



**The 'Sconset Trust**  
Conservation & Preservation

# In 'Sconset

\*SPECIAL EDITION February 2014

## Mission

The Trust's mission is to protect the unique character of 'Sconset Village through conservation and preservation of areas of open land and structures of historic and/or architectural significance in and around the village.



'Sconset Pump, January 29, 2014

## From the Trust Chair

\* SPECIAL EDITION NEWS

Mark Filipski | mwflip@gmail.com



Mark Filipski

**Greetings to all. Our friends who live in 'Sconset during the off season tell us that this has been a cold and snow-filled few months for winter 2013-14.**

Perhaps you keep in touch with these locals or check the *Inky Mirror* from time to time so you know all about it. Above is a charming photo of the 'Sconset pump taken by Marianne Felch on January 29th.

It is indeed a rare occasion that we set out to contact our membership during the winter months other than inviting you to gather for a Winter Soirée and gently reminding you to attend to your membership gift for the new year.

For a number of reasons I think this is the right time to produce a "special edition" first-ever Winter 'Sconset Trust Newsletter. Most of you know that 2014 marks the 30th anniversary of our founding in 1984. There is much to celebrate as we look back over these years, but also much to plan for as we move forward on a number of mission-critical fronts

This winter we look forward to gathering for our 10th **Winter**

**Soirée** in a new venue – the city of Boston. Thanks to **Leslie Blanchard** for hosting this event on February, 28th. Bob Felch tells me that the original plan 10 years ago for the annual mid-winter Soiree event was to alternate sites between New York City and Boston. Well, better late than never.

In addition I know many of you are eagerly awaiting our annual membership appeal with our prior year membership report, a letter from our Executive Director and our dazzling remittance envelope! It should arrive by mid-March. Please be generous and support our great 30 year legacy at the Trust.

We are excited to announce the official opening of the **Ruddick Commons Trail System** in June 2014. The walking trail system has been designed by a team of Trust board members, our Executive Director and the Champoux Landscape Company. See the article on page 2 about the plans and our invitation to come to the ribbon cutting. We are excited to offer this public benefit to the entire island community as a result of the successful Coffin Land Campaign.

Your Board has spent much of the off-season working on policy and action strategies for issues surrounding our vulnerable Sankaty Head Lighthouse property. Bluff erosion continues to generate headline news on Nantucket. The homes along Baxter Road, the road itself and the lighthouse are ground zero. We are

Continued on page 2.

# Chair's Letter

Continued from page 1.



Sankaty Lighthouse, February 11, 2014 by George Riethof

actively working with our neighbors and the Town of Nantucket to establish a game plan should the northern section of Baxter Road be breached in the future. You will see an article providing an up to the minute status report of this challenging initiative.

We are delighted that the local and state regulatory bodies have finally found a way to work with SBPF and other parties including the Trust to permission a robust erosion mitigation system at the toe of the Sankaty bluff. The Trust board voted unanimously to provide financial support from our Sankaty Head Lighthouse Fund last month. We have provided a one-time gift of \$100,000 from this fund representing roughly 5% of the corpus. We have been nurturing this fund since the first gifts to the Sankaty Head Lighthouse campaign started arriving in 2006. Through careful management we are able to maintain the lighthouse and the property while supporting the protection of the lighthouse's lifeline –

Baxter Road. I direct you to an article in this special edition regarding the geotube installation and our work to support this initiative.

We are pleased to report that the Coffin Land Campaign is in the final stages of solicitation. If I may make one final comment at this point in time, it would be – if you have not already done so, please make a gift to the campaign so that we can have 100% from our full membership.

Once again we will gather for our annual **Night under the Light** summer gala. This summer, the date is July 20th and we will celebrate our 30 years of achievement and help the Trust to continue to expand our membership and our financial strength. Thank you to Martha Dippell and Danny Korengold for agreeing to chair this year's gala.

I look forward to seeing you this summer in 'Sconset. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at either (212) 538-7164 or [mwflip@gmail.com](mailto:mwflip@gmail.com).



