

The Three Bays Monitor

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Dead Neck Island

In appreciation of our positive and successful stewardship of Dead Neck Island over the past several years, Mrs. Paul Mellon has recently deeded the 84-acre island to *Three Bays Preservation* in memory of her late husband.

Our organization will continue to consult with and work with *The Mass Audubon Coastal Waterbird Program*, which for many years has been a valuable partner in preserving and enhancing the island sanctuary.

In presenting the gift, Mrs. Mellon said “It gives new hope to the future to know it will be preserved not only for its beauty, but as a habitat for sea birds and rare species who seek this special environment for survival.”



*Dead Neck Island,
looking South West toward Cotuit*

Three Bays Preservation is deeply honored and grateful to have been so entrusted.

Rushy Marsh Pond

We continue to work with the Town of Barnstable to re-open Rushy Marsh Pond to the sea. This work in Cotuit is critical to improving the water quality and removing the invasive *Phragmites australis*, the common reed that is crowding out the native vegetation.

Our work profiling the shifting sands of the outer beach continues, with over 18 months of data now recorded. Water quality testing within the pond continues with a full schedule of 7 events during the current season. The water samples are analyzed for fecal coliform, nitrogen, nitrates, nitrites, salinity, pH, temperature and various nutrients, at both the Barnstable County Lab and SMAST in New Bedford.

Last year the Town installed an 18-inch pipe connecting the sound to the northern end of the pond. This has helped with drainage and has reduced flooding on Main Street. However, it is just a temporary fix while we continue to work toward a permanent solution.



Bay Street Channel Dredging

In our ongoing effort to open the Bay Street Channel from northern West Bay under the bridge and on to St. Mary's Island in North Bay, preliminary surveying was conducted this past spring to determine the width and depth of the existing channel. It appears that these channels are in better condition than once thought.

Data collection will be completed this September to determine the amount of material that needs to be removed. Disposal of the fine grained material continues to be the issue that must be resolved before any dredge work can begin. We will be applying for permits as soon as we have a suitable placement site for this material, provided there is sufficient fundraising for the permitting effort.

The actual dredge work could commence in the late fall of 2005 or early 2006, provided there are monies available for the dredge work.

[Click to view map](#)

Skunknett River

Working with *UMass Dartmouth's School of Marine Science and Technology (SMAST)* and the *Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program*, we are continuing research begun last year at the Skunknett River Wildlife Sanctuary into the removal of pollutants by natural fresh water wetlands.

This is a collaborative effort between the *Mass Audubon Society*, owners of the land, the *Town of Barnstable* and *Three Bays Preservation*. Together we are evaluating the ability of restored wetlands to remove polluting nitrogen using cost-effective natural processes. This is exciting research into what natural freshwater systems can do to remove harmful pollutants from stream flows before they enter the saltwater estuaries.

This pilot project and the data that is produced from it will be directly applicable to the larger wetlands system along the Marstons Mills River in our three bays watershed.