



Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

3381 acres, representing 5.9% of Martha's Vineyard, have been conserved by the land bank since voters created it in 1986. Please visit them; maps are available at town halls and libraries; online at www.mvlandbank.com; and at the land bank office in Edgartown.

Acquisitions

The glaciers rived the land on the west side of the Lagoon Pond, leaving behind intriguing topography. A new conservation area — the 6.0-acre **Beech Tree Preserve** — was created by the land bank in 2017, comprising a wide scooped bowl, a rise and then a plunging ravine down to the water. 160 feet of beach there are now publically-owned. The core of the preserve was acquired from Malcolm Watson at a price of \$760,000.

As hard as it is to imagine, sometimes Vineyard land lies dormant for decades because its title appears indecipherable. Sussing out the identities of the original owners' heirs, in order to reassemble the ownership, is arduous — but is worthwhile if the land sits in a sensitive area. A 5.1-acre lot on the west side of the Menemsha Creek, containing more than 900 feet of beach braced by a moor backland, was targeted by the land bank in 2007; a decade later, the final 0.7116% interest was acquired. The sellers were Yvonne Miles et al. and the aggregate price was \$100,284. The lot was incorporated into the land bank's **Menemsha Neck Preserve**.

The land bank paid \$250,000 to Jan Whiting, land court commissioner, for 3.2 acres of sandy grassland adjacent to its **Toad Rock Preserve**. Nearby, the land bank paid \$1,300,000 to Donald Worley et al. for a 66% interest in a 46.5-acre property known for more than a century as the Hebron Wamsley Homestead. Many of the original stone walls are extant and the land is sliced by multiple streams.

Later, and separately, Mr. Worley and his family sold a 1.4-acre lot to the land bank, for inclusion in its **Aquinnah Headlands Preserve**. The price was \$110,000.

A hole in the land bank's **Three Ponds Reservation** was plugged via the purchase of 4.3 acres from Karen Stephens. The price was \$312,500.

Gregory Mayhew and the members of his family and extended family allowed the land bank to plat a conservation subdivision for their land, resulting in three building lots and the balance in conservation. The protected land abuts and will be assimilated into the **Middle Line Woods Preserve**. The conservation lot comprises 6.0 acres and cost \$668,404.

A two-step brought 7.5 acres of grassland into land bank fee-simple ownership. In 2001 the land bank purchased, for \$225,000, an agricultural preservation restriction from Barbara and Edward Child over their Old County Road land; in 2017 the land bank paid their sons \$150,000 to acquire the land outright. The land has been known as the ***Child Farm East***.

In addition, the land bank continued to pursue and purchase partial interests in properties across the island.

Land management

Ecological inventories and studies continued at many land bank properties: Aquinnah Headlands Preserve, Edgartown Great Pond Beach, Fulling Mill Brook Preserve, Gay Head Moraine, Great Rock Bight Preserve, Manaquayak Preserve, Middle Line Woods Preserve, Paint Mill Brook Preserve, Pecoy Point Preserve, Poucha Pond Reservation, Quammox Preserve, Sepiessa Point Reservation, Toad Rock Preserve, Tiasquam Valley Reservation, Tisbury Great Pond Beach, Tisbury Meadow Preserve, Waskosim's Rock Reservation and the Wilfrid's Pond Preserve.

The commonwealth approved management plans for the Little Duarte's Preserve and the expanded Fulling Mill Brook Preserve. The land bank applied for, and received, a permit for the grassland-protection fence at the Trade Wind Fields Preserve. Pending is the management plan for the Middle Line Woods Preserve.

The final phase of trail installation was completed at the expanded Manaquayak Preserve. In 2016 the land bank opened the preserve's new trailhead, on the Lamberts Cove Road, plus its new pond-access trail; in 2017 a loop spotlighting an unusual slough that only intermittently earns its name — Rainwater Pond — was finished.

The land bank hunting subcommittee recommended, and the land bank commission approved, revisions to the agency hunting policy; the goal is to increase the deer harvest.

