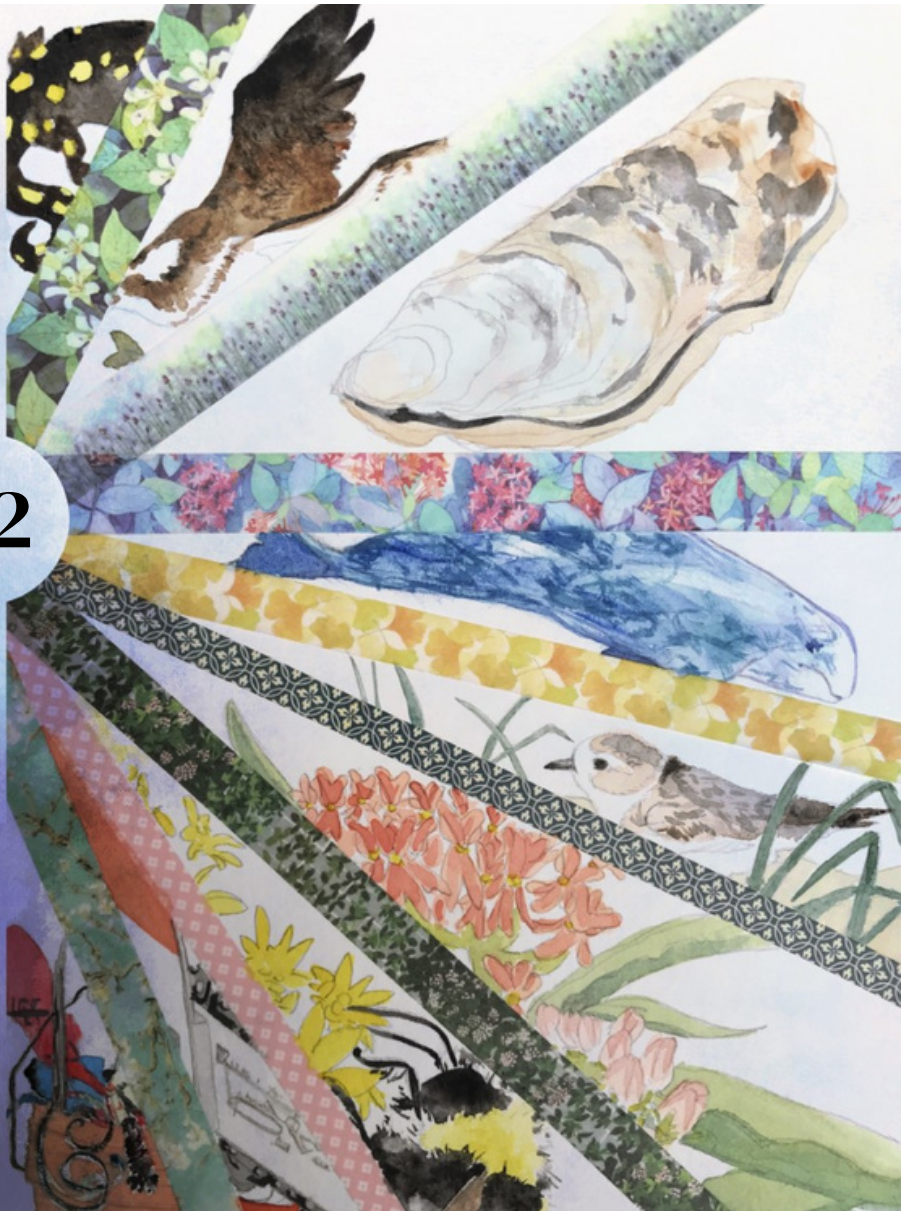




WayPoint

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Artwork by Jodi Monroe

Service Spotlight

Thursdays are for the 'COD Dayers'

By Korri Basinger

Maybe you've heard this term thrown around at one of our service projects, or maybe you've heard one of us Corps members mention it in passing one time, or maybe you've never heard of 'COD Day' at all – and that's okay. So, what is a 'COD Day?' It's a reoccurring bonus service day on Thursdays for a small cohort of ACC who only serve with their individual placements on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We currently have at least one member joining COD days from each of our four program houses; Rob and Travis from Pocasset, Emilie from the Ranch, Jodi from Devine, and Braden, Stori, Brandon, and me (Korri) from LeHac. (We were sad to have to say goodbye to another trusty COD Dayer from LeHac, Max, who left the program in May.)

