



Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

4050 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; and at the land bank office in Edgartown.

Acquisitions

So many goals were attained with the creation of the **Quenomica Preserve**. Scenic and ecological: an exceptional 21-acre peninsula, projecting into the Edgartown Great Pond with two-thirds of a mile of shoreline, was purchased from John O'Keefe for \$8,000,000.

Scenic, ecological and pragmatic: 14 acres of fields abutting existing conservation land were purchased for \$9,500,000 from Edwin and Ellen Harley. The latter was pragmatic because the land bank had been facing a number of expensive building construction projects across the island — for land management workshops and for affordable housing for its staff — and never, in its planning, allowed itself to envision the existence anywhere on the island of a single property with several practical pre-existing buildings clustered around a core, using space so efficiently ... and then this remarkable opportunity arose. As a bonus, one of the buildings will serve as the land bank's office, allowing it to sell its current office in Edgartown center.

The Tisbury Great Pond benefits from the land bank's purchase of 26 acres along the Mill Brook, its primary source. Six vacant building lots, long ago platted hard against the stream, were conserved, sparing the watershed the impact of their septic systems and development runoff. The \$2,500,000 price was softened by a \$325,000 donation from the Martha's Vineyard Community Foundation's Land Protection Fund, which the land bank gratefully accepted. The seller was Claudia Miller; the land has been incorporated into the **Priester's Pond Preserve**.

Likewise the Squibnocket Pond benefits from the land bank's new **Black Brook Preserve**. The 6-acre parcel is the spring from which most of the freshwater feeding the pond arises. It's a good example of how conservation builds on itself, as this headwater became a land

bank priority directly following the 2020 and 2021 creation of the Squibnocket Pond Reservation. Some \$150,000 has or will be spent to protect this land, purchased via a number of partial interests.

Merry Farm LLC sold 18 grassy hilltop acres into conservation, as an accretion to the **Wompesket Preserve**. The preserve is now double its initial size. The price was \$2,500,000.

The Sheriff's Meadow Foundation and the land bank teamed to purchase, from David Ames, Jr., a \$677,625 three-acre lot off the Chappaquiddick Road. Two lobes of conserved land straddle the lot and its conservation will not only keep the inholding green but will allow the installation of a long-distance trail spanning the lobes. It is part of the **Three Ponds Reservation**.

Mary Robin Ravitch sold to the land bank, for \$2,020,000, her 4.5-acre property abutting the Ice House Pond, for renaturalization. She retained a life-estate, which allows sellers to remain on their properties for the rest of their lives; the price to the land bank is reciprocally reduced. Ice House Pond is a rarity on the Vineyard — a freshwater great-pond — and will benefit from the reduced development around its margin. **Pepperbush Preserve's** name nods to the widespread paludal shrub.

Land management

Ecological inventories and studies continued at many land bank properties: Arrowhead Farm, Aquinnah Headlands Preserve, Christiantown Woods Preserve, Edgartown Great Pond Beach, Great Rock Bight Preserve, Manaquayak Preserve, Ocean View Farm Preserve, Paint Mill Brook Preserve, Pecoy Point Preserve, Priestster's Pond Preserve, Quammox Preserve, Quenomica Preserve, Squibnocket Pond Reservation, Tisbury Great Pond Beach, Tisbury Meadow Preserve, Waskosim's Rock Reservation, Wilfrid's Pond Preserve and Wompesket Preserve.

Review by the commonwealth of the James Pond Preserve and Squibnocket Pond Reservation management plans is still underway; such imprimatur is required, by statute, before land bank properties can be opened for public enjoyment.

Morainal erosion requires constant vigilance. The land bank field crew rebuilt trails at the popular Aquinnah Headlands Preserve, Great Rock Bight Preserve and Waskosim's Rock

Reservation — and at quieter properties such as the preserves at Ramble Trail, Tisbury Meadow and Weahtaqua Springs. Hikers are using the new path linking the spine trail at the Fulling Mill Brook Preserve with the Radar Hill Road, which leads to the Peaked Hill Reservation, as well as a new loop on an addition to the John Presbury Norton Farm.

