to minimize environmental impact along the shoreline, allowing for revitalization of the salt marsh. In addition to their scenic and ecological value, salt marshes have enormous capacity for carbon sequestration and flood storage, making them key “green infrastructure” components of resilient coastlines. The boardwalk will be lifted above grade to allow for water to flow freely underneath, which both reduces risk of inundation and allows for naturally occurring processes such as marsh migration.

Marsh migration takes place as sediment accretes underneath plant growth, causing the marsh to rise in elevation. However, sea level rise has begun to outpace this accretion, meaning that marshes must migrate landward faster in order to survive. Shoreline development

directly landward of salt marshes prevents this migration, reducing or eliminating the resilient benefits that marshes can provide.

As we continue to witness the impacts of sea level rise and erosion on our shorelines, we must be open minded to considering innovative and integrative approaches to adaptation. Through stewardship of its downtown waterfront properties, the Land Bank aims to lead by example in this arena. Our goal is to design spaces that prioritize public access to the water in a way that enhances and restores natural ecosystems so they can buffer and absorb flooding. We hope to inspire other waterfront property owners to engage in comprehensive planning, collaborate with their neighbors, share strategies and ideas, and help make a resilient future for Nantucket become a reality.

Property Spotlight: Long Pond Landing

We are still celebrating the opening of Long Pond Landing, the Land Bank's new ADA accessible park, walkway, and pier at 48 South Cambridge Street in Madaket! The Land Bank purchased this property in 2015 with the goal of improving public access to Long Pond. On December 17, 2023, we held a ribbon cutting at the property, officially opening it for public use. Long Pond Landing is a 140-foot wooden pier that extends over the pond and facilitates access for boating, birdwatching, and other recreational activities. From beginning to end this project was seven years in the making, so we are thrilled to finally deliver it to the community!

From the gravel parking lot with a dedicated ADA space, visitors may wind their way along a gently sloping ADA compliant path leading down to the dock, passing a set of benches along the way. No matter where you are in this park, you are guaranteed unparalleled panoramic views of the pond!



Sitting on the pier feels like you are immersed in Long Pond, perfectly positioned to study the abundant wildlife that inhabits the surrounding ecosystem. The wetland vegetation bordering the pond contains thickets of shrubs and cattails, providing ideal habitat for songbirds. Across the pond from the pier is an osprey pole, allowing visitors to observe ospreys fishing, nest-building, and caring for their young. This cornucopia attracts a host of other birds that call Long Pond their home, including many waterfowl. If you're lucky, you might catch a glimpse of a snapping turtle as well, but remember not to feed them, because it can make them aggressive and put them at risk for disease.

Long Pond Landing also has ladders off the pier for kayakers and other non-motorized boaters to pull up, take a rest from their paddling, and savor the view. Beyond the pier, 48 South Cambridge Street serves as an entrance to Head of the Plains, a remarkable patchwork of over 1,000 acres of conservation land jointly owned by the Land Bank and the Nantucket Conservation Foundation. There are miles of trails winding through grasslands and shrublands, drawing visitors all the way down to the beach or Clark's Cove if they choose. Plan your next Madaket adventure today to explore Head of the Plains and soak in fresh views of Long Pond afterwards!



If you visit Long Pond Landing and take a photo, post it on Instagram and tag @nantucketlandbank! We love to see people exploring Land Bank properties, and hearing what they love most about them.

Staff Spotlight: Jesse Bell

Jesse Bell started work at the Nantucket Land Bank in 2005 as a temporary employee and 18 years later she is now our Executive Director! We sat down with her to learn more about her background, her work as Executive Director, and what she loves most about working at the Land Bank.

Tell us a little about your background. Where did you grow up? Where and what did you study?

I grew up in Bergen County, New Jersey, a suburb of New York. I went to college at the University of Vermont (UVM), and then went to Vermont Law School to get my law degree as well as my Master of Studies in Environmental Law. Studying at UVM is probably where my love of nature began. I lived in Vermont year-round for 8 years and we would hike, ski and swim constantly. In law school I lived in a bucolic setting on a beautiful property in the mountains with a pond. I went to law school because I wanted to protect the environment, and I knew this type of advocacy was only going to become more important in the future. I have a son who is a senior in high school, a daughter who is a freshman in high school, a 10-year-old daughter who is turning my house into a gymnastics studio, and a 13-year-old dog named Ringo. They keep me busy for sure!



What are your main priorities for the Land Bank?