These Thursday service days are unique and vary every week. We've completed projects in all 15 towns across Cape ranging from shorebird fencing with the Cape Cod National Seashore to piles burns with the MA DCR to clearing brush from a bog with Barnstable Land Trust. Trust me the range of projects we got to look forward to every Thursday did not disappoint. A few of our favorites include, serving with Sarah Naciri from Sustainable CAPE to deliver salt hay to community children gardens around the Outer Cape, creating shellfish nets and planting quahogs with Liz Lewis from the Town of Barnstable Shellfish Department, and supporting Ian Ives and Jay Cordeiro of Mass Audubon with wetland restoration efforts for Spadefoot Toads (and those are just a few from the long list of favorites!).



A group of Cod Dayers at the top of Scargo Tower in Dennis

Another niche of being a 'Cod Dayer' was helping plan ACC's two signature events, MLK Day and Canal Clean-Up. For this we split up into two groups, one going to the ACC office for event planning while the other assisted with field-based service projects.

Emilie, Jodi, Travis, Max, and Emily developed a successful beach clean-up event for our MLK Day of Service celebration while Rob, Stori, Brandon, and I took the lead on planning Canal Clean-Up in collaboration with Elisa Carey from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

So, to answer my question – COD Day is a lot of great things mashed into one day 42 times over.



The Corps at Canal Clean-Up

BLT Fire Reduction

By Sylvie Holding

On May 9th and 11th all twenty-two of us joined service partner, Kelly Barber, Director of Land Stewardship at the Barnstable Land Trust (BLT), in a two-day fuel reduction project at Eagle Pond & Little River Sanctuary (EPLRS). This service project was exciting because not only was this an all-Corps project, but it was also the first of its kind for BLT. The pilot project was inspired by the Barnstable County Wildfire Preparedness Plan (2012) which deemed EPLRS as high wildfire risk due to its approximately 182.5 acres of contiguous forest composed of a large amount of dead timber debris and fire-adapted pine-oak landscape. While BLT has hosted numerous ACC projects in the past, this was the first mechanical fuel reduction and wildfire prevention project that has ever been conducted on the property, and it proved to be quite a success. As ACC member Rob Zielinski said, "Having Kelly show us that Eagle Pond was in the red for fire risk was important. And full Corps days are always fun. It was good to see everyone and serve together again."

Historically, this land has had many purposes. Throughout the 1700's and well into the 1800's, farming was quite common, and cows pastured in the area. Around the same time, white cedars growing at Eagle Pond were used for shipbuilding. A red pine plantation also existed. Evidence of these uses can still be found today. "Cow ditches" can be seen along the east side of the property and dead red pines still stand dispersed along the trails. Ensuring the wildfire resilience of EPLRS plays an essential role in preserving its historical significance.

Service Spotlight

Over the course of two group project days, members participated in clearing dead and downed brush and dispersing it twenty feet away from the trails which will ideally help slow a potential wildfire and act as a fire break within the trail system itself. It was important to find a balance between doing a thorough job while also ensuring the trails maintain their natural appearance, and members found the perfect sweet spot. Now, EPLRS stands a bit more wildfire resistant and remains the same unique trail network it has always been.

