



October 1, 2019

Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

Town of Wellfleet Board of Selectmen
Brian Carlstrom, Superintendent, Cape Cod National Seashore

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RE: Herring River Restoration Letter of Support

Margo Fenn
President

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) writes to express our strong support for the Herring River Restoration Project in Wellfleet.

Charles Sumner
Vice President

Bob Ciolek
Treasurer

Founded in 1968, APCC is the Cape Cod region’s leading nonprofit environmental advocacy and education organization. Representing thousands of members across Cape Cod, APCC’s mission is to promote policies and programs that foster the preservation of the Cape’s natural resources. APCC focuses its efforts on the protection of groundwater, surface water, and wetland resources, preservation of open space, the promotion of responsible, planned growth and the achievement of an environmental ethic.

Maureen O’Shea
Clerk

Michael Corrigan

DeeDee Holt

Thomas Huettner

One of APCC’s major program areas involves promoting and assisting in salt marsh restoration efforts on Cape Cod, and with good reason. Cape Cod has experienced a critical loss of salt marsh habitat. More than 7,000 acres—or 38 percent—of our salt marshes on Cape Cod have been lost or destroyed due to damming, dredging, filling, ditching and other human development activities.

Pat Hughes

Cheryl Lubin

Elysse Magnotto-Cleary

The loss of salt marshes also means the loss of the many valuable ecosystem functions they provide. For example:

Blue Magruder

Eliza McClennen

Stephen Mealy

- It is estimated that 75 percent of our commercially important fish and shellfish species depend on salt marsh habitat at some point in their life cycles for nurseries and as a source of food.
- Salt marshes attenuate storm flooding and provide a buffer against storm surges.
- Salt marshes filter pollutants from runoff and groundwater before they enter our estuaries.

Kris Ramsay

Robert Summersgill

Taryn Wilson

In addition, we are beginning to understand the significant role salt marshes play in mitigating the effects of climate change. Research shows that salt marshes are able to store more carbon per acre than tropical rain forests.

The Herring River Restoration Project has the potential to restore nearly 1,000 acres of salt marsh, reclaiming a substantial percentage of salt marsh habitat previously lost on

Cape Cod. It is a high priority restoration project for the Cape Cod National Seashore, the town of Wellfleet and many partner agencies and organizations. It has also been a priority project for APCC for many decades; APCC was one of the first voices calling for restoration of the Herring River in the 1970s.

The restoration project will significantly improve habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species that thrive in salt and brackish marsh environments. Salt marshes are among the most productive ecosystems on the planet and provide food, shelter, nesting sites and migratory habitat for many species of birds, mammals and reptiles. Restoring tides to the Herring River will enhance the quality and quantity of these resources and improve their resiliency in the face of increased threats by sea level rise and land-based pollution and encroachment.

By restoring twice-daily flushing with clean, high-salinity Cape Cod Bay water, the project will improve water quality, especially near the Herring River mouth, resulting in the likely re-opening and expansion of more than 100 acres of harvestable oyster beds.

The restoration will also restore several miles of river for fish passage as well as access to 160 pond acres for spawning. By providing improved fish passage, improved water quality and expanded habitat, the project will benefit all species of anadromous and catadromous fish, including river herring (alewife and blueback herring), hickory shad, white perch and American eel.

Technical direction for the project has come from a partnership of local, state and federal agencies in consultation with leading estuarine scientists from public, private and university sectors to ensure that the work is founded on a current and peer-reviewed knowledge base. Thanks to an ongoing commitment to public outreach and education on the part of project partners, the project has gained strong local and regional support, and is poised for successful permitting, funding and implementation.

For all the reasons cited above, APCC pledges its continued support of this critically important project to ensure that the full potential of the Herring River restoration is achieved.

Sincerely,



Andrew Gottlieb
Executive Director

cc: Congressman William Keating
Senator Julian Cyr
Representative Sarah Peake
Friends of Herring River