



# Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

3476 acres, representing 6% 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

The Sheriff's Meadow Foundation (SMF) began, decades ago, a significant conservation effort in the area of Cedar Tree Neck in West Tisbury. The land bank tried to complement this work in its 1986 acquisition, on the eastern flank of the SMF holdings, of its **Christiantown Woods Preserve**. In 2019 the land bank was able to add to its preserve with a purchase of 7.3 acres from the Jonathan Rose family. The price was \$550,000.

The old Whale Jaw Farm in Edgartown was conserved via a cooperative acquisition with Zachary Pinerio. He purchased the 1.6-acre farmstead and the land bank acquired the remaining 18.2 acres. The land bank paid \$950,000; the seller was Judith Tucker. The property will be incorporated into the land bank's now 305-acre **Three Ponds Reservation**.

Two beachlots were donated to the land bank. Charles Hotchkiss et al. donated a 0.1-acre lot to be included in the **Chilmark Pond Preserve**; Joseph Kapell et al. donated a 0.3-acre lot to be appended to Moshup Beach at the **Aquinnah Headlands Preserve**.

The environs of existing land bank properties are natural priorities, as conserving them expands the protected area. The land bank purchased 4.5 acres adjacent to the **Pecoy Point Preserve** from the estate of Jerome Kenney for \$890,000.

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, Christiantown Woods Preserve, Edgartown Great Pond Beach, Great Rock Bight Preserve, Manaquayak Preserve, Paint Mill Brook Preserve, Pecoy Point Preserve, Quammox Preserve, Sepiessa Point Reservation, Tashmoo Preserve, Three Ponds Reservation, Tisbury Great Pond Beach, Tisbury Meadow Preserve, Waskosim's Rock Reservation and the Wilfrid's Pond Preserve.

7.5 acres of woodland crowding the island's highest point — Peaked Hill, at 311 feet above sea level — were returned to an open state. Boulders were exposed and native grasses were planted. Hikers now experience a nearly panoptic view including Nomans Land Island, the Aquinnah peninsula, Buzzards Bay and Cuttyhunk Island and, in the far distance, the Sakonnet River estuary. A lottery was conducted to distribute the firewood to the public.

Similarly reclaimed was the portion of the Tashmoo peninsula comprising the Tashmoo Preserve: the land bank removed two beach-cottages and restored the dune. The commonwealth's energy and environmental affairs secretary approved a management plan for the property and it was opened to public use. This added 400 feet of Vineyard Sound beach to the existing public lands at the end of the Herring Creek Road. Under consideration is removal of the revetment, so as to further renaturalize the dune system there.

Staff removed, per an off-premises view easement, trees that had grown and blocked the view of the Tisbury Great Pond from the Middle Ridge Preserve's summit.

As usual, the land bank field crew continued ongoing general maintenance on various land bank properties across the island. In particular, the crew reconstructed boardwalks at the Blackwater Pond and Poucha Pond Reservations. Progress in realizing the cross-Chilmark trail — specifically, the creation of a link between the Peaked Hill Reservation and the Trustees of Reservations' Menemsha Hills Reservation — occurred when the staff installed a new trail connecting Peaked Hill and the North Road.

#### Cross-island hike

The land bank's twenty-seventh annual XIH celebrating National Trails Day — the first Saturday in June — extended from Blackwater Pond Reservation in West Tisbury to Big Bridge in Edgartown, touching 13 conservation lands. A record 120+ hikers started in the morning and nearly 60 people arrived at the finish. All told, about 140 people participated in all or part of the hike. The 16.2-mile hike was completed by 52 people, far surpassing the record set the previous year of 39 people. Almost half of the through-hikers, evenly split between islanders and visitors, had never before been on an XIH.

#### 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 2019 budgeted	fiscal year 2019 actual	fiscal year 2020 budgeted
	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total
revenues	\$10,075,000	\$13,387,307	\$10,075,000 *
administrative expenses	(\$ 576,051) 6%	(\$ 545,776) 4%	(\$ 589,441) 6%
land management expenses	(\$ 1,392,998) 14%	(\$ 1,261,698) 9%	(\$ 1,510,936) 15%
debt service expenses	(\$ 4,926,173) 49%	(\$ 4,627,562) 35%	(\$ 4,466,907) 44%
reserve expenses	(\$ 55,000) 1%		(\$ 75,000) 1%
unencumbered new receipts	\$ 3,130,277 30%	\$ 6,952,271 52%	\$ 3,432,716 34%

As of December 1, 2019 the land bank treasury contained some \$14.6 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 \$8,900 from multiple donors for the erection of a deer fence to protect croplands at the Poucha Pond Reservation.

#### Transfer fee revenues

Fiscal Year 2019 transfer fee revenues were:

	transfer fee revenues received July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019	percent of total
Aquinnah Fund	\$ 224,211	2 %
Chilmark Fund	\$ 712,403	5 %
Edgartown Fund	\$ 3,020,655	23 %
Oak Bluffs Fund	\$ 979,191	7 %
Tisbury Fund	\$ 865,642	6 %
West Tisbury Fund	\$ 891,551	7 %
<i>central fund</i>	\$ 6,693,653	50%
	\$13,387,307	100%

This represented a 1% decrease over the previous year.

#### Commissioners and staff

The land bank bade farewell, with appreciation, to long-time commissioners Priscilla Sylvia (land bank study committee 1984-1986; land bank commission 1986-2019) and Edward Vincent, Jr. (Edgartown land bank town advisory board 1986-1996; land bank commission 1996-2019). The land bank commission currently comprises the following members: Pamela Goff, Chilmark; Richard Knight, Jr., Edgartown, Wesley Mott, commonwealth; Mary Robin Ravitch, West Tisbury; Kristen Reimann, Oak Bluffs; Sarah Thulin, Aquinnah; and Nancy Weaver, Tisbury. The year-round land bank staff comprises the following individuals: Jean-Marc Dupon, conservation land assistant; Maureen Hill, administrative assistant; Harrison Kisiel, crew manager; Antone Lima, conservation land assistant; Jeffrey Komarinetz, conservation land assistant; Cynthia Krauss, fiscal officer; James Lengyel, executive director; Ian Peach, land superintendent; and Julie Russell, ecologist.

Respectfully submitted,

James Lengyel  
Executive Director