



A MARTHA'S VINEYARD LAND TRUST

Newsletter

Winter 2020

OAK TREE, QUANSOO FARM IN DECEMBER

Issue No. 67

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Founded in 1959 by Henry Beetle
Hough and Elizabeth Bowie Hough

Moon Walks



Full moon. Photo: courtesy of Paul Doherty

“Where are you taking us, Dad?”

So asked my children, seeming a bit nervous. It was a full moon, on a beautiful summer night. I had mustered the children on the front lawn, and had asked them to accompany me on a walk in the moonlight. Showing a bit less appreciation for the glory of the full moon than perhaps I had hoped, they nevertheless dutifully joined me on a moonlit walk toward the sea. I had informed them that no flashlight would be necessary, yet they did not quite believe me, and I noticed furtive flashes of flashlight beams, blinking along here and there, as they followed along behind.

Ours was a memorable walk. By the light of the moon, we strolled along the Crab Creek Road, walking from Quansoo Farm, to the Atlantic Ocean, and back again. The children mainly seemed to enjoy returning safely home, and realizing that their father had not lost his mind. I however, enjoyed the walk so much that I resolved to set out for a moonlight walk during every full moon — albeit without the children.

For the following year, I did indeed venture forth, walking during every full moon. Naturally most of these walks took place near home, at Quansoo. One memorable walk, however, took place in New Orleans, as I was in town during the full moon for the annual Rally of the Land Trust Alliance. Of all the full moon walks, the best took place during the winter, and the loveliest of all took place when snow covered the ground. After a year's worth of walks, I discontinued this practice - until last month.

In mid-December of 2019, the island had settled into a deep freeze. Snow blanketed the ground. On this particular evening, I attended the annual middle school Christmas concert at the Performing Arts Center. Melissa was planning to take the children off-island for the weekend, and had a ferry reservation for later that evening. So after a great roll of the timpani, the concert ended and I kissed my family goodbye, and headed home to Quansoo. This was the night of the full moon, and the moon beckoned.

Glowing just above the bare branches of the forest of oaks, this last full moon of the year bathed the entire plain in its silver light. Beside the moon stood Orion, bow taut, dominating the southeastern night sky. The night was cold, and clear, and still.

I bundled up and headed out. On most full moons, one does not need a flashlight for a walk, and this is especially the case when the full moon shines upon the snow. I walked over to the Hancock-Mitchell House for a moment. The windows of the old house reflected the moonlight, just as they have for every full moon, for centuries. I turned in the direction of the moon, and found that the snow glittered, as the crystals of snow split the rays of moonlight into prismatic sparkles.

To the ocean I walked, treading upon a familiar path at an unfamiliar time of day. I walked beside the field, fringed with little bluestem and switchgrass and a bristling thicket of huckleberry. In the woods, the moon cast a lacework shadow of interlocking branches upon the snow. I crossed the Crab Creek footbridge, and trod over the dune, to the sea. There, the moon shone upon a placid Atlantic Ocean, and toward Nomans Land, a lone fishing boat cast its own white light upon the sea.

I appreciate all of the scenic features of Martha's Vineyard. I marvel at the grandeur of the Gay Head Cliffs, at the grotesque beauty of stunted beeches at Cedar Tree Neck, at the great curving arm of Cape Poge. Yet for all the island's scenic beauty, the greatest feature, in my view, is the dark night sky. On moonless nights, the stars sparkle, and the Milky Way stretches from south to north in a great arc, and one can easily find the constellations, timeless and eternal. And on the full moon, the moon floods plain and moraine with silver light, and casts a bright silver beam on the surface of pond and sea.

Fear not. The next full moon, embrace it. Leave the flashlight at home, step outside, and see the wonders of the island in an entirely new light.



Moon walk. Photo: courtesy of Paul Doherty

Campaign Update

For Future Generations

THE CAMPAIGN FOR SHERIFF'S MEADOW FOUNDATION

Achieving our Mission:

Conservation – forever protecting the natural, beautiful, rural landscape and character of Martha's Vineyard.

Stewardship – securing the ability of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation to care for its lands and trails in perpetuity.

Community – connecting the trails, enhancing the lands, serving our island community.

Our Financial Goals:

- \$6,000,000 endowment and dedicated funds
- \$5,000,000 annual fund and operations
- \$2,000,000 trail fund – half for current trail use and half for long-term fund
- \$1,000,000 land acquisition fund
- \$1,000,000 land enhancements and education

Total Goal: \$15 million

Current Status: \$10.6 million raised in cash, bequest intentions, and pledges. **Needed to meet overall goal:** \$4.4 million.

2020 Spring Receptions

Please join us!

March 5, 2020 in Washington, DC
at The Army and Navy Club
Guest speaker: Will Shafroth, President & CEO of the
National Park Foundation

April 15, 2020 in Boston, MA
at The Union Club

We hope you will join us at our spring receptions. We will be gathering at 6:00 pm for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Executive Director Adam R. Moore and members of the Board of Directors welcome the opportunity to personally meet our supporters and to share with you the latest news about the organization.

