



Nantucket Land Bank



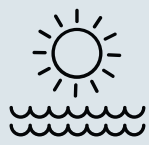
September 2021 Newsletter



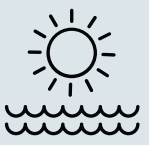
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Coastal Resilience and the Land Bank



September is Climate Change Awareness Month on Nantucket! As a small island, our community is particularly vulnerable to the immediate effects of climate change. These impacts present themselves in many ways: sea level rise, increased flooding events, erosion, and more frequent and intense storms. However, climate change is an all-encompassing issue that threatens nearly all aspects of life, including our built infrastructure, historical heritage, natural environment, access to critical resources, and local economy, to name a few.

As the threats of climate change become more apparent, island stakeholders are having more and more conversations about how our community will respond to this crisis. Notably, the Town of Nantucket has partnered with Arcadis, a design and engineering consulting firm, to create the island's first comprehensive Coastal Resiliency Plan. This will result in very valuable information and recommendations for everyone on Nantucket, and it is becoming clear that we all have an important role to play in improving Nantucket's climate resiliency.



While the seriousness of these threats cannot be overstated, the Land Bank is excited by the opportunity presented in these challenges. As a significant landholder on the island, we have the potential to be heavily involved in resiliency solutions. Our waterfront property and other valuable natural resources such as wetlands, salt marshes, and dunes provide us with a unique opportunity to help manage and adapt to rising sea levels. As an open space organization, we are particularly interested in the idea that recreation and a resilient waterfront can both be achieved in public parks that incorporate nature-based solutions to climate change.

The renderings below by Kleinfelder-Stoss were created as a component of the Climate Ready Boston project and depict a resilient East Boston waterfront park. Climate Ready Boston has developed several examples of waterfront parks that maximize absorption capacity and incorporate flood pathways for storm events. Construction of at least two of these parks, Langone Park / Poupolo Playground in the North End and Moakley Park in South Boston, is underway.



As is the case in Boston, integrating rising tides and increased storm surge into waterfront infrastructure are important components of Nantucket's adaptation to climate change. The question at the Land Bank is how do we do that? The image of the East Boston park when it is flooded would suggest that the water has simply inundated the area. However, the islands of marsh and the hardened seawall combine to slow wave energy and prevent erosion. Similarly, the gradual increase in elevation moving away from the shoreline is also a mechanism for structuring where flood waters end up. These subtle design elements can provide protection and aesthetically pleasing open spaces for the public to enjoy.

With all of this in mind, the Land Bank is having conversations and thinking about how coastal resilience can and should impact our decisions in terms of projects we decide to take on and properties we may acquire. We have contracted with the Woods Hole Group to examine flood predictions on specific to Land Bank parcels and to assist with prioritizing and designing future projects. The information the Woods Hole Group is providing will inform our decisions, so we are able to mindfully contribute to a resilient Nantucket.

Property Spotlight

Easy Street Park



In honor of Climate Change Awareness Month, we are highlighting our recently completed Easy Street Park. The Land Bank acquired the properties at 27 & 21 Easy Street in 2015 and 2017 and worked with Michael Van Valkenberg Architecture to create the beautiful, waterfront park you can visit today.

A stone's throw from the Steamship Authority Port in the heart of downtown, Easy Street Park was designed with climate change in mind. Features such as an elevated boardwalk, open seating, and mounded garden beds with native vegetation accentuate the Land Bank's mission of creating resilient waterfront public parks.

In this location, resilience equates to flood tolerance. To that end, the park contains a number of features that accommodate salt and freshwater. The boardwalk is elevated, leaving space beneath for water retention during large rain events, storm surge, or high tide flooding. The sloped garden beds contain enough soil to keep the plants happy and healthy, but rest on top of a layer of sand. This sand layer drains quickly and will expedite the drainage of residual flood waters. The garden beds are bursting with native and flood-tolerant vegetation, all of which has an increased capacity to withstand coastal weather events. Shrubs such as sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*),

chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), and beach plum (*Prunus maritima*) are water and salt tolerant, which is essential in an exposed location such as this. Lastly, the Easy Street Park includes a mural of historic flood events, symbolic waypoints of record high water levels during major storms. This



display is meant to raise awareness about the past, present, and potential future impacts of climate change on Nantucket, as we work towards a more resilient island.

This property is of course free and open to the public, promoting scenic access to the waterfront and Nantucket Harbor. It is the perfect spot to stop and enjoy a coffee or ice cream with unrestricted views of bustling marine activity. As you engage with climate change awareness this month, make sure to check out the Easy Street Park!



Meet Cameron Covill:

Seasonal Ecology & Land Management Technician

Since early May, Cameron Covill has worked as our Ecology & Land Management Technician. As the season winds down, we sat down with him to reflect on his experience with the Land Bank!

Tell me about yourself? Where did you grow up and travel as a kid?

I am 23 years old. I grew up in East Windsor, Connecticut, located in the north central part of the state and close to the Massachusetts state line. I have an older sister. I spent most of my time outside, doing a lot of hiking. We also did a lot of geocaching. Most vacations were around New England, like trips to Maine or to visit relatives in Vermont. One of my favorite trips was a hike up Mt Ascutney in Vermont. Up top, you have incredible panoramic views of the region like Okemo, Killington, the Green and White Mountains.

What drew you to the Land Bank and how would you describe your job?

I went to Westfield State University where I studied environmental science and wildlife ecology. After graduating in 2020, I worked at the Belchertown Conservation Commission which entailed a lot paperwork, and I started looking for a position that would involve outdoor field work. I started in May assisting Guthrie Diamond, the Land Bank's Field Ecologist. I do a lot of rare plant surveys with the goal of assessing our property management and seeing how we can promote healthy plant communities. I also do some wetland delineations for permitting, and invasive plant removal.

What is the most interesting thing about your work for the Land Bank? How do you anticipate it will benefit you in future professional endeavors?

Although I had a wildlife minor in college, I didn't study a lot of plant biology and identification. Guthrie has helped me build a mental checklist of how to identify a plant using dichotomous keys. I have enjoyed learning how to recognize so many plants. I have a framework to build off of now for different pieces of plant structures. The experience and knowledge gained will definitely help in future similar jobs.



What is your favorite Land Bank property and why?

It would be Smooth Hummocks, maybe because it is closest to where I live so I spend the most time there. It is a prime example of a globally rare sandplain grassland habitat with rare species not often seen together. Coastlines are disappearing due to erosion and grasslands require a lot of management. This area is also home to a lot of my favorite beaches. I have really enjoyed my job and living on island for these last few months. I will definitely come back to visit Nantucket every now and then.