



## Wildlife Land Trust

Spring 2016

### Sometimes it takes a team....

“Orenda continues to play an important role in the complex partnerships we need to get land conservation done in the 21st Century,” said Mark Robinson, Executive Director of the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts. “We could not have attracted the state grant into this Mill Pond project without Orenda’s help”.

Orenda Wildlife Land Trust, partnered with the Town of Brewster, the Brewster Conservation Trust and the regional Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc. in bringing this project that included undevelopment forward. Two simultaneous purchases from adjoining landowners on the pond were arranged. Orenda purchased the vacant wooded lot from Timothy Birdsall and his wife Jillian Douglass while the Compact bought the dilapidated house from the Buehler family. Brewster Conservation Trust will tear down the house, pump and fill the septic system, remove invasive plants and an asphalt driveway, plant native vegetation and provide the first public access to Mill Pond. The Town Conservation Commission will hold conservation restrictions on both lots.



Photo by Liz Lewis

All smiles at the closing for the Douglass- Birdsall property, from Left to Right: Mark Robinson, Executive Director of the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Hal Minis, President Brewster Conservation Trust, Timothy Birdsall and his wife Jillian Douglass, land owners and Dave Tately, President of Orenda Wildlife Land Trust

This project contains valuable plant and wildlife habitat of wooded upland, freshwater wetlands and will help reach the wetlands goal to “preserve and restore the quality and quantity of inland and coastal wetlands and their buffers on Cape Cod”. Jillian Douglass has dedicated the protected property to her late mother Sharon Luley Douglass.

#### Look Inside:

- *Best time ever for conservation restrictions*
- *Welcome spring!  
Welcome pollinators!*
- *Schedule of upcoming events*
- *Orenda Song of Praise*

### Orenda offers scholarship at Cape Cod Community College



Once again, Orenda Wildlife Land Trust is pleased to offer a scholarship to a student that has interest in protecting and preserving the environment on Cape Cod.

The applicant must be currently matriculated in the Environmental Technology certificate program. The recipient will be invited to attend two meetings of the board during the school year.

We have had great response to the scholarship over the years and we enjoy supporting students that are dedicated to preserving the environment for generations to come.

# Welcome Spring and Pollinators too!

By Kim Amaral, Orenda Board Member

Last week I had the wonderful opportunity to visit the Boston Flower Show with my mother-in-law. Much like the seed catalogues that pile up in the mail, the annual flower show heralds the arrival of spring—despite any late-season snowstorms we might get on the actual first day of spring! While I won't be installing giant tumblers of tulips or massive stonescaping in my own yard any time soon, this annual tradition unveils the true meaning of spring to all gardeners: a fresh start in our gardens. Where to put the tomato plants this year? Should we expand the herb garden? Can we even grow artichokes here? (You can, with "Imperial Star" annual varieties.)

But all our planning, seed starting, and rearranging of the garden would be for naught if it weren't for those other seasonal visitors to our yards, the pollinators. Unfortunately, as you may know, honeybee populations are declining, dropping by more than 30%, according to the Centre for Research on Globalization in Montreal. Another recent report provided the first global assessment of the threats to pollinators, finding that 16% of vertebrate pollinator species like birds and bats are threatened with extinction, and at least 9% of bee and butterfly species are at risk. The report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services included an assessment by 80 specialists reviewing current studies on pollinators and environmental impacts, but in their findings could not point to one simple factor to explain pollinator decline. Rather, a complex list of issues may have a cumulative impact on these pollinators, including the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, genetically modified plants, intensive agricultural practices that eliminate native wildflowers, and climate change. The cumulative effect of these could weaken hives and make bees more susceptible to parasites and disease.

Because this is such a complex issue, that leaves us gardeners with a suite of options to help protect these important organisms in our own backyard. Here are just a few options:

- Plant native plants, trees and shrubs.
- Reduce lawns and expand the natural areas of your yard.
- Cultivate a "PC" (pollinator-conscious) backyard by eliminating pesticides or using safer ones, such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt).
- Choose plants from local nurseries that don't treat seeds with neonicotinoid pesticides, which kill all insects by attacking the central nervous system.

- Since 70% of bee species nest in the ground, allow some areas of your yard to remain dry, bare and undisturbed, providing overwintering and nesting spots for pollinators. Also consider leaving some stumps and dead wood in your yard, as the other 30% of native bees nest in stump and snag tunnels.
- Make or purchase a mason bee house or similar "bee hotel" with stacked, narrow tubes. Siting the bee house is important to avoid wasps taking up residence there, so avoid placing it in the shade, and have it face southeast since bees like to warm up in the morning before heading out to gather pollen.
- You might even wish to expand beyond your yard by advocating for more native plantings in public spaces or community and school gardens.

So while you're gearing up for your own fresh start in your garden, perhaps you can try some of these suggestions to give your neighborhood pollinators a "head start." And if you don't get to all of these this year, there is always next spring!

Sources: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/27/science/decline-of-species-that-pollinate-poses-a-threat-to-global-food-supply-report-warns.html>  
<http://www.ipbes.net/work-programme/pollination>  
"A Buzzworthy Cause" by Crystal Rennicke, *Birds and Blooms*, Feb/Mar 2016.

