

A Growing Landscape of Protected Acreage

Every time Orenda adds open space to our portfolio it's a win for our mission to preserve and protect open space for wildlife. In the last six months, over 30 acres was added to our conservation family.

Here's a list of the newbies: we were gifted a 19-acre site of wooded uplands and marsh at the head of the Jones River Brook, an important watershed in Plympton. A 5-acre mix of wooded uplands with a red cedar grove and maple swamp with cattails also came to us in West Barnstable. Not too far away, nearly one acre next to two existing Orenda sanctuaries are now included in our conservation files! And in Cotuit, Orenda picked up a half-acre undeveloped lot that abuts a wetland in the middle of suburbia.

These land donations were brokered by Mark Robinson, executive director of The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc. Robinson says "The best way to keep our waters clean is to protect the land surrounding it from being spoiled. Some of our most important wildlife habitats include the sensitive edge between upland forest and wetlands, where birds and animals have a mix of places to feed, nest and take cover in."

At press time, we're awaiting final word on whether two other properties in West Barnstable will be given to Orenda. Both are located just off Route 6A. One totals 7.15 acres and the other is 1.5 acres—both are a mix of wooded and wetlands. We'll keep you posted in our summer newsletter.

How did we get these acres?

Sometimes land is outright donated to Orenda in return for a state tax break. Acreage is also bequeathed through estate proceedings. Sometimes we purchase land, and that's where we'll always need your help. For instance, we're working on a deal with the Diocese of Fall River for six acres of prime forest just north of Route 28 in Centerville. If our application to the Town of Barnstable's Community Preservation Committee for Community Preservation Act funding comes through, we'd happily accept monetary support to close the sale. We'll keep you posted on this, too.

Orenda owns or manages over 350 acres across 25 sanctuaries throughout Massachusetts. We're staying true to what our name means: Orenda translates into "protected place" in the language of the Seneca, an indigenous people.

Turtle watchers needed!

We need volunteers in the Spring to help protect the potential terrapin nests with enclosures at the Margaret Wyman Sanctuary in West Barnstable. We'll also need volunteers in the late summer to weigh, measure, count, and release hatchlings. This is rewarding and meaningful work, and we hope you can get involved!

The season runs roughly May 15–October 1. Training will be provided. Please email Orenda at orenda@comcast.net for details.

The diamondback terrapin is officially threatened in Massachusetts. Local populations have fallen dramatically, especially on Cape Cod. Rampant development of salt marshes and the surrounding uplands has greatly reduced the terrapin's natural habitat, and heavy annual summer traffic has caused a marked increase in the number of

females struck by cars. Increasing numbers of humans who live and visit the Cape have caused an explosion in local populations of foxes, raccoons, and skunks. How so, do you ask? These species thrive in proximity to humans, and are the primary predators of terrapin eggs and hatchlings.



Photo by Liz Lewis

So, with your help we can improve the odds of the hatchlings survival!

Two Feet in the Past



By Theresa M. Barbo

A few Sundays ago, I finished a long trek at Audubon's Tidmarsh Wildlife Sanctuary in the village of Manomet in Plymouth as the late afternoon sun cast dark shadows on pine and oak trees. A perfect thing to do

on the doorstep of Spring!

Tidmarsh is owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. It's the site of a former cranberry bog, now restored to its original state: 600 acres of forested uplands with vistas of grassy meadows, wetlands, shallow valleys and meandering streams that lead to the ocean. A bit of every type of landscape with the exception of a coastline.

A lot of people and organizations have worked hard to make Tidmarsh a reality: The Audubon Society, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S.D.A., the Town of Plymouth, and the Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game, mostly. This Living Observatory encourages "scientists, artists and engineers to explore, document and reveal how the property transitions over time," according to information I found online. Scientists of today gather data for comparison by future environmental scientists not yet born. Visit Tidmarsh if you can..

