



# Barnstable County AmeriCorps Cape Cod

**Report to the Community**  
***Year 25***  
**2023-2024**

# Our Mission:



Barnstable County AmeriCorps Cape Cod is dedicated to serving the critical environmental and community needs of Cape Cod through natural resource management, disaster preparedness and response, environmental education, and volunteer engagement.



AmeriCorps Cape Cod is funded by Barnstable County and through a grant provided by AmeriCorps the Agency. Housing for Corps members and live-in program staff is provided by Barnstable County, the Cape Cod National Seashore, the Town of Barnstable, and the Chatham Conservation Foundation, Inc. AmeriCorps Cape Cod is managed and operated by the Barnstable County Cape Cod Cooperative Extension with support from the Massachusetts Service Alliance.

# AmeriCorps Cape Cod Year 25


Dear Reader,

Enthusiastic. Dedicated. Inspirational. These words make me think of the 18 amazing Year 25 AmeriCorps Cape Cod members who are graduating today.

As we celebrated the program's 25th anniversary, our Year 25 members illustrated what it means to be selfless and exemplified the best of what AmeriCorps Cape Cod has to offer. Each member brought their own unique experiences and values to protect Cape Cod's environment and strengthen our community. During their term of service, they forged a bond where they supported each other through challenges and encouraged each other during service. They created lifelong connections within the program and built upon the legacy of over 600 alumni.

As you read through this Report to the Community, you will learn about the acres improved, hours served, number of education programs presented, and the value added to Cape Cod. But more importantly, I hope the articles and pictures connect you with the heart and soul that went into Year 25. Each Year 25 AmeriCorps Cape Cod member made a difference and transformed into a leader that GETS THINGS DONE.

Warmest Regards,



Kat Garofoli  
AmeriCorps Cape Cod  
Program Manager



# AmeriCorps Cape Cod Year 25 Community Impact, 1999-2024



Since 1999, AmeriCorps Cape Cod members have diligently addressed critical environmental and disaster preparedness and response needs within our community and expanded volunteer opportunities for community members.

In the past 24 years, members have participated in the following activities:



### Environmental Conservation Projects:

- Completed 4,827 land- and water-based projects.

### Environmental Education:

- Implemented and assisted in the development of over 2,552 environmental education activities to 64,408 individuals.



### Disaster Preparedness and Response Activities:

- Responded to 10 marine mammal stranding events in 2023-2024 affecting 196 marine mammals.
- Assisted American Red Cross staff with improving the disaster preparedness of 134 individuals cross the Cape in 2023-2024.
- Taught 552 community disaster preparedness education classes (since 1999).
- Participated in 28 disaster simulations (since 1999).



# AmeriCorps Cape Cod Year 25 Community Impact, 1999-2024



## Community Events:

- Organized and participated in annual events including: AmeriCorps Week, National Volunteer Week, County Day of Recognition for National Service, Arbor Day, Earth Day, Harwich "Tour de Trash", Cape Cod Canal Clean-Up, Barnstable County Hazardous Waste Collections, Scouts of America Emergency Preparedness Fair, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, Coast Sweep Beach Clean-Up, Project WET Festivals, Brewster Conservation Day, Dennis Conservation Celebration, Yarmouth Winter Carnival, and CARE Days.



## Civic Engagement:

- Engaged 15,397 community volunteers in over 50,585 hours of community service.
- Delivered 324 presentations about AmeriCorps, national service, community service and/or civic engagement.

## Building Community:

- 127 Corps members have stayed or returned to the Cape after graduation to live and work for a period of time.
- 48 alumni are currently living and working on the Cape; 19 are working for Barnstable County or a municipal department.

**AmeriCorps Cape Cod members have served a total of  
1,021,654 hours.**

**Estimated Value of Service to the Cape Cod Community  
from September 1999 - July 2024 = \$27,556,853\***

\*Source: The Independent Sector sets the State and National Volunteer Rate each year. (\$40.97/hr. for 2023 in Massachusetts)

# AmeriCorps Cape Cod Program Staff



**Katherine "Kat" Garofoli**  
Program Manager

**Michael Andranovich**  
Outer Cape Program Coordinator

**Phoebe Plank**  
Upper Cape Program Coordinator

**Leonel Lainez**  
Pocasset Program Supervisor

**Caroline Lawrence**  
Barnstable Program Supervisor

**Robert Zielinski**  
Chatham Program Supervisor

**Henry Torpey**  
Wellfleet Program Supervisor

# AmeriCorps Cape Cod

## Advisory Board

Each year, the AmeriCorps Cape Cod Advisory Board dedicates many hours to guide and support the program. The staff would like to extend its deepest thanks for the thoughtfulness and encouragement that the Advisory Board members provide to enhance our impact across Cape Cod.



