

### Every Precious Parcel

In late summer, Orenda Wildlife Land Trust swapped land with the Barnstable Land Trust (BLT.) We gave BLT ten acres next to their headquarters in West Barnstable. In return, BLT gifted Orenda the parcel next to Smiths Dock and the Margaret Wyman Sanctuary. The agreement also includes future acreage that will link other Orenda sanctuaries in West Barnstable. These areas abut properties in Orenda's existing land portfolio.

Contiguous holdings are a big deal within the land trust industry. These larger corridors allow wildlife to migrate through natural habitat that includes uplands, forests, marshes and other ecosystems.

Now BLT's Conservation Center is embraced by its own open space that includes a two-acre pond. And we were happy to help make this happen for our close collaborators.

What's special about this transaction is that the land Orenda received from BLT was originally gifted to BLT by Charles and Barbara Birdsey. The Birdsey's founded Orenda in 1986. You might say that this deal means a bit of Orenda has come full circle. The Birdsey's also helped jumpstart BLT. "Dave and I are happy to have been involved in the formation of these two organizations," said Barbara. "This land swap represents a convenience for both organizations and allows for more contiguous land, which helps support wildlife habitat."

It's a bit unusual for land trusts to swap parcels. But Orenda and BLT are forward-thinking, like-minded organizations that recognized that this particular swap made for good common sense. "The land swap was the idea of Kenneth Burnes, Orenda's longtime board member and treasurer," said Theresa Barbo, Orenda's executive director.

It's a busy time at Orenda. This Fall is no exception. We have several land deals in the pipeline. Since we don't want



*Land that includes uplands and marsh on Meadow Lane in West Barnstable is back in the Orenda Portfolio, thanks to the swap with BLT. Image Courtesy of Barnstable Land Trust.*

to jinx anything we'll stay quiet for now. But do stay tuned to our website at [orendalandtrust.org](http://orendalandtrust.org) for updates.

What we can share is that Orenda was recently gifted a special parcel in Cotuit. It's only a half-acre. But to us it's priceless. The land is at 76 Cheoh Road. It's a heavily wooded upland area abutting a wetland in the middle of a quiet neighborhood. Songbirds nest there. Mammals burrow in and live there. Other wildlife just pass through. It's picture-perfect.

A group of neighbors pooled funds to buy the half-acre and donate it for conservation. Orenda was thrilled to accept. We are grateful to the neighbors who purchased the land at 76 Cheoh Road. They are Leonard and Georgette Davis; Robert F. Hayden IV; Douglas Kneale; Lisa Nagel; and Francis Quinn. We'll be in touch with these generous folks and figure out what they want to name this brand-new wildlife sanctuary! If they so choose, we'll also have a special dedication ceremony, too.

On Cape Cod where open space is shrinking by the day every parcel, no matter how large or small, is critical to our mission to preserve open space for wildlife habitats.

### Orenda's first sanctuary celebrates 30 year anniversary of protection

Thirty years ago, Charles Birdsey donated nine acres near Great Marsh in West Barnstable to Orenda—the first property donated to this organization. Once a farm, the Cedars Sanctuary is dominated by cedar trees, mature red maples, birch and apple trees. Two large wetlands measuring an acre hold water for most of the year. Wildlife thrives in Cedars Sanctuary. Raccoons, red fox, moles, skunks, coyotes, white-tailed deer, squirrels

and songbirds live there. In May 2010 Cedars Sanctuary was re-dedicated in honor of John Grandy, Ph.D. John is a long-time friend to Orenda and Executive Director of the Pegasus Foundation. Pegasus is dedicated to animal welfare.





## A Note from the Executive Director



By Theresa M. Barbo

Each wildlife sanctuary in the Orenda portfolio is ablaze in Fall blooms. Crimson, gold and orange leaves spill from deciduous trees. It's a unique pleasure to walk through our uplands, forests, and marsh areas and

see a pageant of Autumn.

It's my favorite time of year.

As a kid growing up on Huntington Road in Dearborn, Michigan, we were surrounded by oak trees. We used to rake piles then jump into them. It was a great time to be a kid. We lingered on a bed of dead, curled, and crunchy leaves. Fall leaves perfumed the air. They smelled earthy and sweet. Our sense of smell is connected to memory. More so than any other sense. For most of us, the change of season stirs memories of a childhood lived outside.

But why do leaves smell in Fall? As the vegetation dies, leaves emit gases. These gases slide through minute openings called stomata.

When I moved to Massachusetts in 1986, my love of Autumn came with me. I filter this beautiful season through a new lens. The perspective of a land trust executive rather than a kid who rolled into small mountains of leaves.

Fall serves a critical purpose. Nature prepares for renewal.

Decaying matter from these vascular plants—the blades and stalks—provide nutrients for trees that lay dormant through the winter.

