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Summer 2018

A Hidden Coastal Treasure: *Yankee Magazine's* Ode to the Farm Coast

A hidden beauty, indeed. *Yankee Magazine's* 14-page cover story on the Farm Coast (July/August 2018) begins with a tour of Tiverton Land Trust's signature Pardon Gray Preserve, led by our own Wayne Browning. A two-page photo spread of Bill Hathaway on his tractor follows. Then on to Tiverton Four Corners, Fogland Farm Studio, the artists of Little Compton, and the beaches of Westport and

Dartmouth. Lest we become inured to our local vistas, author Annie Graves reminds us, "...this landscape is its own kind of artwork. Water views slide in where you least expect them. Also where you fully expect them." It's well worth protecting. Thanks to all our members and friends who help preserve "the rural character and scenic beauty of Tiverton for generations to come."



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President's Message

Welcome to your Tiverton Land Trust summer newsletter. There is so much happening—and it's all thanks to *you*.

- New properties
- Trail mapping
- Cub Scouts and bat boxes
- New Board member Scott DeMello, and
- **A Country Day at Pardon Gray!**

With your support, we've been working hard this spring and summer to complete acquisition of the 40-acre Manchester property off Main Road. This critical parcel continues our efforts to protect Pocasset Ridge, part of the largest unfragmented forest east of Narragansett Bay. An article in the *East Bay News* last February provided welcome exposure for our efforts, and spurred generous donations from friends old and new. In spite of our matching grant from DEM, we're still approximately \$100,000 short of our goal, and had to use bridge funding to complete the purchase. Please, if you haven't yet made a gift, or you are thinking about making another, now is the time! We are so grateful to our partners Tiverton Open Space Commission, DEM, The Nature Conservancy and others.

We are very pleased to welcome new board member Scott DeMello. Scott is a long-time Tiverton resident, a practicing attorney and a talented photographer. Scott took the cover photo on our Annual Report as well as several photos in this newsletter. Thanks also to Ginger Lacy, who is leading the effort to map all of Tiverton's public trails—18 miles so far. The stunning brochure is nearly ready, and will be mailed to all TLT members this fall. Finally, please save the date for **A Country Day at Pardon Gray** on Saturday, September 15th (rain date the 16th). If you missed the July/August issue of *Yankee Magazine*, it featured a terrific article about the Farm Coast, with a photo of Bill Hathaway haying and quotes from former TLT board member Wayne Browning. We know it's a wonderful place, and now readers of YM do too. We hope to see you at A Country Day, if not before on one of our properties this summer. In the meantime, thank you for your continued support.

Eric Watne, President



TLT's Annual Community Forum



Dr. Lucy Spelman

If the animals are healthy, so are the humans and the environment. This was the take-home message from TLT's community forum, held at the Tiverton Public Library on April 19. Dr. Lucy Spelman, a wildlife veterinarian who teaches at RISD, was keynote speaker.

Because only one-third of Americans are “science literate,” Spelman launched an organization called “Creature Conserve” to foster public support for animal conservation by bringing artists and scientists together. Artists can learn the science and use the visual arts to engage a broader community. Imaginative prints, sculptures, and animated features from Spelman's students illustrated this point.

Spelman's current work focuses on animals in danger because of conflict with human activity. For instance, in Guyana jaguars prey on cattle because

villages are moving closer, and humans have eaten the capybaras, their customary food. But Spelman is optimistic. Humans are problem-solvers, and we know many of the solutions—we just need to fund them. In fact, she is curating an exhibit this summer and fall on *Urban Wildlife: Learning to Co-exist*. Its purpose is “to help more people understand that humans and animals are interdependent, and that our continued success depends on a diverse and healthy animal kingdom.” (See creatureconserve.com for more information)

Another highlight of the evening was the Volunteer of the Year Award, which Sue Thayer-Kramers presented to Eileen Browning. “Eileen is the glue that holds the Pardon Gray Day committee together. She listens quietly and is the calming, diplomatic force in the room. She keeps us moving forward and even finds time to bring snacks. All this she does with a delightful smile.”



Eileen Browning, Volunteer of the Year, with Sue Thayer-Kramers

New Bat Boxes at Pardon Gray

At TLT's June board meeting, the Webelos of Tiverton/Little Compton Cub Scout Pack 10 presented a set of bat boxes they had constructed, led by den leaders Anthony Simas and Kelly Duda. The project was part of an elective adventure pin called *Build It*, where scouts learn about different types of tools and develop woodworking skills, along with proper safety techniques. Home Depot in Somerset, MA generously donated the materials. The scouts also studied bat behavior, habitat and the beneficial impact of bats on insect control and the environment. They explained to board members how the boxes were constructed to maximize their appeal, comfort and safety for the bats. You can see the craftsmanship of these bat boxes on trees bordering Pardon Gray Preserve.