### 2023-2024 Advisory Board Members

**Kelly Barber\***

*Barnstable Land Trust*

**Alex Bates\***

*Town of Eastham*

**Ryan Burch\***

*Town of Brewster*

**Nancy Church**

*Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge*

**Nina Coleman**

*Town of Barnstable*

**David Crary, Jr. - Chair**

*Community Partner*

**Rachel Hutchinson\***

*Barnstable County Cape Cod Cooperative Extension*

**Sheila Lyons**

*Barnstable County Commissioner*

**Heather McElroy**

*Cape Cod Commission*

**Connor O'Brien\***

*Harwich Conservation Trust*

**John Ohman**

*Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates - Dennis*

**Brian Sharp**

*International Fund for Animal Welfare*

**Jessica Whritenour\*- Vice Chair**

*The 300 Committee Land Trust*

**Erik Boyer\*- Alternate**

*Wildlands Trust*

**Lauren McKean- Advisor**

*Cape Cod National Seashore*

***\*Indicates AmeriCorps Cape Cod alumni  
and former staff***

# Year 25 AmeriCorps Cape Cod Members Pocasset House



**From left to right:**  
**Bridget Gill**  
**Luke Hudson**  
**Leonel Lainez- Program Supervisor**  
**Sarah Lawson**  
**Leeza Barstein**  
**Samuel O'Neill**





# Year 25 AmeriCorps Cape Cod Members Barnstable House



From left to right:  
Grace Vachon  
Hannah VanDivier  
Caroline Lawrence- Program Supervisor

Thank you to all of AmeriCorps Cape Cod's housing partners. Their support helps make this program possible!



# Year 25 AmeriCorps Cape Cod Members Chatham House



**From left to right:  
Robert Zielinski- Program Supervisor  
Sydney Hy  
Margaret Sargent  
Sophie Gallagher  
Daniel Ecsedy  
Korie Doster**



# Year 25 AmeriCorps Cape Cod Members

## Wellfleet House



**From left to right:**  
**Jennifer Clifford**  
**Emily Gilot**  
**Sara Abbitt**  
**Henry Torpey- Program Supervisor**  
**Claire Williams**  
**Michelle Morrison**  
**Savannah Gray**



# Year 25 Special Acknowledgements



## *Darlene Johnson-Morris Award*

Darlene Johnson is the founder and original visionary for the creation of AmeriCorps Cape Cod. With determination, Darlene cultivated investment from community stakeholders to get the program off the ground and continued to grow and adapt the program to the needs of Barnstable County. After leading the AmeriCorps Cape Cod program for 17 years, Darlene retired in 2017. In honor of her dedication and service to the AmeriCorps Cape Cod program and Barnstable County, the program established the Darlene Johnson-Morris Award in Year 18 of the program. Each year, one member receives the Darlene Johnson-Morris award. Program staff select the award recipient based on the member's commitment to community service and by going above and beyond to demonstrate a service ethic.

### **Past Recipients**

**Year 18 Award Recipient: Matthew O'Keefe**

**Year 19 Award Recipient: Mollie Thompson**

**Year 20 Award Recipient: Rachel Robinson**

**Year 21 Award Recipient: Nicholas Banning**

**Year 22 Award Recipient: Bianca Bowman**

**Year 23 Award Recipient: Hannah Crosby**

**Year 24 Award Recipient: Henry Torpey**



**Grace Vachon  
Year 25 Award Recipient**

# Year 25 Special Acknowledgements

## Second Term of Service Recognition



**Sarah Lawson**  
AmeriCorps NCCC  
AmeriCorps Cape Cod



**Hannah VanDivier**  
AmeriCorps NCCC  
AmeriCorps Cape Cod



**Sophie Gallagher**  
Vermont Youth Conservation Corps  
AmeriCorps Cape Cod



**Emily Gilot**  
New England Science and Sailing  
SEA AmeriCorps  
AmeriCorps Cape Cod



Upper Cape Service Partner of the Year:  
**Nina Coleman**  
*Town of Barnstable*



Outer Cape Service Partner of the Year:  
**Amy Usowski**  
*Town of Harwich*

# Year 25 Group Service Highlights



## **Bourne**

- Bourne Town Forest Improvement with Bourne Open Space Committee
- Wetfest at Bourne Intermediate School
- Sagamore Hill View Clearing with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Bournedale Herring Run with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Cape Cod Canal Boating and Safety Day with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## **Sandwich**

- Trail Maintenance at Briar Patch with Sandwich Department of Natural Resources
- Winterizing Oysters at Mill Creek with Sandwich Department of Natural Resources
- Shorebird Fencing Set Up with Sandwich Department of Natural Resources
- Moving Oysters and Maintaining Trails with Sandwich Department of Natural Resources
- Trail Management for YMCA Camp Burgess & Hayward
- Talbot's Point Land Management with Sandwich Department of Natural Resources
- Managing Vegetation at Maple Swamp Conservation Area with Sandwich Department of Natural Resources
- Prescribed Burn with MA Department of Conservation and Recreation