To be an utterly practical and committed environmentalist, consider leaving the leaves as they are. Dead on the lawn. I wish folks wouldn't rake up the leaves. For years we did so, down to the last leaf. Now I regret doing so. To us, dead leaves are natural litter. We think we should do away with them. They serve no purpose in our tidy human neighborhoods. They're dead and what use do they serve?

For wildlife, Fall leaves are crucial. Throughout our sanctuaries and in your yards, Fall leaves shelter frogs, toads, salamanders and many invertebrates, according to the National Wildlife Federation.

Yard debris weighs a lot. Think about it. Tons of leaves are burned. What does that do to the environment and air quality? Leaves are raked and transported to a landfill. This stalls the decomposition process. Not to mention yet another unnecessary carbon footprint in driving dead matter to the dump.

For gardeners, soil fertility increases when plant material decomposes. One school of thought promotes bagging fall leaves to nourish a spring garden. Unlimited access to carbon-rich organic composted materials.

When I moved to Massachusetts in 1986, my love of Autumn came with me.

French author Albert Camus said it best: "Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."

## Book Review: Forest Forensics

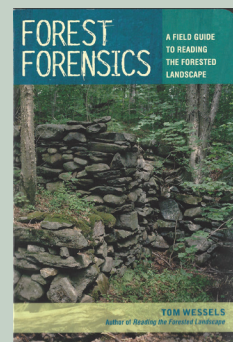
Tom Wessels is the Founding Director of the master's program in Conservation Biology at Antioch University New England. He's an ecologist and the author of *Forest Forensics*, a Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape, (The Countryman Press, 2010.)

Wessels can tell what has happened in a forest—either by a natural process or human action—simply by looking at it. Or walking through it. He insists that a forested landscape is like analyzing a crime scene. This explains why 'forensics' is in the title. The underlying theme in this book is that scientists and conservationists need to understand past natural and human impacts in forests in order to know how to preserve them.

Wessels sees "observable evidence" because he knows where to look and what to search for. A crumbling stone wall indicates where a farm thrived a hundred years ago.

A lone and old tree marks the site of a grown-over pasture. Blackened bark along the length of a tree reveals the trademark scar of a recent lightning strike. It's as if forest themselves write their histories for all to see.

Forensics is user-friendly. It's arranged by dichotomous key using color-coded sections that allow a reader to discern species of trees, stages of growth, and decomposition. All forests mentioned in the book are in the glaciated region of the Northeast United States and bordering provinces in Canada. The plates focus on agriculture, old growth and wind, and logging and fire. *Forest Forensics* is a lightweight paperback that fits into any backpack or daypack. Very practical.



## Orenda Co-Hosts 9th Annual Cape Cod Wildlife Festival

On a breezy gray morning on September 8th, over 947 folks—a record attendance—came to the 9th Annual Cape Cod Wildlife Festival. The free family-friendly event was held at the Mass. Audubon's Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary in Cummaquid. A spacious patch of open space abutting Barnstable Harbor was filled with hundreds of people young and old who care about the natural world.

The Festival is planned and executed by the Cape Cod Wildlife Collaborative of which your Orenda Wildlife Land Trust is a proud founding Member. The Collaborative is made up of just about every non-profit on Cape Cod with mission statements that protect and conserve land, the environment, and wildlife. We all work together to make the Festival happen. The Festival celebrates environmental awareness and conservation. We do this through mindful conversations with Festival visitors, and thoughtful, interactive exhibits, displays and activities. It's community education at its finest. Such a fun day!

Wonderful 'energy' filled the air. You should have been there! Kids loved having their faces painted. Live music by the Gurus was a hit. Piping hot donuts, courtesy of Cape Cod Donuts, were gobbled up. And who wouldn't love two live animal show with Rick the Creature Teacher? Beyond mere fun came a larger meaning. And this is really important. Through activities, one-on-one conversations and a myriad of activities, Collaborative members reminded visitors that Cape Cod is a vulnerable ecosystem. Everyone must do their share to protect it.

Here's why: we live on a spit of sand that's 'only' 11,000 years old compared to the mainland that is hundreds of millions of years old. In geologic terms, it's a delicate place. Borne of glaciers and bordered by Nantucket Sound, Cape Cod Bay, Vineyard Sound and marshes, inlets, rivers and estuaries, there's no other place on Earth as unique as our Island. And those of us who live, work and visit this sandy arm of Massachusetts should be proactive in protecting forests, shores, meadows and marshes.