Pines were removed from the grassland at the Trade Wind Fields Preserve; pine is a particularly invasive species and will overwhelm a field if not controlled. Similar prophylaxis led the land bank to remove woody vegetation along the rock embankment at the Priestler's Pond Preserve dam.

The land bank renovated the cottage at the Ocean View Farm Preserve, which serves as housing for several of its summer rangers, in order to extend its working life.

The land bank continued specialized grassland management at its Waskosim's Rock Reservation and Fulling Mill Brook Preserve via its goat herd, boosted this year by 75 kids.

As usual, the land bank field crew continued ongoing general maintenance on various land bank properties across the island.

Cross-island hike

To celebrate the twenty-fifth — the first took place in 1992 — of its annual cross-island hikes observing National Trails Day, the land bank in 2017 guided hikers on a peregrination that passed through each of the six island towns. Quirks helped: 66% of the towns were checked off by executing a gyre around the Four-Town Bound, and hikers kept their feet dry by simply padding onto the 0.4 acres of Aquinnah that happens to be located on the Chilmark side of the Menemsha Creek. The trek began at South Beach and ended at Menemsha Beach. Some 80 individuals hiked at least some of the route; 30 completed the entire 25-mile course. Thirteen ancient ways were utilized and 20 conservation properties were crossed.

Budget and related matters

The following chart synthesizes the land bank's annual finances. Anyone wishing to read the budget in its entirety, which includes a narrative describing the purpose of each line item expenditure, is welcome to obtain a copy at the land bank office:

	fiscal year 2017 budgeted	fiscal year 2017 actual	fiscal year 2018 budgeted
	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total
revenues	\$11,075,000	\$13,635,100	\$10,075,000 *
administrative expenses	(\$ 539,605) 5%	(\$ 505,230) 4%	(\$ 544,201) 5%
land management expenses	(\$ 1,173,898) 11%	(\$ 1,093,851) 8%	(\$ 1,112,886) 11%
debt service expenses	(\$ 6,127,000) 55%	(\$ 6,205,614) 45%	(\$ 5,140,046) 51%
reserve expenses	(\$ 30,000) 0%		(\$ 30,000) 1%
unencumbered new receipts	\$ 3,179,497 29%	\$ 5,919,392 43%	\$ 3,247,867 32%

As of December 1, 2017 the land bank treasury contained some \$12.7 million in cash, to fund all expenses including new acquisitions and the payment of debt service for existing

properties.

The asterisk (*) indicates the land bank's revenue projection.

Gifts

The land bank gratefully accepted a gift of \$100 in memory of Wayne Kallman; and a gift of \$14,000 from H. Keasby Bramhall, Jr. and Elizabeth Bramhall.

Transfer fee revenues

Fiscal Year 2017 transfer fee revenues were:

	transfer fee revenues received July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017	percent of total
Aquinnah Fund	\$ 143,969	1 %
Chilmark Fund	\$ 1,199,647	9 %
Edgartown Fund	\$ 2,785,812	20 %
Oak Bluffs Fund	\$ 968,693	7 %
Tisbury Fund	\$ 911,342	7 %
West Tisbury Fund	\$ 808,087	6 %
<i>central fund</i>	\$ 6,817,550	50%
	\$ 13,635,100	100%

This represented a 3% increase over the previous year.

Commissioners and staff

The land bank commission comprises the following members: Pamela Goff, Chilmark; Wesley Mott, commonwealth; John Anthony Nevin, Tisbury; Mary Robin Ravitch, West Tisbury; Priscilla Sylvia, Oak Bluffs; Sarah Thulin, Aquinnah; and Edward Vincent, Jr., Edgartown. The year-round land bank staff comprises the following individuals: Jean-Marc Dupon, conservation land assistant; Maureen Hill, administrative assistant; Jeffrey Komarinetz, conservation land assistant; Cynthia Krauss, fiscal officer; James Lengyel, executive director; Ian Peach, superintendent; and Julie Russell, ecologist.

Respectfully submitted,

James Lengyel
Executive Director