## **Falmouth**

- Erosion Mitigation at Peterson Farm with the 300 Committee Land Trust
- Quashnet River Trail Maintenance
- Invasive Tree Removal at Peterson Farm with Falmouth Conservation Commission
- Oyster Relay and bag building with Falmouth Marine & Environmental Services
- Falmouth AmeriCorps Week Shellfish Project with Falmouth Marine & Environmental Services
- Environmental Education at the Falmouth STEAM Fair
- Prescribed Burn at Crane Wildlife Management Area with Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Invasive Tree Removal at the Coonameeset Bogs with the Falmouth Conservation Commission
- Oyster Pond Conservation Area Clean Up with Oyster Pond Environmental Trust
- Coonameset Fields Clearing with Falmouth Conservation Commission
- Project ITCH with UMASS New England Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases

## **Mashpee**

- Quashnet River Habitat Management with Cape Cod Chapter Trout Unlimited
- American Red Cross Home Fire Campaign
- Mass Audubon Coastal Waterbird Program and Shorebird Fencing
- Jehu Pond Conservation Area Pollinator Garden with the Town of Mashpee and Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge
- Red Brook & Pickerel Cove Trailhead Pollinator Garden with the Town of Mashpee and Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge
- Cleaning Mashpee River with the Mashpee Department of Natural Resources
- CARE Day at Camp Farley
- Waquoit Bay National Estuarian Research Reserve Trail Vegetation Management

# Year 25 Group Service Highlights



## Barnstable

- Sandy Neck Rusty Willow Removal and Shorebird Fencing with the Town of Barnstable
- Hyannis West Elementary School Garden Revitalization
- Santuit Pond Preserve Trail Maintenance with the Town of Barnstable
- County Farm Vegetation Management with the Barnstable County Cooperative Extension
- Mass Audubon Shorebird Fencing
- Orenda Wildlife Land Trust Turtle Garden Project at Wyman and Smiths Dock Sanctuaries
- Barnstable High School Tree Planting with Greening the Gateway Cities Program
- Barnstable Intermediate School Tree Planting with Greening the Gateway Cities Program
- Recycled Holiday Strand Lights Collection with Cape Cod Cooperative Extension
- Barnstable Land Trust Fuller Farm Meadow Stewardship and Bat Box Construction
- Barnstable Land Trust Bowles Field Invasive Removal
- Barnstable Land Trust Bayview Farm Meadow Management and Invasive Removal
- Barnstable Land Trust Coombs Bog Invasive Plant Removal
- Barnstable Land Trust Swift Ave Meadow Management
- Barnstable Land Trust Flower Pot Music Concert
- Cape Cod Collaborative School Garden Revitalization
- Town of Barnstable Bismore Park Redesign & Pollinator Planting
- Greening the Gateway Cities Program Planting Days in Hyannis
- Dowses Beach Clean-Up with the Town of Barnstable Department of Natural Resources and Keep Barnstable Beautiful
- MLK Day of Service at Sturgis Charter School Community Space
- WETFEST Barnstable Intermediate and Barnstable United Elementary
- Iyannough Gravesite Trail Creation with Tales of Cape Cod and Mass Audubon
- Trash Sorting Education Project with the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension
- Conex Box Restock with Barnstable Department of Environment and Health
- 9/11 Day of Service with American Red Cross
- Stand Down for Veterans with Cape and Islands Veterans Outreach Center
- Project ITCH – Is Tick Control Helping? – Research initiative with UMass Amherst and New England Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases

## Yarmouth

- Cape Cod Rail Trail Maintenance with MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Vegetation Management and Community Garden Fence Repair with Taylor Bray Farm
- Trail Maintenance at Sandy Pond and Bud Carter Conservation Areas with the Yarmouth Department of Natural Resources



AmeriCorps



MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE

# Year 25 Group Service Highlights



## Dennis

- West Dennis Beach Fence Building with Town of Dennis Department of Natural Resources
- Herring Run Clearing with Town of Dennis Department of Natural Resources
- Dennis Conservation Celebration with Town of Dennis and Dennis Conservation Land Trust

## Harwich

- Family Pantry Garden Winterization and Spring Opening with The Family Pantry of Cape Cod
- Vegetation Management at White Cedar Woodlands and Coy's Brook Preserve with Harwich Conservation Trust
- Thompson's Field Pile Burns and Land Management with Town of Harwich Conservation Department
- Garden Club Fertilizer Fundraiser Event Support with Harwich Garden Club
- Plant Sale with the Harwich Garden Club
- Harwich Tour de Trash Event Support with Town of Harwich and Harwich Conservation Trust
- Native Species Garden Expansion Island Pond Cemetery with Town of Harwich Cemetery Department
- Community Gardens Upkeep at Thompson's Field with Town of Harwich Conservation Department