What does this mean? How can each one of us play our part in 'protecting' Cape Cod? So many ways exist. In large and small measures. Here's a few ideas which were championed at the Festival: plastics is an enormous environmental threat. Do you know how many thousands of plastic grocery bags are thrown out on the Cape every day? Their 'shelf' life can be measured in mere minutes. But the bags last for thousands of years. And get rid of plastic straws. Once they pass through the trash disposal cycle, they can kill a marine animal if swallowed. Use organic fertilizers on lawns on the Cape's 15 towns. Toxic gardening chemicals in non-organic lawn products sink into the soil. They pollute groundwater. Avoid dumping unused pharmaceuticals down the sink. Eventually



Orenda is a proud Founding Member of the Orenda Wildlife Land Trust

these Orenda is a proud Founding Member of the Orenda Wildlife Land Trust systems and pollute water supplies. There's so many ways for everyone to do their part. And, of course, donate to Orenda to help preserve and protect precious little open space that remains on Cape Cod.

As we've noted above, Orenda Wildlife Land Trust is a founding member of the Collaborative. Other Collaborative participants are the Barnstable Clean Water Coalition, Barnstable Land Trust, Cape Wildlife Center, Friends of Cape Wildlife, Center for Coastal Studies, IFAW Marine Rescue & Research, Mass. Audubon's Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary, National Marine Life Center, Thornton W. Burgess Society, Whale & Dolphin Conservation, and Wild Care. We're proud to also note that the yearly Festival is the only one of its kind in Massachusetts.

The Festival was financially supported by Cape Cod 5 Foundation and Cape Cod Media Group. We couldn't have held this event without their support! If you didn't have time to attend this year's Festival, try to come next year! We'd love to see you there. In the meantime, we're already planning for 2019, our 10th Festival.



A young guest enjoys exploring wildlife through coloring at Orenda's Craft Table. Image courtesy of Theresa M. Barbo



## *Turtle nests discovered on Margaret Wyman Sanctuary*

On a hot summer day, Ian Ives director of the Mass Audubon's Long Pasture Sanctuary in Cummaquid and Liz Lewis of Orenda walked the Margaret Wyman Sanctuary to look for possible terrapin nests. The sanctuary is located near the Great Marsh, an area that is attractive to the threatened Diamondback Terrapin Turtle.

There must have been at least 20 predated nests that were mostly in the sunny and sandy areas of the property. Our biggest need for the future is to protect these nests from predation by skunks, raccoons, and other egg loving creatures. This will involve a volunteer at the site to monitor turtle activity and place milk crates over nests. Liz, Ian and Farley recently returned to the sanctuary and marked the nesting sites for next year.

These fascinating creatures will nest until mid-July, laying between 10-20 eggs at a time before departing

back to their native marshlands until next summer. The warmth of the hot summer sun will help to incubate the eggs under the sand until they hatch in the fall, when they will have to make the treacherous journey back into the marsh as quarter-sized hatchlings

We are hoping to coordinate the protection and development of a terrapin nesting site with the natural resources staff at the nearby Sandy Neck Beach.



*Sanctuary and Orenda Wildlife Land Trust Stewardship Co-Chair Farley Lewis staking potential Terrapin Turtle nests for the next nesting season in 2019. The nest sites are located on the Margaret Wyman Sanctuary in West Barnstable. Photo by Liz Lewis*



AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Orenda Wildlife Land Trust every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price (0.5%) to Orenda Wildlife Land Trust.

### **How do I shop at AmazonSmile?**

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to Orenda Wildlife Land Trust.

**PayPal**™ Is now available at the Orenda Website just search for Orendalandtrust.org to renew your membership or make a donation with PayPal the most trusted credit card site. Your financial security is our highest priority.



P.O. Box 669  
West Barnstable, MA 02668  
Phone: 508-362-4798  
www.orendalandtrust.org

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

David Tately, *President*  
Daniel J. Morast, *Vice President*  
Kenneth Burnes, *Treasurer*  
Farley Lewis, *Clerk*  
Richard Boyden  
Diane Salomone  
Jeff Wyman

### **BOARD OF ADVISORS**

Barbara Birdsey, *Founder, Past President*  
Laura Herbst, *Past Director*  
Ralph Herbst, *Past President*

### **STAFF**

Theresa M. Barbo, *Executive Director*  
Elizabeth Lewis, *Administrator*  
Aaron Servis and Leah Servis,  
*Nelson Sanctuary Caretaker*

### **NEWSLETTER**

Susie Perry, *Graphic Design*  
perrydesign@comcast.net

### **AFFILIATIONS**

The Compact of  
Cape Cod Conservation Trusts  
Land Trust Alliance  
Mashpee Environmental  
Coalition to Affiliations  
Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge  
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

### **Orenda's Mission**

Founded in 1986, Orenda Wildlife Land Trust (orendalandtrust.org) works to preserve and protect open space for wildlife habitat, fresh air, and water quality, in sanctuaries on Cape Cod and throughout Massachusetts.

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