It got me thinking about our own Orenda. Orenda may not be a partner at Tidmarsh, but we sure do work alongside many other like-minded organizations, and proudly so. Here's a few of our partners: The Compact of Cape Cod

Conservation Trusts, Inc.; Barnstable Land Trust; Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge; Barnstable Clean Water Coalition and other members of The Cape Cod Wildlife Coalition, a group of nature-centric non-profits. We're part and parcel of what's happening in natural resource conservation on the Cape and with our other partners in western Mass., site of our other sanctuaries. It's rare that any land trust works as an isolated entity. We need our friends to help accomplish our mission.

We do this, in part, so when we step back to walk these wild places, purely for restoration, exercise and the simple pleasure of being outside, we can rest assured other organizations are working as hard as we are. It's a 'safety in numbers' thing, I guess!

Whenever I'm outside, I think of John Muir (1838-1914,) a Scot-American, the so-called "next great figure" after Henry David Thoreau in the Hall of Fame of American environmentalists. Have you read his works? Muir trekked across the West, and wrote about his travels while advocating for land conservation. He was instrumental in the formation of the Yosemite Valley, and co-founded the Sierra Club.

Muir believed that humans need Nature. He wrote, "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature will heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike."

And Muir would have loved the complex terrain of, and sophisticated modern conservation efforts on behalf of, Tidmarsh. Muir surely would have lingered at Tidmarsh and Orenda's sanctuaries long after an afternoon sun began to set over these lands.

Libby Herland | Stewardship Spotlight

Libby Herland was a teenager in 1970 when the first Earth Day inspired her lifelong pursuit of conservation.

"This was a period of major change in our country, and along with the anti-war movement, I was an impressionable youth who embraced these messages of love and peace, for ourselves and for our planet," she remembered.

Today, Libby's retired from state and federal jobs in natural resource conservation. Her long career included an eight-year stint managing eight wildlife refuges that comprised the Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex. This includes the Mashpee NWR in which Orenda's Makepeace Mercy Lowe Sanctuary is located. That's how we got to know Libby.

She's still engaged in conservation, but just in a different way. Libby volunteers for the Mass. Audubon's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries Board and the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance, a non-profit that works with state government on water quality issues.

"Air and water pollution were major concerns in the late 1960's and early 1970's, and I am still concerned about water pollution and have been actively involved in river protection for almost 25 years," said Libby. "Several of the national wildlife refuges I managed were located along rivers, including two nationally designated wild and scenic rivers. All these rivers were subject to nutrient loading from sewage treatment plant discharges and water quality degradation from non-point pollution," Herland added.

Forty years on and counting from that first Earth Day, it's climate change, especially along rivers, that occupies Libby's thoughts.

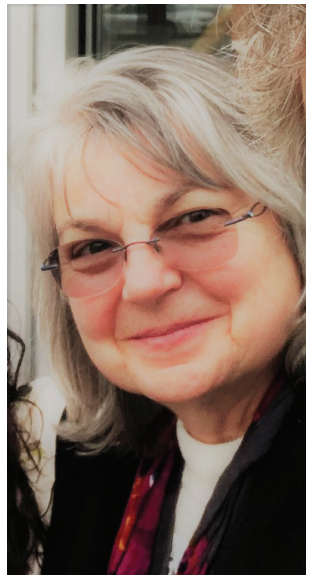
"Of course, climate change is going to have a big impact on rivers as well as wildlife, including birds. I wasn't very aware of climate change back in the 1970's, nor was I aware then of invasive species and the threats they pose in our natural communities and to our native wildlife," Herland says. "The decline in bird populations is very concerning to me as well. These are probably the biggest new concerns that I am aware of over the past 25 years or so. We still have so much to do and cannot be complacent. Even protected lands will not stay protected forever unless people become their advocates!"

To Orenda, Libby is indispensable because she monitors three of our western Mass. sanctuaries. We depend on her! She's our ears and eyes in Berkshire country.

"Now that I am retired, in addition to the three Orenda preserves that I monitor in and near the Berkshires, I maintain trails at Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary in Pittsfield and I sit on the Mass Audubon Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries Board," Libby explained.