## Brewster

- Stony Brook Herring Run Clearing with the Town of Brewster Department of Natural Resources
- Mother's Bog Invasive Removal and Pond Clean-Up with Brewster Conservation Trust
- MacGregor Vista Pruning and Hay Center Trail Building with Brewster Conservation Trust
- Surf and Turf at Mant's Landing and Mother's Bog with the Town of Brewster Department of Natural Resources
- Eddy Elementary Garden Revival
- Beautify Brewster with the Town of Brewster Department of Natural Resources
- Eddy Bay Trail Maintenance with Brewster Conservation Trust
- Nickerson State Park Fire Road Clearing with MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Hay Conservation Center Stormwater Mitigation with Brewster Conservation Trust
- Cape Cod Rail Trail Clearing with the with MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Brewster Antiques Fair with the Brewster Historical Society



AmeriCorps



MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE



# Year 25 Group Service Highlights



## Chatham

- Vegetation Management at the Chatham House with Chatham Conservation Foundation
- Mill Pond Valley Rain Garden with the Chatham Conservation Foundation
- Chatham Trees and Trails Day with Chatham Friends of Trees
- Shellfish Propagation at the Causeway with the Town of Chatham Department of Natural Resources
- Annual Book and Media Swap Event Support with Chatham Recycles
- Herring Run Clearing with the Town of Chatham Department of Natural Resources
- Goose Pond Tree Clearing with Town of Chatham Department of Natural Resources
- Chatham Environmental Fair with the Chatham Conservation Foundation
- Mulching with the Chatham Garden Club

## Orleans

- Invasive Species Management for The Twinings Pond Meadow Restoration Project with Orleans Conservation Trust
- Invasive Species Removal at the Mill Pond Valley Trail with Orleans Conservation Trust
- Cape Cod Rail Trail Clearing with MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Installing Locust Steps at Ice House/Reuben's Trail with Orleans Conservation Trust
- Vegetation Clearing and Pile Burning with Orleans Conservation Trust
- Vegetation Management at Kent's Point with the Town of Orleans
- Trail Reroute for the Mill Pond Valley Trail with Orleans Conservation Trust
- Invasive removal at Woods Cove Trail with Orleans Conservation Trust

## Eastham

- Invasive Species Removal at Eastham Elementary School with Sustainable CAPE
- Eastham Herring Run Clearing with Town of Eastham Department of Natural Resources
- WETFEST at Eastham Elementary School

## Wellfleet

- Fall Ponds Day with the Cape Cod National Seashore in Wellfleet and Truro
- Overwintering Oyster Pitting with the Town of Wellfleet Shellfish Department
- Trail Maintenance and Reroute for the Wellfleet Conservation Trust trails in Wellfleet
- Oyster Shell Collection for the Wellfleet Oysterfest
- Annual Wellfleet Cemetery Cleanup with the Wellfleet Cemetery Commission



# Year 25 Group Service Highlights



## Truro

- Salt Hay Collection with Sustainable CAPE
- Children's Garden Bed Preparation for the Truro Central School with Sustainable CAPE
- Spring Ponds Day with the Cape Cod National Seashore in Truro and Wellfleet

## Provincetown

- WETFEST at Provincetown Elementary School
- Garden Bed Reconstruction at B Street Community Garden
- Children's Garden Clean-Up at Provincetown IB School
- Shorebird Silt Fencing at Herring Cove Beach with the Cape Cod National Seashore



# Special Thanks for our Supporters

## MEMBER TRAINERS

Kelly Hewitt- *Community Action Committee of Cape Cod*

Justyna Marczak- *Barnstable County Human Resources*

Chip Reilly- *Barnstable County Regional Emergency Planning Committee*

Diana Gaumont- *Cape Cod Medical Reserve Corps*

Allie Donahue- *American Red Cross*

Marina Brock- *Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment*

Rachel Hutchinson- *Cape Cod Cooperative Extension*

Benjamin Sacco- *Town of Chatham Shellfish Department*

Liz Lewis- *Town of Barnstable Shellfish Department*

Kelly Barber- *Barnstable Land Trust*

Larry Dapsis- *Retired*

Dave Crary- *Retired*

Ryan Burch- *Town of Brewster Department of Natural Resources*

Josh Wrigley- *Town of Sandwich Department of Natural Resources*

Amy Usowski- *Town of Harwich Conservation Department*

Olivia Guerra- *International Fund for Animal Welfare*

Connor O'Brien- *Harwich Conservation Trust*

Frank O'Laughlin- *Barnstable County Regional Emergency Planning Commission*

Joan Muller- *Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve*

Josh Nigro- *MA Department of Conservation and Recreation*

Brian Everett- *MA Department of Conservation and Recreation*

Karyn Lothrop- *MA Department of Conservation and Recreation*

Bill Girard- *Game of Logging*

Mark Robinson- *Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc.*

Charles Johnson- *MA Department of Conservation and Recreation*

Owen Nichols- *Center for Coastal Studies*

Martin Murphy- *Taylor Bray Farm*

Nina Coleman- *Town of Barnstable Department of Natural Resources*

Dan Schell- *Cape Light Compact*

Caroline Genter- *Whale and Dolphin Conservation USA*

Emilie Brush- *Tyngsborough Department of Natural Resources*

Alex Bates- *Town of Eastham Conservation Department*

Abigail Archer- *Cape Cod Cooperative Extension*

Shannon Hulst- *Cape Cod Cooperative Extension*

Nina Coleman- *Town of Barnstable Department of Natural Resources*

David Fryxell- *Dennis Conservation Land Trust*

Melyssa Millett- *Town of Provincetown Environmental Planning & Conservation Department*