## Board of Directors

Mark W. Filipski, *Chair & President*  
 Patti Brown, *Vice Chair*  
 Elliot Gewirtz, *Treasurer*  
 Penny Scheerer, *Secretary & Clerk*

Kathy Arvay  
 Lesley F. Blanchard  
 Barry Cooper  
 J. Joseph Hale Jr.  
 Dee Haslam  
 Pamela B. Hendrickson  
 Daniel L. Korengold  
 Laurel Ried Langworthy  
 Bonnie Block Levison  
 Michael J. Lynch  
 James R. Poole  
 Jennifer C. Price  
 Kennedy Richardson  
 Alice M. Rochat  
 J. Donald Shockey Jr.  
 James E. Walker III  
 Rhoads Zimmerman

Robert D. Felch, *Executive Director*  
 Lorraine Milstead, *Office Manager*

## The 'Sconset Trust

P.O. Box 821, Siasconset, MA 02564  
 Phone: 508 228 9917 Fax: 508 228 0810  
 Email: [info@sconsettrust.org](mailto:info@sconsettrust.org)

[sconsettrust.org](http://sconsettrust.org)



# Coffin Land Update



Ruddick Commons Trail System, photo by George Riethof

## Ruddick Commons Trail System

Robert D. Felch | Executive Director

**Since the launch of the Coffin Land Campaign, the board has worked to define the best way in which the acreage at Ruddick Commons can be used for direct public benefit.**

It was clear from the earliest days of the campaign that we should consider creating a low maintenance trail system that offered walkers an opportunity to safely explore this marvelous property and enjoy nature. Also, the general feeling is that we should only “lightly touch” the property so that the natural wonders are not marred by excessive construction and man-made intrusions.

Our Land Committee run by Jim Poole and our Ruddick Commons trail subcommittee chaired by Kennedy Richardson have worked to devise a

plan that will offer residents and visitors alike the opportunity to explore the property on foot and enjoy the greenbelt gateway to 'Sconset. Our 45 acre parcel offers much more than is visible from the Milestone Road including seasonal fauna and groves of native trees, bushes and grasslands amongst undulating landscapes. In addition the Trust owns two contiguous parcels adding roughly 14 additional acres and providing a connection through our heavily wooded “Saunders” property east to Burnell Street.

As you will see from the above trail system map, the main entrance will be at the Milestone roadway entrance. This is adjacent to the Ruddick Commons entry marker. A natural parking area will be created, fenced off by split rail fencing. There are two exit

points away from the Milestone entrance – one at Plainfield Road and the other at Burnell Street. These two points are ideal for people walking or biking from the village of 'Sconset.

We will place “minimalist” trail markers, color coded marking the trails but otherwise there will be no signage along the trails, benches or trash receptacles. The motto for trash is “Pack in Pack out.” It is likely we will have a trailhead sign near the parking lot that will provide some history and a trail description. We are reviewing adding a QR code for smartphone scanning including the trail map.

As of this writing the trails have been rough cut by our team of Ben Champoux at Champoux Landscape and the staff of the Nantucket Land Bank. Look for an update with plans for a June grand opening announcement.

# Baxter Road Update

## Baxter Road Alternative Access

**Since October 2013, the Town and various parties having an interest in planning for alternative access of the northern end of Baxter Road, have been working on devising a finite scheme for such access should the roadway be breached north of Bayberry Road.**



Northern Baxter Road,  
August 24, 2013  
by George Riethof

There is a great deal of complexity related to this process based on land ownership, municipal obligations, zoning regulations, financial considerations and public uses and benefits. Suffice it to say; four months later following many public and private meetings, the issue has not been settled in a mutually agreeable conclusion for all stakeholders.

The ongoing deliberations have been burdened by the need to speculate where and when a breach might occur and then what the possibility of multiple breaches adds to the equation. Many including Trust leadership believe that the installation, though delayed, of the current geotube erosion mitigation system has a good chance of alleviating conditions leading to or eliminating a future breach. A supportive community and collaborative regulatory environment are required to see a timely expansion of the geotube installation, covering from just south of the lighthouse property to 85 Baxter Road.

Nonetheless the Town as well as all private and public property owners must create a “shelf” solution that can be implemented on short notice should a

breach trigger action in the future. Not only will this plan include a rerouting of roadways but also the relocation of all utilities.

The primary obligations of the Town are to assure access and safety standards adherence, as afforded on all public roadways on the island. Such a plan might require the Town to “take” private property and roadways by eminent domain. “Taking” plans must include permanent easements along with temporary construction easements for roadways and utilities. Often municipalities are required to pay damages for loss of value to private property owners. The actual costs for implementing alternative access plans often are placed into a “betterment district” and are charged back to the beneficiaries of new access and utility services. In such a case a non-profit such as the Trust can be assessed for betterments. Payment of betterment assessments can be extended over a 20 year period.

