



# Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

3960 acres, representing 7% 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](http://www.mvlandbank.com); and at the land bank office in Edgartown.

### Acquisitions

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**Doug's Cove Preserve**, at the upper arc of the Lagoon Pond, was expanded by the \$31,900 purchase of a 0.3-acre notch. The seller was W. Temple Jorden.

The Vineyard's development regulations — abetted by the remarkable planning powers of the Martha's Vineyard Commission law — are second to none. They identify lands owed special protections, such as the borderlands of streams draining into great-ponds. When developed properties in these areas come available for undevelopment, and simultaneously serve strategic purposes for island-wide trail planning, the land bank recognizes the opportunity. Ann Burt and her family sold, for \$775,000, their house along the Tiasquam River, which was built prior to the enactment of the protective regulations. When Mrs. Burt's retained life-estate concludes the land bank will restore the 1.1-acre property to its natural state, as part of the **Music Street Fields**.

In 2020 the land bank conserved the well-admired fields of Arrowhead Farm on the Indian Hill Road; in 2021 another set of well-admired fields, those of **Bliss Pond Farm** at the intersection of the Menemsha Crossroad and the North Road, became available and the land bank purchased a conservation restriction and view easement over them, amounting to 34.0 acres. The seller was Julianna Flanders and the price was \$1,462,000.

Phase Two of the **Squibnocket Pond Reservation** conservation plan was consummated. Caroline Kennedy and Edwin Schlossberg and their family sold 31.8 acres, with nearly 1000 feet of turfy frontage on the pond, to the land bank for \$10,000,000. The entire reservation now comprises 335.7 acres.

More of the Tashmoo peninsula was conserved in 2021. Ann Tonetti sold to the land bank her 0.6-acre property abutting the **Tashmoo Preserve**, which now contains 640 feet of public surfline. The price was \$1,890,000.

Conservation accretion continued as well at the **James Pond Preserve**. The preserve was effectively doubled in size with the \$8,350,000 acquisition of 6.6 acres from the family of

Corinne Mullins Schoeller. Visitors will experience an unfolding landscape: first the pondside fields, then the high dunes bracing some 550 feet of cove beach, followed by the Vineyard Sound and capped by Naushon Island in the far distance. A management plan is soon due to be completed.

Generosity led to the creation of the **Blacksmith Valley Preserve**: Robert Thorpe donated a grassy 0.7-acre hillock overlooking the ocean at the east end of the Squibnocket Pond. It is a vestige of the undulating pastureland that once obtained throughout the area.

The two lobes of the **Gay Head Moraine** sit separately astride the Lobsterville Road, 75 acres on the east side and 38 on the west. What was needed was a land bridge, and it was supplied by the purchase of 2.0 acres from Peter Lynch and his family. Bridge the two lobes the lot may, but the actual terrain itself is just the opposite: a catenary between two rises. The price was \$215,000.

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, Great Rock Bight Preserve, James Pond Preserve, Manaquayak Preserve, Ocean View Farm Preserve, Paint Mill Brook Preserve, Pecoy Point Preserve, Quammox Preserve, Sepiessa Point Reservation, Squibnocket Pond Reservation, Tisbury Great Pond Beach, Tisbury Meadow Preserve, Trade Wind Fields Preserve, Waskosim's Rock Reservation and the Wilfrid's Pond Preserve.

The commonwealth approved management plans for the Beech Tree Preserve in Tisbury and the Caleb's Pond Preserve in Edgartown. The management plan for the Squibnocket Pond Reservation, which is owned, in part, jointly with the Sheriff's Meadow Foundation, was locally approved and was sent to the commonwealth for its review.

The land bank's livestock herd — comprising some 140 goats — systematically grazed 60 acres, as part of the agency's grassland restoration program. At the end of the grazing season the land bank added 5 yearlings to the herd and sold 28 superannuated goats. The land bank purchased an arapawa buck and bred an estimated 30 does in the autumn, for spring kidding.

Infrastructure was targeted. Two curious ravines are now accessible to hikers: a span was installed at the Fulling Mill Brook Preserve while at the Beech Tree Preserve an adjustable stairway was nestled into a coulee — Vineyard-version — that descends to a quiet lagoon beach.

New trails created new links. The Edgartown school and the Cleavelandtown Road are now connected by a path that threads through a neighborhood; the Peaked Hill Reservation and the North Road have been coupled via a trail that crosses the Middle Line Woods Preserve; and, long sought, a fixed path now crosses the no-man's-land around the old Tisbury landfill to hook the Bare Hill Preserve to the Sailors Burying Ground and the Wapatequa Woods Reservation beyond. Perhaps most notable of all was the creation, undertaken in order to segregate foot and vehicular traffic, of a 0.6-mile trail in the easterly "lane" of the Herring Creek Road leading out to the Tashmoo peninsula.