Adam Gracia- *CARE for the Cape and Islands*

Christina Wiseman- *Housing Assistance Corporation*

Ysabel Garcia- *Estoy Aqui*

Phil Goddard- *Town of Bourne Integrated Solid Waste Management*

Kalliope Chute- *Cape Cod Cooperative Extension*

# Special Thanks to our Supporters



## SIGNATURE EVENT DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

Kelley Foundation, Inc.  
Chez Antoine  
Bread & Roses  
Coca-Cola  
Tractor Supply Co.  
Simone's Pizza Burger  
Stop and Shop Marston Mills  
Orleans Stop and Shop  
F&L Pizza  
Family Table Collaborative  
Bagels and Beyond 2  
Snowy Owl Café  
Chatham Perk  
Buttercup Cafe  
Daily Brew  
Cape Cod Bagel Café  
Cape Cod Donuts  
Trader Joe's - Hyannis

# Year 25 Individual Placements

## Pocasset House

Leeza Barstein

### **Barnstable County AmeriCorps Cape Cod**

Enhancing AmeriCorps Cape Cod's Community Education Initiatives  
and Signature Events

### **Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment Emergency Preparedness Division**

Disaster Preparedness on Cape Cod

Bridget Gill

### **Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Bureau of Forest Fire Control District 1**

Historical Collection of Wildfire Information for Barnstable County

### **Town of Mashpee Department of Natural Resources**

Waquoit Quality Restoration and Aquaculture in Mashpee Town Waters

Luke Hudson

### **Falmouth Community Television Corporation, Inc.**

Falmouth Natural Resources Community Education and Engagement

### **The 300 Committee Land Trust**

Promoting Falmouth's Accessible Trails with the 300 Committee Land Trust

Sarah Lawson

### **Barnstable Clean Water Coalition**

Marston Mills Streamflow Assessment and Cranberry Bog Restoration Project

### **Barnstable County Cape Cod Cooperative Extension**

Aquifer Education Initiative

Sam O'Neill

### **American Red Cross of Southeast Massachusetts**

Disaster Cycle Services

### **Town of Sandwich Department of Natural Resources**

Mill Creek Shellfish Propagation and Natural resources Management:

Lands Management, Threatened Shorebird Protection, and the Annual Herring Count



# Year 25 Individual Placements

## Barnstable House

Grace Vachon

**Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve &  
Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge**

School and Environmental outreach in our Cape Cod Community

Hannah VanDivier

**Barnstable Land Trust**

Building Community Partnerships in Barnstable and Beyond

**Town of Barnstable**

Supporting the Town of Barnstable's Efforts with  
Greening the Gateway Cities Program



**AmeriCorps**



**MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE**

# Year 25 Individual Placements

Chatham House

Sophie Gallagher

**Brewster Conservation Trust**

Brewster Conservation Trust's Land Stewardship  
and Volunteer Outreach Program

**MA Department of Conservation and Recreation – Nickerson State Park**

Managing the Vegetation Along the Cape Cod Rail Trail and  
Nickerson Bike Trails for Community Use

Sydney Hy

**International Fund for Animal Welfare**

Educating and Engaging IFAW Volunteers, Town Agencies, and the Local  
Community in Marine Mammal Rescue

Korie Doster

**CARE for the Cape and Islands**

Shifting Tourism Businesses to Sustainable Service Ware  
with CARE's Cape Cod Coalition

**Town of Dennis Department of Natural Resources**

Engaging Communities and Preserving Natural Resources in Dennis

Daniel Ecsedy

**Harwich Conservation Trust**

Advancing Conservation Land Stewardship in Harwich

Margaret Sargent

**Town of Harwich Conservation Department  
and Town of Harwich Cemetery Department**

Promoting and Enhancing Natural Habitats in the Town of Harwich



# Year 25 Individual Placements

◆.....◆

## Wellfleet House

Sara Abbitt

### **Cape Cod National Seashore: Park Planning Department**

Growing CCNS Climate Change Understanding and Readiness  
and Pond Restoration Results

### **Town of Chatham Department of Natural Resources – Shellfish Division and Chatham Conservation Foundation**

Chatham Natural Resources – Land and Sea

Jennifer Clifford

### **Dennis Conservation Land Trust**

Creating a Guide for Identifying and Reporting  
the Rare Species of Cape Cod

### **Orleans Conservation Trust**

Boundary Making and Land Stewardship in Orleans

Emily Gilot

### **Town of Provincetown Environmental Planning and Conservation Department**

Preserving Green Spaces and Improving  
Coastal Resiliency in Provincetown

### **Wellfleet Conservation Trust**

Expanding Conservation Stewardship and Engagement in Wellfleet

Savannah Gray

### **Town of Brewster Department of Natural Resources**

Preserving Brewster's Natural Resources through Community Events,  
Monitoring Conservation Lands, and Coastal Structures Inventory