Infrastructure too requires vigilance. Slumping ate away the bluff at the North Neck Highlands Preserve, so new — and adjustable — beach-stairs were installed. The stairs leading down to the Ice House Pond at the Manaquayak Preserve were completely rebuilt, using milled locust. A viewing platform was erected at the Little Duarte's Pond Preserve and deteriorated kayak racks at the Quammox Preserve were replaced.

In a profuse place like the Vineyard overgrowth swiftly occurs, which has both ecological and scenic impacts. Uprooting — pitch pines at the Trade Wind Fields Preserve; autumn olive at the Short Cove Preserve; and japanese knotweed at the Farm Pond, Norton Fields and Sweetened Water Preserves — maintains good ecological health, while view corridors were revived by mowing at Allen Farm, Blue Barque Preserve, Eachpoquassit Hill Preserve and the Waskosim's Rock Reservation. But development is profuse here too; buildings were removed at the James Pond and Tashmoo Preserves in order to renaturalize these areas and make them more welcoming to visitors. The Beatrice Barrett Planet Earth Fund, administered via the Martha's Vineyard Community Foundation and the Nature Conservancy, generously donated \$186,500 for these undevelopment projects.

Useful buildings are always prized. Cottages at James Pond and Quenomica, renovated, have been established as staff housing for caretakers who provide overnight supervision of these preserves.

The land bank's grassland restoration program expanded in 2022: acreage managed via grazing increased by 25%, and the herd itself is regularly replenished via annual planned kidding.

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

XIH

After a two-year hiatus the XIH resumed in 2022 for a 18.9-mile trek from State Beach at Big Bridge in Edgartown to the Long Point Reservation in West Tisbury. Over eighty hikers

participated; forty completed the entire cross-island hike. The route passed through ten conservation properties and used eleven established ancient ways.

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 2022 budgeted	fiscal year 2022 actual	fiscal year 2023 budgeted
	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total
revenues	\$20,000,000	\$22,291,003	\$17,000,000 *
administrative expenses	(\$ 645,407) 3%	(\$ 606,695) 3%	(\$ 736,988) 4%
land management expenses	(\$ 3,014,382) 15%	(\$ 1,623,619) 7%	(\$ 3,302,764) 19%
debt service expenses	(\$ 6,357,202) 32%	(\$ 6,532,349) 29%	(\$ 7,156,137) 42%
reserve expenses	(\$ 1,050,000) 5%	(\$ 1,000,000) 5%	(\$ 100,000) 1%
unencumbered new receipts	\$ 8,933,009 45%	\$ 12,528,340 56%	\$ 5,704,111 34%

The expenditure in the 2022 reserve category serves 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.

As of December 1, 2022 the land bank treasury contained some \$9,393,000 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 \$715,000; in 2023 the threshold will be \$800,000. This is called the "m" exemption and 34 transactions qualified for it in 2022.

Gifts

The land bank gratefully accepted the following gifts: (1.) Monica Finch, \$100, in memory of Dagmar Dockery; and (2.) Tammy Kallman, \$100, in memory of Wayne Kallman.

Transfer fee revenues

Fiscal Year 2022 transfer fee revenues were:

	transfer fee revenues received July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022	percent of total
Aquinnah Fund	\$ 119,058	1 %
Chilmark Fund	\$ 1,461,110	7 %
Edgartown Fund	\$ 4,896,849	22 %
Oak Bluffs Fund	\$ 1,689,069	8 %
Tisbury Fund	\$ 1,505,907	7 %
West Tisbury Fund	\$ 1,473,510	7 %
<i>central fund</i>	<i>\$ 11,145,502</i>	<i>50%</i>
	\$ 22,291,005	100%

This represented a 17% decrease over the previous year.

Commissioners and staff

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: Janette Andrews, fiscal officer; Jean-Marc Dupon, conservation land assistant; Maureen Hill, office manager; Zachary Jessee, goatherd; Harrison Kisiel, land superintendent; Jeffrey Komarinetz, conservation land assistant; James Lengyel, executive director; Antone Lima, crew manager; Julie Russell, ecologist; Timothy Sheran, conservation land assistant; and Blake Wasson, conservation land assistant.

Respectfully submitted,

James Lengyel
Executive Director