

# Sippewissett Association

## Newsletter

### Access to Gunning Point Beach

By Michael Eder

On November 3, 2010 Langley Keyes, one of the decedents of Lester Langley who owned much of the original Haynes subdivision at the turn of century, sold his interest in “the beach, shore and flats along Buzzards Bay” as well as his interest in “the streets, ways and avenues” to Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries Inc. (SPABSI).

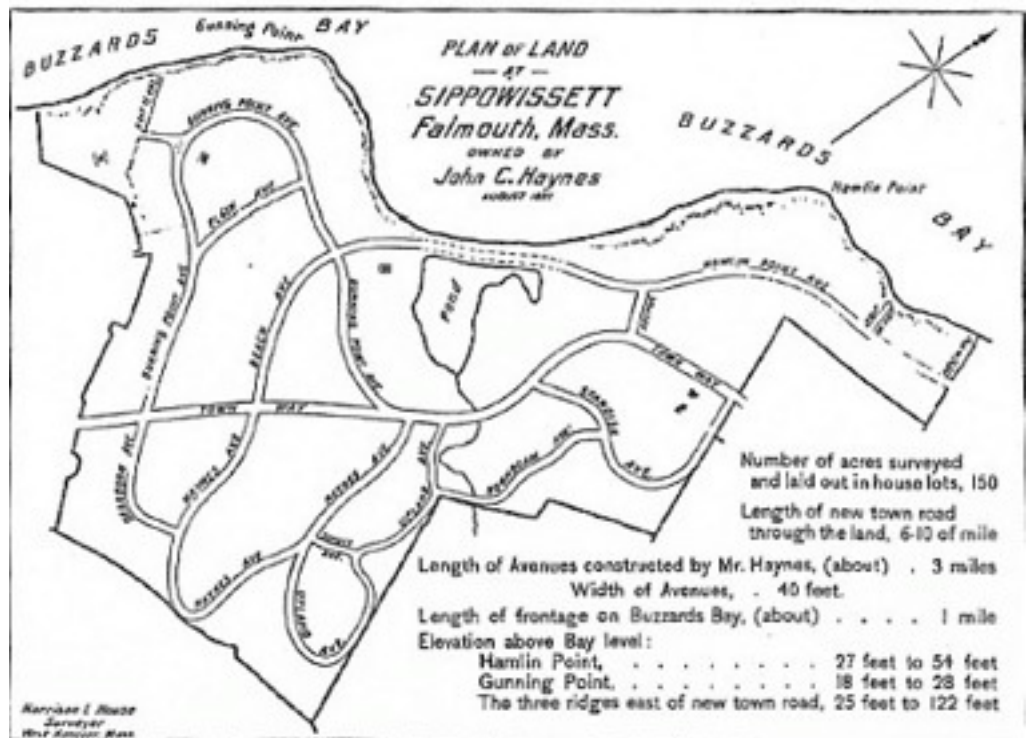
With the continued support of SPABSI, neighbors have been working to improve access to the beach and shore. In November 2013 another step was realized when the groin (jetty) in front of 43 Gunning Point was opened up and a lateral path was created in front of 35 Gunning Point and 39 Gunning Point.

Although still not ideal, the combination makes for an interesting passage along the shore that was not previously possible a few months ago. When the tides allow, you can now traverse the beach from either of the two accesses provided by the original Haynes subdivision plan (northerly from Langley Road and southerly down Gunning Point Way to the path between 7 Gunning Point

Way and 61 Gunning Point Avenue).

These passages, in addition to recently added and previously existing stairs, provide a variety of entree points to the top of the revetment (seawalls) as well as along the shore

SPABSI’s ownership will ensure for years to come that the neighborhood and the public will be able to access this rocky shore with its fascinating stone formations, birds, the occasional seal, and beautiful vistas of Buzzards Bay.



*The mission of the Sippewissett Association is to: protect and foster the mutual benefit and interests of land-owners of the Sippewissett region of the Town of Falmouth, Massachusetts; to promote and encourage cooperation among such landowners in order to ensure that the future development of said region shall be in keeping with its general residential zoning restrictions and to take whatever action or actions may be necessary to this end; and to protect and prevent the misuse of public and common areas in the Sippewissett region.*

# Preserving Our Natural Resources

By *Judith Yost*

I have resided at 28 Cape Codder Rd. with my husband Richard since the summer of 2003, late August to be exact. We were attracted to this area by its awesome beauty, but more importantly by family tradition and generational roots. During this time we were called upon to support financially the Sippewissett Association and Sippowissett legal struggle over the rights to use Gunning Point Beach. I am an environmentalist and enjoy spending my life out-of-doors, appreciating the beauty and order in nature. Preserving our natural resources is important to me and my family; our four children have enjoyed recreating in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and Maine or at the Massachusetts beaches in all their glory, cold water and all.

I understand after a great deal of research and communications with BSS Engineers and the Falmouth Conservation Commission's watchdogs that the berm that lies in front of the Cape Codder is a critical habitat for many birds and wildlife species. All contribute to the ecological balance in the Buzzard Bay area—namely Falmouth, Woods Hole and the great and little Sippewissett marshes and estuaries.