In the future, BLT will continue to maintain progress of this ACC project, reducing accumulation of dead woody debris along trails and potentially conducting pile burns during open burn season in the winter. This fuel reduction project will be repeated on a 3-year cycle, or more frequently if needed. BLT will also consider creating a firebreak in larger swaths of forests and will explore the potential of incorporating prescribed burning, which has been used at Town-owned sites in the area like West Barnstable Conservation Area and Crocker Neck Conservation Area, to improve ecological value and further reduce fire risk. Currently only the State has resources to conduct prescribed burning, and they can only perform this service on state land, which puts limits on fuel reduction efforts on much of Cape Cod. In the meantime, BLT is grateful for the significant progress made by ACC members in this pilot effort.



The entire Corps assisting BLT



ACC has cut down a lot of trees this year (for good reason!), but we'd like to take a moment of silence for these deceased trees.

ACC Goes Dumpster Diving

By Hannah Crosby

Boat shrink wrap is becoming an increasing contributor of marine debris on the Cape. As such, in 2018, Woods Hole Sea Grant began a boat shrink wrap recycling program to reduce marine debris and waste stream impacts from Cape Cod seasonal boaters. That first-ever effort in 2018 saw volunteers collect shrink wrap from approximately 90 boats at a single container. Since then, the program has expanded each year (a collection season was lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic), topping out at a program-high 15,000 to 20,000 pounds of boat shrink wrap last season. This year, Woods Hole Sea Grant partnered with AmeriCorps Cape Cod, Barnstable County, and five towns (Bourne, Dennis, Chatham, Eastham, and Wellfleet) to continue this essential effort. Facilities accepted shrink wrap from April 1st through June 30th, charging residents no fees for this process. In order for the shrink wrap to be properly recycled, it needed to be free of rope, wood, zippers, and vents which is where ACC comes in. Members cut out any contaminants from the shrink wrap before putting it in a new dumpster to be recycled off Cape by Republic Services in Brockton, MA.



Sorting through boat shrink-wrap at the Bourne Transfer Station

IP Spotlight

My Individual Placement at Dennis Conservation Land Trust

By Korri Basinger

I have spent my year individually serving with the Dennis Conservation Land Trust (DCLT), which is a non-profit organization that seeks to preserve open space within the Town of Dennis. For the past 10 months, I've assisted my supervisors, Julie Early, and Dave Fryxell, with a variety of projects.



Julie and Dave each have their own different niches. Julie is DCLT's Executive Director so I help her with outreach and administrative projects. So far, I've helped her design an interpretive sign for DCLT's Flake Ground Meadow property, after researching its natural setting and historical significance. I have also learned how to use fundraising software to develop web pages in preparation for DCLT's annual Summer Auction and Duck Race events. In between, I've attended DCLT Communications Committee meetings, written grant outlines, and recently, taken up the art of brochure creation.

Dave's role at DCLT is the land manager/freshwater ecologist. I help him with a range of field projects. This could entail property maintenance, storm damage clean-ups, beach clean-ups, creating maps with QGIS software, and coordinating volunteer stewardship Tuesdays (getting out on the land and meeting the people who work behind the scenes to keep it beautiful is one of my favorite activities!). Recently, Dave and I have been committed to creating a procedural system for sampling/monitoring the various potential vernal pools on DCLT lands. We have gone out several times to take water samples, perform benthic sweeps, collect zooplankton, and look for the presence of amphibians. Overall, serving with the DCLT has allowed me to dip my toes into so many different areas of important conservation work. Both Julie and Dave have taught me so much and I'm grateful they were just as excited to teach me as I was to learn from them. I don't think I can thank them enough for making every Tuesday and Wednesday over the past 10 months a fun-filled, educational adventure.



(Above) Korri with DCLT volunteers

(Top) Korri helping analyze vernal pool samples

Individual Service for the Collective Good

By Hannah Crosby

There is a quote by the television personality Mr. Rogers, that has gotten traction in the past few years since his passing. He said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'" It doesn't take an astute observer to appreciate that we are living in a time of bad news, especially as it relates to the climate. It can be downright depressing and scary and rather hopeless if one lets herself think about it for more than, oh, a minute or two (ask me how I know this).