Right now we are focused on planning for the future. Our parcels are starting to connect and come together in a way that we’re able think about waterfront areas on a larger scale, allowing us to consider design strategies and ideas we weren’t able to before. The challenge is always how do we create public access to the water (which is important to our economy and quality of life) in an environmentally sensitive way that’s accessible, resilient and in keeping with Nantucket’s unique character. Over the next 5 to 10 years, I would like to see our Washington Street plans start to come to fruition, in addition to expanding our agricultural footprint, and taking on outdoor recreational projects that have been requested by the community.

If you have a recreation idea you want to see on island, email director@nantucketlandbank.org and we’ll put it on our wish list!

What is the most interesting thing about your work?

I absolutely love my job because I believe in the Land Bank program and see first-hand what it does for the island. I know I’m biased but from where I sit I can really appreciate it. I get to work with an incredibly talented group of people who feel the same way and are super dedicated. We’ve gained valuable experience from prior projects and gotten good at assembling design teams and engaging community members in the planning process. It’s rewarding when we open a new park, or dock, or provide a new recreational amenity or farm. The work we do is so fulfilling, I couldn’t ask for a better job.

What is your favorite Land Bank property and why?

I have to say it is probably Smooth Hummocks. There was a time in my life where I ran out there almost every day. The sunrise comes up over the pond, and it’s just unbelievable, like a religious experience. It’s globally rare habitat out there, so that’s pretty special, and it’s always been a place where I process emotions and vent about life with friends. We always say, “what gets said in Smooth Hummocks stays in Smooth Hummocks.” Ha!



What do you most want people to know about the Land Bank?

We are a community organization that is staffed and governed by year-round local people – all of whom care deeply about Nantucket. We collaborate frequently with individual community members, local non-profits and town departments on various initiatives and try to help where we can when it is in our capacity to do so. Everything we do is for this community, and we advocate hard for public interests where we see a role for the Land Bank to play. We not only purchase land but we also purchase public easements that lead to the water and provide additional access to our trail systems. We take a very long-range view of things here, often thinking about the future beyond our lifetimes.

2022 Year in Review!

2022 was a remarkable year for the Land Bank! Public water access was a primary focus of Land Bank acquisition activity last calendar year, representing 9 out of 15 land purchases. Several of these properties have existing docks with grandfathered or licensed rights that will facilitate the permitting of improvements for public use. We also purchased a new agricultural property, Berry Patch Farm, and a few conservation properties with generous contributions from neighborhood residents. In total we acquired 49 acres and over 2,000 feet of shoreline! Some of these properties will require some work to be ready for public use but with the concepts we're envisioning they are all going to be amazing additions to the island.

A Memorable Cross Island Hike

This year, we hosted our 3rd annual cross island hike, which was full of familiar faces, a fresh new route, and lots of Halloween candy to keep our hikers fueled! Over 90 people joined us at the beginning of the 18.9-mile course, which began at Tom Nevers and ended at Settler's Landing. This year's course crossed Land Bank, Nantucket Conservation Foundation, Town of Nantucket, and Department of Conservation and Recreation properties. We already are looking forward to what 2023's Cross Island Hike has in store!



Growing the Land Bank Family

We were lucky to be joined by four new employees!



Claire O'Connor
Encroachment
& Conservation
Restriction Manager



Emily Goldstein
Murphy
Research Ecologist



Elizabeth Phelps
Permitting
Assistant



Emma Kantola
Communications &
Outreach
Coordinator

Expanding our Agricultural Impact

In 2022, the Land Bank made progress in expanding local agriculture. We partnered with the American Farmland Trust to learn more about how we can work toward our goal of ecologically responsible and regenerative agriculture on Land Bank properties. One result of this collaboration is our recently published Request for Responses, calling all interested farmers to apply to farm our property at 19 Wauwinet Road. We are so excited to work with our local farmers and see this property blossom into another small farm on-island! Stay tuned for more updates on our agricultural progress in 2023!

Download the ACKTrails App
by scanning the QR code. More
trails being added this year!



Coast to Coast Seniors Walk

One of our new favorite series kicked off this year: Coast-to-Coast walks for seniors in partnership with Nantucket Conservation Foundation (NCF). This series breaks up the Coast-to-Coast trail into bite sized sections so all can enjoy, with the benefit of having seasoned professionals, Guthrie Diamond from the Land Bank and Neil Foley from NCF, guide each walk to answer all your nature questions! This year a group of about 12 seniors joined us to hike 24.7 miles over the span of 7 walks. Thank you to everyone who joined us on this adventure!

