



June 4, 2014

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Executive Director

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Hal Minis, President
Brewster Conservation Trust
P.O. Box 268
Brewster, MA 02631

Dear Mr. Minis:

It is with great enthusiasm that the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) writes in support of the Brewster Conservation Trust's (BCT) proposal to establish the Bouchard Environmental Fund. The Fund—which would be established to promote the conservation, protection and stewardship of the natural resources of west Brewster and the Stony Brook/Quivett Creek watersheds—is an exciting proposal that will help ensure greater protection of this ecologically significant region of Cape Cod. It is also a fitting tribute to the memory of Diane Bouchard.

APCC looks forward to the opportunity to work in partnership with BCT under the research and education activities proposed in the Fund, and views such activities as a natural continuation of the efforts undertaken by APCC for the past twelve years in this area of Brewster.

Founded in 1968, APCC is the largest and oldest regional nonprofit environmental organization on Cape Cod. Representing more than 5,000 members, our mission is to promote policies and programs that foster the preservation of the natural resources of Cape Cod. 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. APCC's science-based work includes environmental advocacy, education, research and restoration in all 15 towns on the Cape Cod peninsula.

As you are aware, APCC has a long and successful history of actively collaborating with BCT and the town of Brewster to promote land conservation as well as watershed restoration and protection initiatives within the town. In recent years, much of our efforts in Brewster have focused on the Stony Brook watershed, where APCC has partnered with the town, the state and other organizations (including BCT) on restoration of the Stony Brook salt marsh and to improve habitat for river herring that migrate up Stony Brook to spawn in the freshwater ponds within the watershed.

In addition to acting as project manager for some of the Stony Brook salt marsh restoration efforts, APCC coordinated fish, bird, plant and salinity monitoring programs at Stony Brook, Freemans Pond and Quivett Creek to document the health of the marshes

3010 Main Street | P.O. Box 398 | Barnstable, MA 02630-0398
Tel: 508-362-4226 | info@apcc.org | www.apcc.org

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before and after restoration. APCC also coordinates volunteer herring counting programs at Stony Brook and Bound Brook (Quivett watershed) to monitor the populations of migrating alewife and blueback herring, both vital food web species that have declined across the Northeast in recent decades. APCC also assisted the town in obtaining resources to fix stormwater drainage into Stony Brook and Paines Creek Beach to improve water quality for fish and wildlife and aquatic ecosystems. Currently, APCC is working with the town to document coastal erosion and to develop coastal adaptation measures that will protect Brewster's important natural resources from the effects of sea level rise and climate change.

Our experience in this region also includes comprehensive documentation and mapping of the sensitive saltwater, freshwater and upland natural communities that are found within the watersheds. The information in this ongoing project is being provided to the state's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and will also be included in an update of APCC's *Cape Cod Critical Habitats Atlas*.

The Stony Brook and Quivett Creek watersheds provide outstanding examples of the value of using a holistic watershed approach to protection and restoration. They also provide excellent opportunities for continuing scientific and applied scientific research that will further our understanding of the natural ecosystems in these two watersheds. Such scientific research will improve the management and protection of these ecosystems, which include tidal flats, barrier beach, salt marsh, brackish and freshwater wetlands, riparian habitat, and wooded uplands. Because of the wealth of historical information and the significant baseline monitoring work on herring runs, salt marshes and natural communities already done as part of restoration and conservation activities, these watersheds provide a unique opportunity for advanced scientific research.

Examples of areas of scientific inquiry include, but are not limited to, the following questions: 1) How are these watersheds responding to restoration and conservation efforts? 2) Will restoration and conservation efforts lead to more resilient and healthy watersheds as climate change and coastal change occur? 3) How does biodiversity change along environmental gradients of elevation, hydrology, salinity and proximity to humans? 4) What are the keystone species in these ecosystems? and 5) How can we better protect and manage these ecosystems to optimize their health and increase their resiliency?

The answers to such questions and future data collected from research projects conducted in the Stony Brook/Quivett Creek watersheds will not only benefit the natural resources within those watersheds, but will also provide invaluable information that can be applied to similar conservation efforts elsewhere on Cape Cod and beyond.

Sincerely,



Ed DeWitt
Executive Director