Boardwalks and viewing platforms were rebuilt at the Farm Pond Preserve and Poucha Pond Reservation; the Priester's Pond Preserve arbor, parallel to the Mill Brook, was revived.

The land bank extensively upgraded the historic Mai Fane House at the Tisbury Meadow Preserve. As are many employers, the land bank did so to secure needed staff housing, but a historic island landscape — a modest cottage in its expansive field setting — was collaterally rejuvenated.

Invasives and overgrowth were removed at the Sailors Burying Ground and the Toms Neck Preserve, for both scenic and ecological benefit.

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

## XIH

The land bank's annual cross-island hike, occurring each first Saturday in June since 1993, was for the second consecutive year, regrettably, canceled.

## Budget and related matters

The following chart synthesizes the land bank's annual finances. Anyone wishing to review the budget in its entirety, which includes a narrative describing the purpose of each line item expenditure, is encouraged to read it on the land bank website:

	fiscal year 2021 budgeted	fiscal year 2021 actual	fiscal year 2022 budgeted
	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total
revenues	\$10,900,000	\$26,921,940	\$20,000,000 *
administrative expenses	(\$ 603,122) 6%	(\$ 576,048) 2%	(\$ 645,407) 3%
land management expenses	(\$ 2,126,683) 20%	(\$ 1,732,299) 6%	(\$ 3,014,382) 15%
debt service expenses	(\$ 4,470,848) 41%	(\$ 5,599,351) 21%	(\$ 6,357,202) 32%
reserve expenses	(\$ 75,000) 1%	(\$ 262,000) 1%	(\$ 1,050,000) 5%
unencumbered new receipts	\$ 3,624,347 33%	\$18,752,242 70%	\$ 8,933,009 45%

The expenditure in the 2021 reserve category, combined with \$1.0 million in the 2022 category, serve as the land bank's allocation in the county's OPEB (other post-employment benefits) trust fund; public employers in the commonwealth are required to plan for this purpose.

The extraordinary revenues allowed the land bank to purchase properties that it previously would have had to forgo, as well as complete some that it had been working on for years. As of December 1, 2021 the land bank treasury contained some \$17.4 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.

Per statute, first-time homebuyers paid no land bank fee on purchase prices at or below \$595,000; in 2022 the threshold will be \$715,000. This is called the "m" exemption and 51 transactions qualified for it in 2021.

#### Gifts

The land bank gratefully accepted the following gifts: (1.) Mary Alice Carmichael, \$150,

Alice Fisher, \$100, and Susan Fisher, \$200, all in memory of Elizabeth Faulkner Rowe; (2.) Lisa Curtiss, \$100; (3.) Margaret Crary, \$300; (4.) Tammy Kallman, \$100; and (5.) \$53,290 from the Chappaquiddick Open Space Committee, which represented its final installment in a \$1,000,000 donation campaign to assist the land bank in its acquisition of a portion of the Cove Meadow Preserve.

Transfer fee revenues

Fiscal Year 2021 transfer fee revenues were:

	transfer fee revenues received July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021	percent of total
Aquinnah Fund	\$ 390,329	1 %
Chilmark Fund	\$ 1,071,604	4 %
Edgartown Fund	\$ 6,618,671	25 %
Oak Bluffs Fund	\$ 1,648,405	6 %
Tisbury Fund	\$ 2,167,537	8 %
West Tisbury Fund	\$ 1,564,424	6 %
<i>central fund</i>	<i>\$ 13,460,970</i>	<i>50%</i>
	\$ 26,921,940	100%

This represented a 80% increase over the previous year.

Commissioners and staff

Former commissioner Priscilla Sylvia, who represented Oak Bluffs from 1986 to 2019, died; her many contributions to the institution during those years were greatly appreciated. The land bank commission currently comprises the following members: Steven Ewing, Edgartown; Pamela Goff, Chilmark; Wesley Mott, commonwealth; Kristen Reimann, Oak Bluffs; Sarah Thulin, Aquinnah; Nancy Weaver, Tisbury; and Peter Wells, West Tisbury. The year-round land bank staff comprises the following individuals: Tatia Bauer, wildlife biology intern; Jean-Marc Dupon, conservation land assistant; Maureen Hill, administrative assistant; Zachary Jessee, goatherd; Harrison Kisiel, land superintendent; Antone Lima, crew manager; Jeffrey Komarinetz, conservation land assistant; Cynthia Krauss, fiscal officer; James Lengyel, executive director; Julie Russell, ecologist; Timothy Sheran, conservation land assistant; and Blake Wasson, conservation land assistant.

Respectfully submitted,

James Lengyel  
Executive Director