The present berm is covered with an assortment of invasive vine species—two of which, black swallow wart and bayberry, should be removed. These vines do not hold soil and smother the native cedar trees, wild cherry trees and scrub pines that do hold the soil with their deep roots. Their branches provide a lookout and resting place for ospreys and hawks. The berm's native trees and shrubs shelter rabbits and provide nesting places for a wide variety of New

England birds, i.e. goldfinch, cardinals, sparrows, chickadees, skates and hummingbirds. In addition to mice, moles, rabbits, gophers, groundhogs and fox, which nest in the berm, we need the honeybees to pollinate all the plants, flowers and shrubs that house the birds and animals. Insects breed and become food for the birds and bats. It is a food chain critical to fish and game, which in turn feed us.

Naushon, the townhouses next to the Cape Codder, have a more simple challenge. The berm in front of the Cape Codder is covered almost totally with invasive vines that need to be removed; native vegetation should be planted in its place. There are different challenges for the Elizabethan condo building. A portion of this buffer zone has been replanted and registered with the state. However, there is a mixture of native plants, shrubs and trees as well as invasive vines that continue to thrive and cover those very cedar trees and scrub pines. In time, these plants and vines will smother them. Autumn olives and other plants that are not indigenous to this area have taken root; they should be removed and native species planted in their place. Such action would be beneficial, environmentally speaking, but will require yearly maintenance and vigilance.

The project will be a labor of love and require a large financial expenditure; however, it is necessary on many levels. As I see it, we have a simple choice: We can neglect our responsibility to preserve our natural resources and perish in the process, or, we can rescue these natural resources so they survive and thrive. Clean water and a safe food source are the critical challenges facing future generations.

## Phragmites Removal Update

*from Dick Payne*

Gunning Point Pond was cut, the refuse was largely removed and taken to the town leaf dump. Flume Pond also was cut and the dead stems spread around the pond edges with ConCom permission. Both ponds now look pretty good.



An unusual number of snowy owls have been spotted on Cape Cod this winter. Robert Grosch photographed the owl (left) on Black Beach in Sippewissett; Karl Audenaerde spotted the owl on the right on Sandy Neck. According to Project SNOWstorm, "Snowy owls normally live their lives...in the high Arctic. But every once in a while, for reasons that are not fully understood (perhaps an absurd abundance of food during the summer breeding season), snowy owls come flooding down from the north in a phenomenon known as an irruption.

Smaller irruptions happen every few years, but once or twice in a lifetime a mega-irruption occurs, when snowy owls show up much farther south, and in vastly greater numbers, than usual.

This winter, 2013-14, is one such extraordinary event, the largest irruption in the Northeast and Great Lakes regions in four or five decades. Snowy owls have been reported as far south as Florida and Arkansas, and even on Bermuda." For more information, go to [www.projectsnowstorm.org](http://www.projectsnowstorm.org).

## "Z" is Back in the Bahamas

By Nancy McDonald

Good news! I have received a report that Z, "our" banded piping plover (PiPI) was spotted on North Blanket Sounds Flats, North Andros Island, Bahamas, on October 3, 2013—a 1,100-mile flight each way. That is exactly where she was banded in 2010. Clever bird!

I was lucky enough to see her once last year, on May 2. She was on the south side of the Great Sippewissett Marsh inlet, where she successfully nested in 2012. She was the only plover in sight that day when Terry Pomper took the accompanying photo.

I also had a report and photo of her with four other PiPI, at the end of April. According to 2013 Massachusetts Audubon data, she was never observed nesting and had left the area by mid-May. Will she try again in 2014?



*Our piping plover has color bands on her legs, representing a code that is unique to her: ZO DB-W. Z = Black flag, North Andros; O = Orange; DB = Dark Blue (all on her left leg) and W = White flag on right leg. Photo by Terry Pomper*

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## The Magnificent Monarch

One of the most amazing migrations in North America is that of the eastern monarch butterfly, which flies from Mexico through the U.S. to Canada and then back to Mexico—all within a single year, over several generations of insects.

Sadly, this butterfly population is in severe decline. At a summit meeting in Mexico in February 2014, the heads of government of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico signed an agreement to help monarch butterfly recovery. Habitat loss in all three countries is the primary cause, although the logging in Mexico that destroyed several of the butterfly's wintering grounds has largely been halted.

However, herbicide use in the farm belts of Canada and the U.S. has decimated the milkweed plant that the monarchs depend on for laying their eggs and the larvae for feeding. The group Make Way for Monarchs, dedicated to preserving this species and other pollinators, has targeted Sunday, April

14, a citizen day of action to encourage the planting of milkweeds and the wildflowers that monarchs and other pollinators need. April 14 was chosen because it is the 50th anniversary of the death of Rachel Carson, one of the first to warn of the dangers of excessive use of herbicides and pesticides. For more information, go to [www.makewayformonarchs.org](http://www.makewayformonarchs.org).



*The monarch, from Make Way for Monarchs website*

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## The Sippewissett Association

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