Michelle Morrison

### **Town of Wellfleet Shellfish Department**

Creating a Shellfish Restoration Area

Claire Williams

### **Cape Cod National Seashore: Roads, Grounds, and Trails Department**

GPS Mapping and Assessment of CACOs Self-Guided Trails\_

### **Center for Coastal Studies**

Marine Fisheries Research in Cape Cod Coastal Communities



# Year 25 Member Reflections

## Signature Event Planning- COD Day Thursdays

Daniel Ecsedy, Chatham (Devine) House Member

For the past 25 years AmeriCorps Cape Cod has supported service projects and Individual Placements throughout the Cape. But we shouldn't look past the ACC signature events that take place throughout the year. The Community Outreach and Development (COD) Day members have planned and carried out these important community events: Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service, AmeriCorps Week, and Cape Cod Canal Cleanup. Through the efforts of members Leeza Barstein, Michelle Morrison, Savannah Gray, Grace Vachon, and myself, AmeriCorps Cape Cod has been able to make a positive impact on our community through these signature events.



Let's start with Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service! This was the first event our team got to tackle. Not having too much experience in the planning department was of no concern to us members. Through the help of ACC staff, who have seen this song and dance before, we decided on a community luncheon and essential items drive. We also had some amazing volunteer engagement from Mass Maritime Academy, Family Table Collaborative, and multiple community volunteers. At the end of the day, the community luncheon was a success. We collected a total of 580 donations, including tents, sleeping bags, jackets, and other essentials for the Housing Assistance Corporation to distribute within the community.

With our first successful event under our belt, we set our sight on AmeriCorps Week, where we would celebrate AmeriCorps Cape Cod's 25th anniversary. The COD Day team was tasked with planning three different alumni service projects. After some heated debates with the Program Supervisors, we teamed up with Falmouth Marine & Environmental Services, Harwich Conservation Department, and Barnstable Department of Marine & Environmental Affairs. Alumni had an opportunity to get back to service through shellfish raking, meadow clearing with a pile burn, and installing shorebird fencing. The projects went off without a hitch, with alumni sprinkled into the mix as well.

Our last signature event was Cape Cod Canal Cleanup. Finishing off National Volunteer Week on April 20th, this event had us planning alongside the Army Corps of Engineers to host a canal-wide trash cleanup day. After so many months of choreographing events, we had no trouble kick starting the planning for a fun event. We knew the place, the time, what we needed, who needed to do what task, and what to expect from this event. The planning process was now a well-oiled machine. In all honesty, I'm very happy to have been placed with this group of members. Each planning day provided its own challenges, but everyone worked together to get things done. I always looked forward to Thursdays with the COD Day Crew. It was also great to get some experience of event planning. The thought of planning an event for over 200 people struck fear into my heart at the beginning of the year; now it hardly phases me! By the end of the service year, I bet we could have planned the Olympic Opening Ceremony! But for now, COD Day members will stick to ACC's signature events to encourage service for the Cape's community.

# Year 25 Member Reflections

## Shellfishing in Wellfleet

Michelle Morrison, Wellfleet House Member

The Wellfleet Shellfish Department (WSD) has been a service partner with AmeriCorps Cape Cod for decades. I am placed with the Wellfleet Shellfish Department for my individual placement twice a week. The program has also provided multiple group service days helping with shellfish propagation in town. As a novice in the world of shellfishing, I was not sure what to expect when I requested WSD as my placement. I was excited to serve with them because I have an immense love for Wellfleet, and shellfishing is such an integral piece of the town community.



Overall, this placement has exceeded my expectations and given me a host of incredible experiences. Even though I get mud on my face every day and have gone out in the cold and rain more times than I can count, I wouldn't change it for the world. The WSD staff have taught me about the life cycle and propagation of shellfish, including oysters and quahogs, allowing me to feel more confident in a field that I knew nothing about prior to this year. I have assisted nearly every phase of growing oysters, from removing the seed from our spat collecting devices to broadcasting fully grown oysters into Wellfleet Harbor. I have seen a host of different creatures and spent many beautiful days in my waders on the grant.

One of the most important parts of this placement and this department is undeniably the community of shellfish growers that I have met. Shellfishing is integral to the history and people on Cape Cod, especially in a place like Wellfleet. Shellfishing is the biggest year-round industry in town, and in the wintertime this is certainly apparent. But on a nice day when the wind isn't blowing and the tide is good, the community comes out. The grant holders work on their farms, the commercial and recreational fishers pick shellfish in the wild, and the department patrols the town. I have met so many people in this field, and all of them have imparted some kind of wisdom on me. I love to recognize people I have met in town and to feel, if only for a moment, like a Wellfleetian.

