

## Sheriff's Meadow Foundation

Sheriff's Meadow Foundation is Martha's Vineyard's local land trust. The mission of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation is to conserve the natural, beautiful, rural landscape and character of Martha's Vineyard for present and future generations. SMF owns 2,005 acres of land and holds conservation restrictions on 858 acres, protecting a total of 2,858 acres on the island. The Foundation's properties represent all the major Martha's Vineyard habitats: beaches, sand dunes, coastal ponds, wooded moraine, forests, swamps, marshes, agricultural lands, meadows and more.



## Education

Phone: (508)693-5207

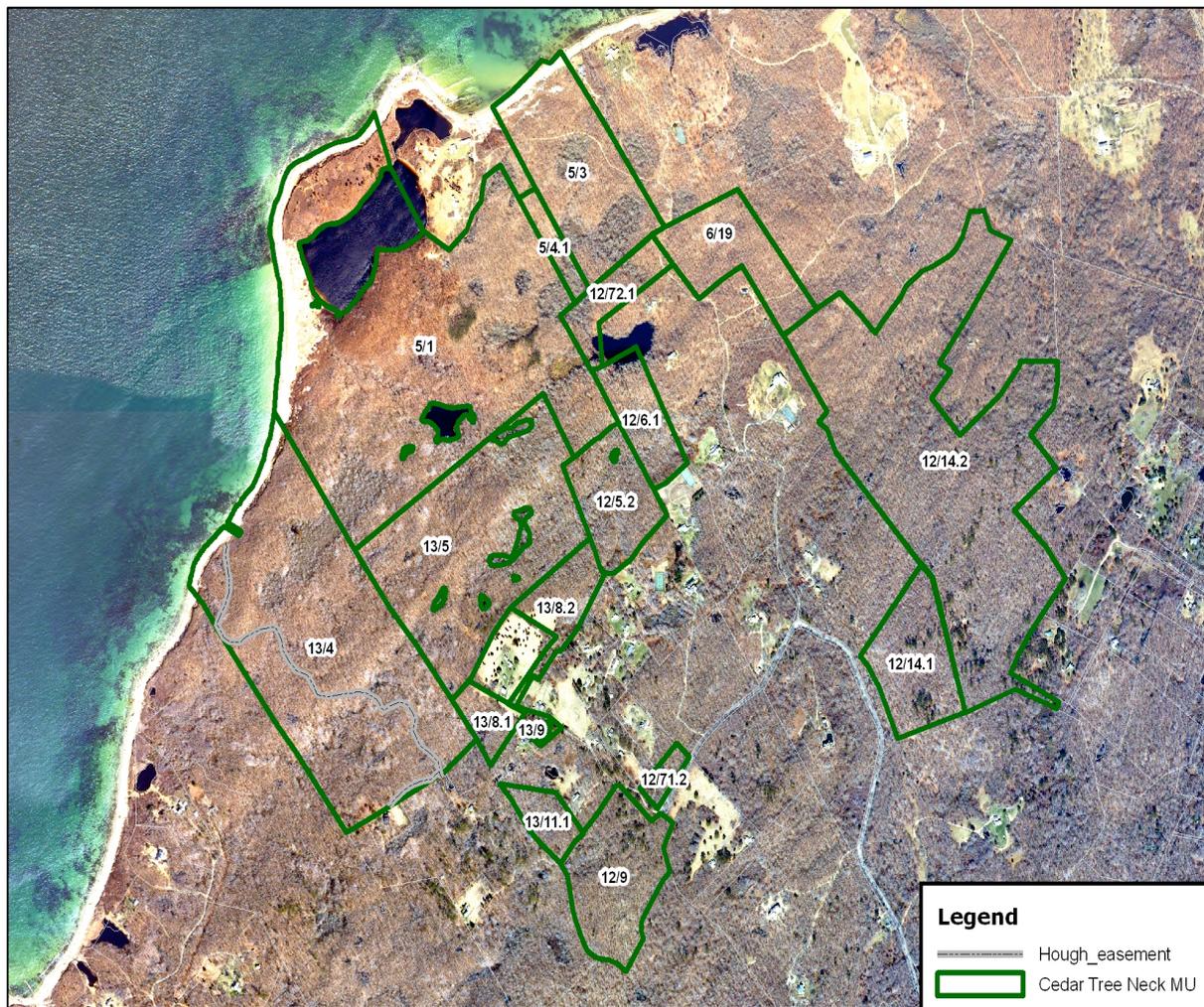
Sheriff's Meadow Foundation has developed curriculum for teachers who would like to bring their students to Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary. Trips are facilitated by classroom teachers, but you are welcome to consult with the Director of Stewardship, Executive Director, and/or Property Manager as their work schedules permit. To schedule a trip, please call the office to make sure there are no other groups planning to visit at the same time.