But does one really retire from being an environmental activist?

"My vacations all centered around visiting national wildlife refuges and national parks (still do!)"



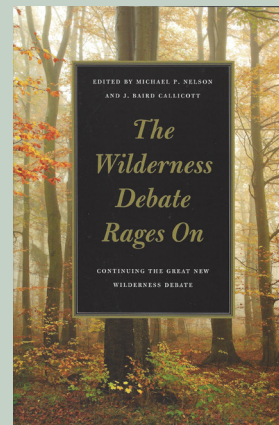
Book Review: The Wilderness Debate Rages On

The Wilderness Debate Rages On (University of George Press, 2008) picks up where its literary predecessor, The Great New Wilderness Debate, left off a decade before. This volume is a bit pricey—\$40—but it's stellar in its ability to harvest an anthology of voices about wild places from ecologists, environmental philosophers, conservation biologists, cultural geographers and nature activists.

The book kicks off with papers by little-known ecologists from the early 20th century who advocated for preservation for scientific studies. These voices differ from, say, Thoreau and Muir, who said that nature should be saved solely for recreation. It winds up with works from the 1980's, and

efforts by the National Park Service to conserve what's left of our wild spaces. It's a solid, entertaining read that's surely a foundational volume for any home library.

Edited by Michael P. Nelson and J. Baird Callicott, it may have been published in 2008, but its message is as fresh and timely as ever.



Woods Awakening!

Our sanctuaries—from grasslands to uplands to marshes and forests—are awakening from winter slumber. Signs of Spring abound as nesting season gears up. Warrens, songbird and squirrel nests, and shallow burrows of lowland critters hum with activity. One of our favorites and most familiar is the Eastern Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*).

These ubiquitous tree-climbing, nut-and-berry eating rodents are busy as bees in Spring. They are crepuscular which means they're most active at dawn and dusk. "These days you may see squirrels actively chasing one another up and down trees as they actively pursue courtship and mating," says Dr. Mark Pokras, Founding Co-Director of the Tufts Center for Conservation Medicine and a consultant for Orenda.

As you're reading this, no doubt gray squirrels are nesting nearby in cavities of hardwood trees or they'll build themselves a nest lined in leaves and grasses in taller branches. Between March and May, litters of between one and seven babies are born after about a month's gestation. At nearly two months, the young are weaned.



Photo courtesy of Heather E. Fone

Calendar Happenings

Spring greets Orenda with a full calendar. **Spotlight Wild**, our new public outreach program, debuts in April. Spotlight Wild is an illustrated PowerPoint that features an in-depth look at ecosystem conservation—land, water and wildlife—and our collaborators are Zak Mertz, executive director of the Cape Wildlife Center, and Kathy Zagzebski, executive director of the National Marine Life Center in Buzzards Bay.

Theresa Barbo, Orenda's executive director, rounds out the trio of Spotlight Wild. The program also features an interactive panel discussion with our audience. Any and all questions about wildlife and the environment are welcomed. We'll expand our schedule with more dates, but we'll kick off our first lecture at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History on Thursday, April 4th at 4 p.m., and at 1 p.m. on Thursday, April 18th, at the Salt Pond Visitor's Center in Eastham.

If your schedule permits, make time for the **Dennis Conservation Celebration** on Saturday, April 27th, at Johnny Kelley Park in South Dennis. Orenda will be among the like-minded nature organizations with a table chock full of information about our mission to preserve and protect open space for wildlife.

A few highlights of early summer: for the first time Orenda will co-host a Spring luncheon & fundraiser with the **Cape Wildlife Center** on Tuesday, June 11th at Noon at Old Yarmouth Inn in Yarmouth Port. We're not shy of saying we're joined at the hip with the CWC. We share the same building, the same founder (Barbara Birdsey,) and our mission statements align tremendously. It makes sense to share programming and events from time to time. Tickets are \$50 per person. More details soon.



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
Karen Ryder, *Webster*
karenryder.com

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.