But, as Joan Baez said (yes, I do know who that is), "action is the antidote to despair," and I am lucky that I have spent the year surrounded by these exact helpers Mr. Rogers' mom told him about—the real-life people who are actively working to address climate change on the Cape. These people I am referring to are volunteers with the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative which happens to be the organization I'm paired with for my Individual Placement (IP) on Tuesdays.

I am part of the Communications and Outreach Committee with the Collaborative which means I help compile bi-weekly climate-focused newsletters, plan speaking events, and I helped at the tail end of planning their annual Net-Zero conference (not to be deterred by that wacky October nor'easter(!). Remember that?!).

I digress. At the expense of sounding corny, it has been a real pleasure serving with the Collaborative this year, not only because I have gotten to meet interesting people and learn from their varied experience, but also because it is galvanizing to serve with people who, in the face of bad news, choose to do something about it. They are the very helpers Mr. Rogers' mother was talking about.

And it's not just my IP partners at the Collaborative doing this. All 22 of us ACC members have been serving alongside "the helpers." Whether it be effectively managing conservation land, propagating shellfish for the towns, or rescuing stranded marine mammals, every single one of our service partners this year are working to address the very real environmental needs of the Cape. It is labor intensive, tiring, monotonous, and often dirty work, but it is a vital resource that they are providing the community, and it has been a pleasure helping them in this effort.

It's easy to despair about the effects of climate change, but it is much harder to use your time, energy, and expertise to make your area of the world a little better, a little more hopeful for the next generation. I have seen first-hand my service partners do this, and it is a motivating thing to witness.

IP Spotlight

Marine Mammal Response with IFAW

By Caroline Genther

Marine mammal strandings are unpredictable and each year AmeriCorps Cape Cod (ACC) experiences a different level of involvement with the International Fund for Animal Welfare's Marine Mammal Rescue and Response Team (IFAW MMRR). The Year 23 Corps had the opportunity to serve at a total of five marine mammal strandings and responded to a wide variety of species including common dolphins, a Risso's dolphin, Atlantic White Sided dolphins, and pilot whales. Responding to stranded marine mammals is no easy feat (especially in bulky waders), and as such, these responses, and the members that served at them, deserve some serious recognition. In order to do so, let's take a trip down memory lane.

On April 1st, after a long day of Group Service, Devine members Hannah, Cas, Jodi, Maddy, and Caroline were some of the first on scene to a mass stranding of three common dolphins on the Brewster Flats, followed by Ranch members Sylvie and Emily. Everyone quickly changed into their waders and made their way to the animals, finding two alive and one dead. Hannah counted both of the live animals' breaths per minute and Maddy took photos of all three animals. Once the IFAW MMRR team arrived on scene the members followed their instructions and helped extract the two live animals off of the Flats and up to the mobile dolphin rescue clinic using dolphin tents and carts. Members then drove to Provincetown to help release the two dolphins from the shore of Herring Cove Beach. IFAW did not satellite tag either animal, so there is no information about where they went after being released, but they did not re-strand and can therefore be considered a successful release!



From left to right: Kasey Oakes, Emily Russ, Hannah Crosby, Sylvie Holding, and Maddy Oerth listen to the release plan for two common dolphins. Photo credit: Andrea Spence, IFAW

Just two days later on April 3rd, ACC members were requested to help release a common dolphin that had stranded in Wellfleet. LeHac members Brandon, Jami, and Stori were able to meet the IFAW MMRR team at Herring Cove Beach for a nighttime release. The last ping from this animal's satellite tag was on April 11th, 2022 in Maine. Another successful release!