Adam Moore, Executive Director  
Nevenka Daniels, Administrative Assistant  
Kristen Fauteux, Director of Stewardship  
Bill Bridwell, Property Manager

## Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary

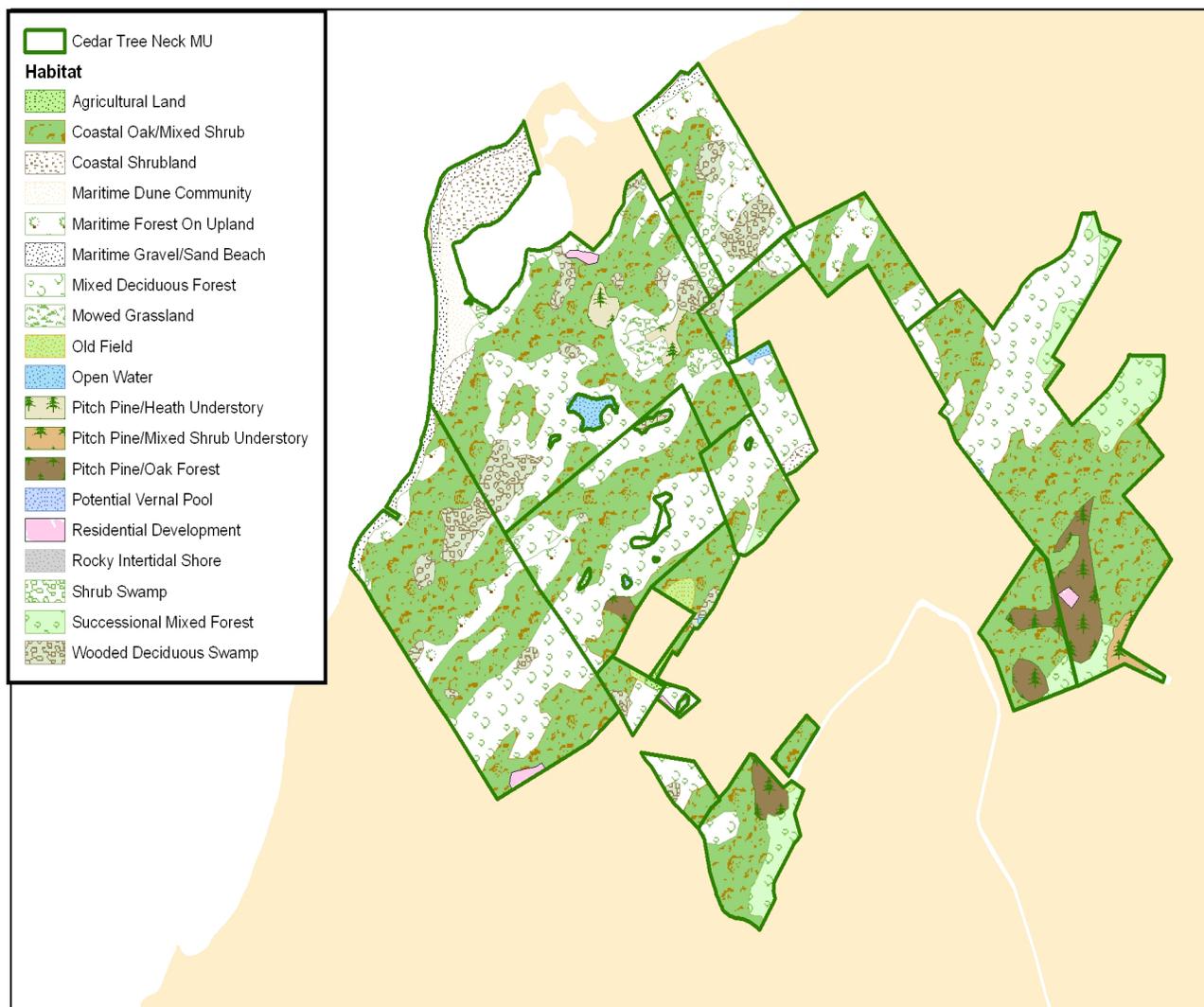
Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary provides excellent examples of the habitats and vistas which make Martha's Vineyard such a special place. Tumbling streams and freshwater ponds, sandy beaches and rocky cliffs, tall oaks and cool beech groves, all can be found in an easy morning or afternoon walk. The Vineyard Sound waves beat against the rocky shoreline, beach grasses bend before salt-laden breezes, stunted American beeches bear wooden witness to a constant, sculpting wind, fresh water tumbles down a rocky stream bed to meet the sea.

Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary exists due to the generosity and persistence of many. In the mid 1960's, Henry Beetle Hough, cofounder of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation, and Allen H. Morgan, then the Executive Vice-President of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, orchestrated a fund-raising campaign to buy 100 acres of land from the Daggett family. Only the second family to own the property since 1700, the Daggetts assisted by selling their land at a price well below market value. At the same time, the Hough family donated 70 acres of abutting family land known as "Fishhook," including over a quarter mile of shoreline. This fundraising campaign was successful, and other gifts followed. Forty acres were given by Charles and Bessie Norton in memory of Alexander S. Reed, and this gift is now known as the Alexander S. Reed bird sanctuary. Other gifts of land and of conservation restrictions have brought the size of the Sanctuary to its current 312 acres, and conservation of land at Cedar Tree Neck continues still.