This community and department is important not only to me, but also to every ACC member that has had a chance to serve with it. We had a very successful group service day on March 4th where members were de-pitting oysters. The WSD uses an overwintering pit for seed oysters, which means that every January, juvenile oysters are taken off the grant and put into a pit in the ground to wait out the harsh winter weather. In the early spring, they are put back into the water. Despite being a creature with gills, the oysters then resume metabolic activity and continue growing after spending nearly 2 months on land. The LeHac house members helped to move these oysters from the pit back into the water in the morning, and then finished the day by clearing a herring run in Wellfleet. Both myself and my housemates had a great day, and everyone enjoyed getting their hands dirty with some Wellfleet locals.

I've had hard days of cold, wet, and strenuous conditions, but the experiences I have had and the people that I have met have more than made up for it. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Wellfleet Shellfish Department, and will take the lessons that I have learned with me to all future endeavors.

# Year 25 Member Reflections



## Plastics Education and Making Friends with the Friends

Grace Vachon, Barnstable (Ranch) House Member



For my Individual Placement (IP) experience this year, I have had the pleasure of serving with Waquoit Bay Research Reserve (WBNERR) and the Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge. Waquoit Bay Research Reserve is part of a network of 30 reserves or NERR across the country established by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Each one is dedicated to protecting critical salt marsh habitat through research and education. However, WBNERR is special because our office looks directly onto beautiful Waquoit Bay, whose crystal blue waters glisten on a sunny day. They are close partners with my other IP organization, the Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge. The Friends is a small group of volunteers who support the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, which consists of

over 5,000 acres of protected land in the town of Mashpee. They host events to promote the Refuge, such as the Walk for the Wild 5K. They also facilitate stewardship projects such as trail clearing and pollinator gardens.

I came into my first IP day with little teaching and program planning experience other than interning at a town rec department over the summer. This IP presented the perfect opportunity for me to develop these skills. On my first day in October, my IP partner at WBNERR, Jayne DiCandio, tasked me with developing a school program about plastics. Hundreds of millions of tons of plastic are produced every year and much of this plastic waste enters our oceans, polluting the water and harming marine life. What excited me was the many avenues I could take with this topic since plastic pollution comes in variety of forms. I chose to focus primarily on microplastics because their small size makes them of particular concern. Because plastic is not biodegradable, these microplastic pieces remain in our air, water, and soil forever.

From October to February, I worked with Jayne to develop a beach microplastics activity for students. Our original plan was to have kids look for microplastics in sand samples collected from local beaches using microscopes. After sifting through several samples and not finding much, we had to tweak our original idea a bit. I knew from my research that microplastics can conglomerate in beach sand as well as salt marsh sediments, so we decided to continue to focus on that concept while changing our methods. There were some gnarly storms this fall that caused a bunch of trash to wash up on South Cape Beach in Mashpee. Jayne and I collected this trash as well as some organic materials like shells, plants, and twigs. We then crushed these items into small pieces and put them in buckets of sand to create fake "beaches" containing both microplastics and organic material. The students would sift through these buckets and separate the trash pieces from the pieces of shell and other organic material. In the process, they would learn about what microplastics are, what they look like, how they are formed, and how they can end up in beach sand. In March, I taught this activity to a Girl Scout troop as part of World Thinking Day.

Continued on the next page.

# Year 25 Member Reflections



While my service with WBNERR has focused on education, my service with the Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge has focused mostly on science communication and outreach through their website and newsletter. I have written articles about invasive species, vernal pools, the restoration of the Quashnet River, the rabies oral vaccination program, WBNERR's Osprey camera, and mammal species found in the Refuge. An exciting new project that I am assisting the Friends with is a self-guided tour for their Walk for the Wild event. The goal of the event was to promote the Refuge and bring attention to the habitats that it protects. This year's event will be in October, and their vision is to have informational signs with QR codes posted along the walking route. When participants scan these QR codes, they will be directed to fun infographics and videos with basic information about important plants, animals, and landmarks. I have been working with Friends members Nancy Church, Lucinda Keith, and Glen Davis on these infographics and videos. Recently, I had the privilege of visiting the home of a tribal elder and clan mother of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe named Joan Avant, also called "Granny Squannit." I filmed a video of her reading a poem about the beauty of nature and how to observe the natural world. When I showed it to her, the look on her face was one of pure joy at seeing herself on film. Joan is also an educator and historian for the tribe, and it was wonderful to hear just how much knowledge she had and to get more exposure to Native American history and culture. We are hoping to use her video to open our guided tour. I would say that my visit with Joan has been one of my most memorable IP experiences.

Overall, it has been great serving with the Friends this year since they are such a fun and dedicated bunch. In other words, I have become "friends with the Friends." I hope my relationship with them continues beyond this year. While I don't think I want a career in environmental education, it has been great to work with WBNERR this year because I have gained valuable skills in giving presentations, planning, time management, communication, and organization. I plan to bring these skills to my future career, even if I don't want to continue along this path. Thank you WBNERR and the Friends for a great year!