The Trust has a strong interest as well as public and legal obligations to protect time-honored direct public vehicular and pedestrian access to the lighthouse

property. Not all parties agree that this is a priority. Other parties have stepped forward to offer private/public solutions in order to facilitate the process. As one would expect, costs and payments for damages can be and are hotly debated.

The jurisdictional focal point is the County Commissioners of Nantucket County who meet once a month. The five commissioners are the same as the five Nantucket Selectmen but they convene separate meetings and most often are dealing with public way issues as the County has jurisdiction over such matters. The Trust has met with the Commissioners and the Town Planning Manager Andrew Vorce on several occasions to help sort through the issues and process. Other major stakeholders include the Sankaty Head Golf Club and private homeowners along both sides of Baxter Road north of the Bayberry intersection.

We will continue to communicate with you on this matter but want to assure you at this time that we are working in a collaborative manner to address the critical community needs for alternative access while protecting the accessibility of the lighthouse property for future generations.



# 'Sconset Bluff

## Geotube Bluff Protection Project

**Many have read or at minimum heard about the current Geotube erosion mitigation project undertaken by the Siasconset Beach Preservation Fund and the Town of Nantucket.**



Geotubes, February 1, 2014 by George Riethof

It has been fully installed as of the end of January. This installation has been approved on an emergency basis by the local Nantucket Conservation Commission (ConCom), which has regulatory jurisdiction over coastal and wetlands construction activities. A more robust installation of four layers of geotubes was approved by the state Department of Environmental Protection but the local ConCom scaled back the system to three layers. A significant element of the project includes the overlaying of sand on the infrastructure to replicate natural sand erosion from the bluff and to protect the installation and bluff. Sand has been trucked from island sandpits through 'Sconset to Baxter Road where the sand is transferred via conveyors over the edge of the bluff to the installation below. The general manager of the project indicates that the sand hauling will be completed in early February. Subsequent sand hauling will occur during the winter months following storms which have a deleterious effect on the volume of sand atop the geotubes.

The current 500 linear feet of geotube installation protects the toe and bank of the bluff immediately below the narrowest portion of land between Baxter Road and the bluff edge. This covers properties between 87 and 101 Baxter Road. While most of the lots in this section are vacant, this is the area most at risk for a breach. Future expansion could run as far north as the lighthouse property and as far south as 63 Baxter Road. This additional expanse of Baxter Road would include a vacant lot owned by the Trust at 119 Baxter Road – the lot immediately south of the lighthouse property. To date the phase one portion of this project has been funded privately.

The Trust has been supporting the initiatives of SBPF and the Town to protect the toe of the bluff with a robust structure that will slow down and even stop erosion at the bluff. We have consistently believed that Baxter Road, with its community of homes, is an important lifeline for the lighthouse property and should be protected and not left to erode away. We have spoken

publically with specific reference to the importance of the iconic lighthouse to the Nantucket community and beyond. Certainly, Sankaty Head Lighthouse is one of the most revered and visited Nantucket island destinations. The Trust successfully relocated and restored the lighthouse in 2007 and 2008 due specifically to bluff erosion at the site.

The Trust board believes and recently confirmed that its mission statement is consistent with protecting and preserving Baxter Road in its current position. To this end the Trust board voted in January in response to a request from the board of SBPF to provide a donation from our Sankaty Head Lighthouse Fund. While we were not in a position to provide the full amount requested, we provided a gift in the amount of \$100,000.

We will continue to monitor the progress of the geotube system and plans for additional protection below Baxter Road. We encourage our members to support this and future projects to protect our shorefront in 'Sconset.



Join us as we gather for the Night under the Light V to celebrate 30 years of good works and once again express our support for the 'Sconset Trust.

*A super silent auction, a Jeep Wrangler, Spanky's raw bar, special 30th anniversary merchandise and a great group of 'Sconset Trust fans.*

## Celebrating 30 Years

The headline in the July 12, 1984 edition of *The Inquirer and Mirror* reads: Siasconset forms conservation foundation. The lead to the article penned by Rob Benchley stated:

*"A group of 'Sconset residents, concerned about the threat of overdevelopment of their village, are responding to the pressures of dwindling open space and increased growth by forming a conservation foundation of their own. What will be known as the 'Sconset Trust, the depository will act in much the same manner as the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, only on a smaller scale. Planning Committee Chairman Robert Shetterly announced the creation of the Trust at the July meeting of the Siasconset Civic Association."*

By the end of 1984 the Trust was incorporated and had its 501c3 designation in place. So let's celebrate a great idea and vision—to protect the unique charm of a village that we all cherish.



Ruddick Commons, by Rob Benchley