## Visit Orenda at upcoming events!

### BREWSTER CONSERVATION DAY

at Drummer Boy Park  
Rte. 6A Brewster  
July 9th 9:30am to 2pm

*Many exhibits for conservationists environmentalists and history buffs. Activities for children too!*

### CAPE COD WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

at Mass Audubon's Long Pasture Sanctuary  
Bone Hill Rd. Cummaquid  
September 10th 10am-3pm

*Also for conservationists: Meet Environmental organizations from the Cape and beyond. Exhibits and activities for children, live animal presentation, live music.*

# Best time ever for conservation restrictions

By Mark H. Robinson, *The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc.*

If you have ever thought about preserving your land, now is the time to act. Congress renewed a remarkable piece of tax legislation, enabling private landowners to reap enhanced incentives for donating permanent conservation restrictions (CRs) on their properties.

A primer on these restrictions: you do not give up title to the land; you still own it; you can sell it or give it to heirs; you agree to relinquish the right to build houses on some or all of it, or agree to preserve resource areas (such as buffer zones to wetlands or a scenic view); you negotiate the terms of the CR to retain your customary uses or future needs; you do not need to allow public access; the CR must be done in perpetuity to receive tax breaks; some outside entity must hold the CR, usually a Town ConsCom or a non-profit land trust; the holder has a right to monitor the land annually and enforce the terms.

The new tax law accelerates and extends the tax benefits. A CR donation provides a bigger tax break each year and extends the length of time to enjoy it. Previously, CR donors could only deduct a maximum of 30 percent of their income each year for six years to use up the deduction. Often for lower-income taxpayers, the deduction (difference between the value of the land with and without the restriction) might have been too large to consume as a six-year deduction.

Now, completed CR will allow donors to deduct 50 percent of their income each year for 16 years. The extra ten years should help to use up all or most of the deduction. You might not be leaving some of the deduction “on the table” as before.

One example: a landowner with annual income of \$100,000 has a property worth \$1,000,000. She donates a CR to the local land trust on the property. She keeps title and privacy and

management control, but extinguishes certain development rights, such as subdivision potential. The property still has some value as part of her estate, say, \$200,000. The difference of \$800,000 is the charitable deduction for federal income taxes. Under the old CR tax rule, this deduction would provide \$45,000 in saved income taxes over six years. With the new rule, she will have \$200,000 in saved taxes over 16 years. Such is the potential power of the new rule.

Qualified properties can also receive up to \$75,000 in a state income tax refundable credit for CR donations or bargain sales.

The Town benefits as well from CR donations. The land stays on the tax rolls, though usually at a lower value. The Town is not responsible for maintaining the land and the costs thereof. The community enjoys the retention of open space without having to buy it. The Selectmen have discretion to approve or reject each application for a restriction, based on the significance of the parcel and the negotiated terms to protect it.

Many landowners wish never to develop their property and argue the town assessor should not treat their land for its subdivision potential. But the assessor is bound by law to value it for its “highest economic use” without regard to intention. A CR enables the owner to express his intentions legally and obligates the assessor to consider a reduction. And any reduction does not result in “lost” tax revenue; it simply shifts it imperceptibly onto all other properties.

*Mark H. Robinson has served as the Executive Director of The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts since 1986. He has guided over 300 conservation restrictions to completion. Contact [mark@thecomact.net](mailto:mark@thecomact.net).*



Orenda Wildlife Land Trust board members attend SE Mass Land Trust Convocation on January 30th...back row: left to right Dan Morast, Vice President, Diane Salomone, Board member Front row: left to right; Lida Miner, Board Member, Liz Lewis, Administrator, Dave Tately, President, Dick Boyden, Land Stewardship Chairman.

*Photo by Farley Lewis*



# Orenda Song of Praise

Every seed that sends down roots  
and puts out leaves to greet the sun  
honors its Orenda.

Every fish that swims upstream  
or keeps to shallows near the shore  
honors its Orenda.

Every bird that spreads its wings  
and rides the currents of the air  
honors its Orenda.

Every beast the forest knows  
that bears its young in lair or den  
honors its Orenda.

The people of the Iroquois  
walking proud upon the earth  
honor their Orenda.

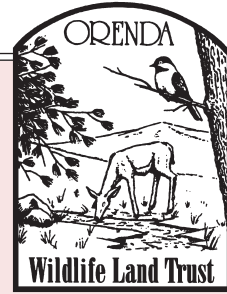
Now we praise the Maker of Life  
who from His own Orenda  
made blade of grass and mighty oak,

creatures wearing gills and fins,  
feathered beings that can fly,  
fox and deer and wolf and mouse,  
and all the Longhouse People,  
to each He gave a spirit self: Orenda.



Photo by Leah Servis

View of the pond from the Nelson House.



## ORENDA WILDLIFE LAND TRUST

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Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

### Orenda's Mission

*Orenda Wildlife Land Trust's  
mission is to protect wildlife and their habitat.  
By purchase and gift,  
Orenda acquires land to be held  
in perpetuity as protected  
open space wildlife sanctuaries.*

**All contributions to  
Orenda Wildlife Land Trust  
are tax-deductible under  
federal regulations.**



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