## Description of habitat/community

Extensive mixed mesic woods dominated by oaks interspersed with hickory, beech and sassafras trees; a man-made pond surrounded by red maple, beetle bung and sassafras trees which feeds a stream with a beech grove and numerous ferns along its banks; a sphagnum moss / red maple swamp drained by another small stream; an overgrown field with little bluestem, pasture rose, cedar trees and blueberry bushes; a planted red pine plantation; a barrier beach separating Cedar Tree Neck Pond from Vineyard Sound; extensive sand cliffs with a rocky beach at their base and the Cedar Tree Neck headland, covered with shrubby heath and low wind sheared cedar and sassafras trees, jutting into Vineyard Sound.



## Land Use History

Some sections of the property were farmland and sheep pasture. Primary crops were turnips, potatoes and hay. Peat was removed from bogs on the property and ice was cut from the ponds. The western section of the neck was a cranberry bog. Red Pines were planted in

sections of the turnip field in 1942. There is an old horse barn and the remains of a cottage on the Irvin property. In 1969, Honeysuckle, Autumn Olive, crab apples and other nonnative or invasive species were planted on the property and Ames Pond was dug to provide habitat upon recommendation from the USDA.

## **Human History**

The land at Cedar Tree Neck was owned by the Norton family until it was bought by John Tobey Daggett in 1846 for \$1,800. In those days, islanders were very self sufficient, and the Daggett family undertook many traditional subsistence activities typical on Martha's Vineyard at the time. Blankets and clothing were made from sheep's wool and cattle skins were made into leather at tanneries. They had extensive vegetable gardens, and typical farm animals: cows, horses, pigs, chickens, ducks, and pigeons. They harvested 200 tons of ice annually, to use in the house and to preserve fish. For each winter, they would have a barrel each of sugar, flour, apples, and 100 pounds of prunes on store.

The Daggetts engaged in many varied activities to produce income as well. Below are just a few:

- ◆ Digging of peat from marshes (low swampy bogs), which people used as a heat source. There was a wharf built nearby on the North Shore for schooners to take peat for sale on mainland
- ◆ Trap-fishing in the pond, along the North Shore, and across the sound along the Elizabeth Islands was a main activity. In their fish traps, they caught scup, sea trout (squeteague, weakfish), squid, black bass, tautog, striped bass. From 1905-1910, they caught approximately 60,000 sea trout each year, each fish weighing 4-5 pounds each, and sold for 8-10 cents per fish. Menhaden, goosefish, blowfish, and squid were also caught and considered waste fish.
- ◆ Turnip and potato farming: potatoes were planted first for harvest in July. Turnips were planted in alternating rows and harvested after first frost. Dead fish and seaweed were used as fertilizer. The family grew about 1,000 bushels annually, and they were sold at approximately 25 cents/bushel. For turnips kept by the household, a trench would be dug (2 ft deep, 8 ft wide, 50-60 feet long) and covered in beach grass, then soil. Soil pipes were placed to allow moisture to escape.
- ◆ In 1942, they planted 3-4,000 red pines in old field to keep out oaks and shrubbery.
- ◆ From shipwrecks, the family gathered items such as oranges, bananas, coal, lumber, candles, army clothing. A particularly large batch of coal was recovered from one shipwreck and sold for profit.

## **Other Interesting Facts:**

In WW II, the North shore of MV was used for training of soldiers-- they practiced landing on and securing the beach, using small landing craft infantry boats. Some men would get lost and left behind, and stay over night with the Daggett's until a boat was sent back for them.

## **Cedar Tree Neck Species List**

### ***Mammals***

Raccoon  
River Otter  
Gray Squirrel  
Chipmunk  
Striped Skunk  
Coyote???

### ***Amphibians***

Green Frog  
Pickerel Frog  
Bullfrog  
Fowler's Toad  
Spring Peeper

### ***Reptiles***

Snapping Turtle  
Painted Turtle  
Eastern Box Turtle  
Kingsnake  
Garter Snake

### ***Birds***

Osprey  
Northern Harrier  
Screech Owl  
Great Horned Owl  
Piping Plover  
Scarlet Tanager  
Eastern Towhee  
Goldfinch  
Loon  
Kingfisher  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Red Tailed Hawk  
Wood Cock  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Gray Catbird  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Blue Jay  
Crow  
Bank Swallow  
Black Capped Chickadee  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
American Robin

American Redstart  
Northern Cardinal  
Red-winged Blackbird

**Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species documented from site:**

Listed species known from the area include three moth species:

- *Catocala herodias gerhardi*- Gerhard's Underwing Moth
- *Stenoporpia polygrammaria* – Faded Gray Geometer
- *Papaipema sulphurata* – Water-willow stem borer

**Threats to wildlife:**

- Invasive species
- Insecticide spraying
- Habitat loss
- Erosion

References:

Dagget, John Tobey. It Began with a Whale: Memories of Cedar Tree Neck

Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary Management Plan