On April 14th, the IFAW MMRR team responded to a Risso's dolphin on the Brewster Flats. ACC members from both LeHac and Devine met up with the team at Herring Cove Beach for a picture-perfect sunset release. Hannah, Stori, Korri, Brandon, Jami, Maddy, Vince, Program Supervisors, Bob and Mike, and honorable mention, Gary (Vince's dad), were all there to participate and experience a beautiful newsworthy release. This animal was satellite tagged and last pinged on June 5th, 2022, over 100 miles offshore of Chatham, making this yet another successful release!



ACC members join the IFAW MMRR team in a group photo after the release of a Risso's dolphin at Herring Cove Beach. Photo credit: Andrea Spence, IFAW

On May 18th, there was an early morning report of seven Atlantic white-sided dolphins stranded in Wellfleet. ACC members Braden, Audrey, Jodi, Maddy, Hannah, Jami, Hazel, Stori, Cas, and Program Supervisors, Bob and Mike, were an integral part of this response from start to finish. They helped keep the animals above the tide line, push the dolphin carts up the hill to the mobile dolphin rescue clinic, release all of the animals, and clean up all of the muddy gear at the end of the day. One of these animals was satellite tagged and last transmitted on July 8th, 2022 offshore of Nova Scotia. A happy ending to a wild day and another successful release!



ACC members participate in the release of 7 Atlantic white-sided dolphins at Herring Cove Beach. Photo credit: Andrea Spence, IFAW

Our last response of the service year was on June 11th, when five pilot whales stranded on a sand bar off of Monomoy Wildlife Refuge. ACC members Hannah, Jodi, and Program Supervisor, Mike, responded to help out as eyes on land while the IFAW MMRR team carried out their response on the sandbar only reachable by boat. Unfortunately, one of the animals was deceased upon IFAW's arrival and two of them re-stranded in the following days, both of which were euthanized. However, two made it off safely and haven't been spotted since. A necropsy was conducted on the two animals that were euthanized in order to get a better idea of why they may have stranded.

While this stranding was not the most uplifting one to end the service year on, each event is an opportunity to help animals, whether that be directly or through the collection of data to recognize trends and improve stranding techniques and practices. AmeriCorps Cape Cod's Year 23 members were an integral part of each response, and IFAW MMRR couldn't have done it without them.

The Year in Photos



In early June, ACC had the opportunity help Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution with phenotyping sugar kelp strains. Scott Lindell (from WHOI) and his team work on five research farm sites (from CT to ME) to test hundreds of sugar kelp strains side by side. The strains are planted in the fall, and then each farm is evaluated within a day or two of harvest in the spring. Members assisted the research team in the harvesting and assessing of the farms (and had some fun along the way).

The Year in Photos

We've done a lot this year... we've hauled brush...



burned brush...



and become besties with Emilie Brush!!



Portraits of all the members done by Jodi Monroe



Superlatives



Vince - Class clown



James - Most likely to be gone fishing



Sylvie - Best arms



Travis - Most likely to have beans and bananas
in stock at any given moment



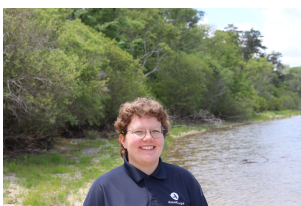
Emily - Cutest thrifter



Susanna - Most insightful



Stori - Most likely to be on a walk



Jodi - Most artistic



Lauren - Most likely to brighten your day

Superlatives



Jami - Most likely to be gone herping



Maddy - #1 seal fan



Audrey - Most likely to have an unfinished bracelet on her water bottle



Braden - Funniest member



Hazel - Corps mom



Cas - Best piping plover advocate



Brandon - Best napper



Caroline - Strongest member

Superlatives



Emilie - Best sitter



Rob - Most fun to serve with



Hannah - Wisest member



Korri - Best person to tease people with



Max - Most likely to not even be there to defend himself (We miss you, Max!)

And last, but not least, a huge thank you to the ACC program staff who helped make this year so great!



Thank you!



AmeriCorps Cape Cod
Cape Cod, Massachusetts