# Year 25 Member Reflections



Learning New Things with the Brewster DNR  
Savannah Gray, Wellfleet House Member

Before coming to Cape Cod, I knew next to nothing about the Cape and natural resource management. After being placed with Brewster Department of Natural Resources (DNR), I have had many experiences with different types of conservation efforts and every day brought a new experience.



Brewster is home to 82 of the 980 ponds, including the largest and deepest pond on the Cape. Brewster also is home to the largest tidal flats in all of North America, multiple commercial and one town operated shellfish grants, the Stony Brook Herring Run, and numerous walking trails. Trail maintenance and upkeep is a large part of what I did at the Brewster DNR. I assessed the walking trails in Brewster for storm damage, overgrown passages, and eroded areas in order to keep trails accessible to many people who visit and live in Brewster.

Brewster's Stony Brook Herring Run is an essential passage for tens of thousands of River Herring on their journey from the ocean to the pond where they were born to spawn. After spawning in their natal pond, the adults return to the ocean while the juvenile River Herring remain in the freshwater ponds for a few months. As the days turn cooler, the young River Herring make their way to the ocean. Stony Brook Herring Run is one of the sites for an AmeriCorps Cape Cod all Corps service day. All members helped clear overgrown plants that were clogging the Herring Run near Stony Brook Grist Mill.

The ponds that the River Herring call home for the summer are important to these fish and many people on Cape Cod. The water quality of many ponds around Brewster is tested from April to October. My Individual Placement partners Ryan, Dave, and I would go out to the deepest point in the ponds to record different parameters regarding the quality of water.

In addition to regular upkeep of conservation areas, I was tasked with creating a database that compiles any and all documentation of structures built on ponds in Brewster. All structures built within 100 feet of a wetland must go through a permitting process prior to construction. Creating a digital collection of permits for the structures on the edges of ponds will make the managing of these areas easier. Phase 1 of the inland coastal structure inventory began by taking boats out on 22 ponds in Brewster and getting photo documentation of all of the structures including docks, piers, and stairs. Phase 2 involved combing through Barnstable County Deeds and the file room at the DNR office in search for corresponding permits for the structures.

Besides the pond structure permit project, I've been involved with the beginning of two other projects. Tricia, the fall semester intern, and I began recording the beach profiles of several landings across Brewster's shore. Using the Emory Rod method, we measured the slope of set transects on these beaches to document erosion. For another project, we partnered with NOAA to join the Aquaculture Phytoplankton Monitoring Network. The network focuses on monitoring toxin producing phytoplankton that could be harmful to fin and shellfish in aquaculture areas.

# Departing ACC Staff

AmeriCorps Cape Cod is fortunate to have a wonderful staff who keep the programming running each year. We are saying goodbye and wishing luck to the following staff:



**Phoebe Plank**

Year 20 Member

Year 21 Program Supervisor

Year 22 & 23 Program Specialist

Year 24 & 25 Program Coordinator

After nearly five years of working as part of the ACC staff, I have made the decision to transition out of my current role as Upper Cape Program Coordinator. I will be moving to Vermont to explore other job opportunities and/or graduate school programs. I want to thank all the ACC and Barnstable County staff, Advisory Board members, AmeriCorps members, and community partners that I've connected with over the years for making my time with the program and on Cape Cod so special. I'm thankful for the skills I've learned and the community I've made through ACC. I look forward to staying in touch with the ACC network and keeping up to date on all ways that the program continues to help "get things done for Cape Cod."



**Robert "Rob" Zielinski**

Year 23 Member

Year 24 & 25 Program Supervisor



**Caroline Lawrence**

Year 24 Member

Year 25 Program Supervisor



**Leonel "Leo" Lainez**

Year 24 Member

Year 25 Program Supervisor



**AmeriCorps**



**MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE**



**AmeriCorps**



**MASSACHUSETTS  
SERVICE ALLIANCE**

## **AMERICORPS PLEDGE OF SERVICE**

**I WILL GET THINGS DONE FOR AMERICA –  
TO MAKE OUR PEOPLE SAFER,  
SMARTER, AND HEALTHIER.**

**I WILL BRING AMERICANS TOGETHER  
TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITIES.**

**FACED WITH APATHY,  
I WILL TAKE ACTION.**

**FACED WITH CONFLICT,  
I WILL SEEK COMMON GROUND.**

**FACED WITH ADVERSITY,  
I WILL PERSEVERE.**

**I WILL CARRY THIS COMMITMENT  
WITH ME THIS YEAR AND BEYOND.**

**I AM AN AMERICORPS MEMBER,  
AND I WILL GET THINGS DONE.**

# We Are AmeriCorps Cape Cod



**Barnstable County AmeriCorps Cape Cod**

P.O. Box 427

3195 Main Street

Barnstable, MA 02630

**[CapeCod.gov/departments/AmeriCorps](http://CapeCod.gov/departments/AmeriCorps)**