Left to Right: Alexander Monkevicz, Aiden Simas, Adam Marley, Kelly Duda, Anthony Simas, Evan Duda, Nick Duda and TLT President Eric Watne. Absent is Zach Lindstrom, whose sister Aubrey also helped him build his house.

Pocasset Ridge: Birding Alert

(From Garry Plunkett's email to colleagues on March 12, 2018, adapted here with permission)

Hi Friends,

Just passing on a gratifying experience at the recent RI Land & Water Summit. I attended a presentation on the ongoing RI Breeding Bird Atlas project, involving a multi-year data collection/analysis of bird species. I must confess to a swelling of the chest as slide after slide showed population data with species concentrations in the East Bay area—including of course, you know where—our Pocassetlands forest complex!

It wasn't a surprise. Introductory slides showed RI's critically important habitats, e.g. large, contiguous forests for interior nesting birds, and prominently featured was the large, preserved Tiverton canopy. Then, the presenter pointed out the importance of coastal areas, a superhighway of migratory flocks. By this time I'm feeling smug.

On it went—concentrations of data points in our forest block, a rise in pileated woodpeckers attributed to large areas of aging hardwood forests, a



big majority of RI ovenbird sightings, and the only Kentucky Warbler ever seen in RI. All of this pointed to Tiverton.

Folks, it's been a privilege watching this unfold over the years, and now getting nearer to "closing the deal" by securing the remaining properties. It's been an honor working alongside all of you.

Garry

Above and left: Birds of the interior forest — Scarlet Tanager and Black-throated Blue Warbler. Below: Bobolink, a ground nester.



News Flash: Bobolinks have been sighted in the hayfields at Pardon Gray Preserve! These migrating ground nesters are among our most vulnerable bird species. Populations are declining due to rapid loss of habitat—they need at least 10 acres of

open, grassy fields to raise their young. Nestlings will perish if hayfields are mowed before they fledge in August. The fields at Pardon Gray Preserve have been intentionally managed for ground nesting habitat. Now, we are seeing results.



Grade 1 students from Westport's Macomber School learn about vernal pools at Pardon Gray Preserve. The outdoor science curriculum was developed by Westport River Watershed Association.

The Nature of Americans

Biophilia, a term coined by E.O. Wilson and Stephen Kellert, among others, means ‘love of life’ and suggests that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life.

The Biophilia Hypothesis goes something like this:

As a species, we’ve evolved for more than 99% of our history in adaptive response to the natural world, not artificial or human-created forces. Therefore, our senses, emotions, and even our intellect reflect an inherent affiliation with other living organisms.

Do you believe it? Do you believe this effect is still active in us today?

In April 2017, amidst a flurry of news coverage on ‘forest bathing’ and the positive health effects of spending time in nature, a study entitled *The Nature of Americans* was released by a public-private collaborative led by D.J. Case & Associates and involving federal and state agencies, non-governmental institutions and corporations. This study of more than 12,000 American adults and children sheds light on the changing relationship between Americans and the natural world.

First, a few facts about Americans today:

- 4 out of 5 of us live in suburbs or cities.
- We spend 90% of our time indoors.
- We devote 40–50 hours per week to electronic media.

It is no wonder that we feel disconnected from the natural world!

These cultural changes are reflected in how we experience nature. Here are the eight major findings from the report:

1. Americans face a significant gap between their interests in nature and their efforts, abilities, and opportunities to pursue those interests in their lives. ***More than half of nonwhite American adults think the outdoors are unsafe.***
2. Experiences in nature are deeply social. ***Friends and family influence the amount of time adults spend outdoors.***
3. Adults and children differ in where they locate unforgettable, authentic nature.
4. Access to nature is as much about the quality of places as their quantity.
5. Americans value nature in remarkably broad, diverse ways.
6. Americans support nature-related programming, funding and conservation.
7. Americans’ relationship with nature is complex and nuanced.
8. Americans receive tremendous benefit from experiences in nature.

The Nature of Americans initiative was launched to understand and connect Americans and nature. To learn more about study findings, the ways we are disconnected, and opportunities for reconnection, visit: natureofamericans.org

—Carol Lynn Trocki, Conservation Biologist
Mosaic Land Management, LLC



Looking across Nanaquaket Pond to Pocasset Ridge



When I pull into Pardon Gray Preserve ...there's a painterly cast to the early light sifting over the land, misty at the edges of the old Gray Family Historical Cemetery nestled into the fields.

~ Annie Graves, *Yankee Magazine*, July/August 2018

Please be generous in your support of the Tiverton Land Trust – as you have been in the past!

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Pardon Gray Preserve
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(Rain date September 16)

Saturday, September 15

A Country Day at Pardon Gray 2018

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OUR MISSION

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