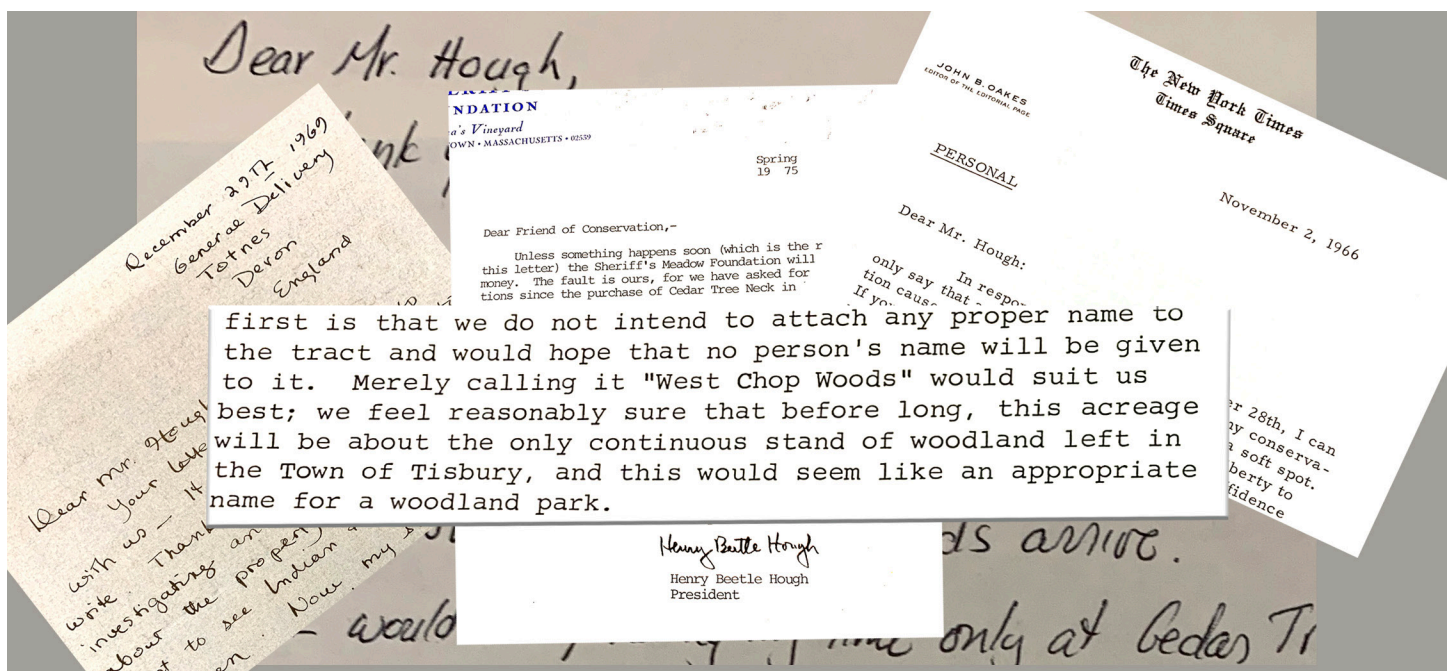
If you would like to attend, RSVP to Susan Hughes at hughes@sheriffsmeadow.org or call 508.693.5207.

by Adam Moore

On the day of the appointment, I entered the campus from Amsterdam Avenue and walked past the Columbia School of Journalism. I imagined Mr. Hough as

Once in the Rare Books and Manuscripts section of the library, I was directed to lock my coat and all my possessions in a locker, except for pencils, a notebook, my phone, and a laptop computer. After stowing my belongings, I entered a glass-walled room, and presented myself to another librarian, who was sitting at a desk at the other end of the room. The librarian reviewed my identification, reviewed my request, and directed me to sit at Table 10, and wait.

From my time with the archives, what struck me most was the personal touch that Henry employed in the work of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation, and the lofty goals that he set — and achieved. The material in the archives testifies to



A small sampling of letters from the HBH archives at Columbia University



Rain, Rain...

by Kate Feiffer

the great breadth of the network that Henry had formed, a network that extended far beyond the shores of the island. I also felt a great sense of closeness to many of the individuals involved over the years, some of whom I knew, and some of whom I only knew of. Finally, I left the library pondering the importance of written correspondence, especially written correspondence on paper. In the Sheriff's Meadow Foundation files, the correspondence drops off precipitously sometime around the year 2000, when most communication became electronic. Though we may be communicating with one another in writing more than ever, via email and text and all means of messaging and social media, I believe we are failing to commit this to paper, and therefore, to posterity. I left the archives feeling a strong belief in the value of written correspondence, of ink upon paper, and most of all, of the value of the handwritten personal note.

I merely perused the contents, and took notes, and a few photographs. Cassie Murray, however, volunteered to create a comprehensive electronic copy and record the contents of these boxes, and others that may have contained relevant material. In December, Ms. Murray spent several days at Columbia, meticulously describing each page in the archives, and arranging for a digital scan to be prepared. Thanks to the work of Ms. Murray, in early 2020, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation will have a complete digitized set of these archives available for its use.

Thanks to Edie Blake's foresight, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation will soon have a digitized set of Henry Beetle Hough's archives related to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation. On behalf of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation, I express our sincere gratitude to Edie Blake for donating these irreplaceable archives to the safekeeping of Columbia University, and to Cassie Murray, an architectural preservationist, for so thoroughly preparing a digital copy for our use and information.



Greta Thunberg was named *Time* magazine's Person of the Year a day after a torrential rainstorm, the likes of which my Vineyard-raised husband says he has never seen, washed away a swatch of land under Lambert's Cove Road. Thunberg, as readers of this newsletter likely know, is the young climate change activist who called out world leaders during her speech at a U.N. Climate Change Conference; Lambert's Cove Road, as we also know, is not prone to washaways.

While the media has focused more on rising sea levels than the impact of torrential rainstorms, the drenchings and the potential for destructive rainstorms are worth noting. According to a 2014 National Climate Assessment Report, "The Northeast has experienced a greater recent increase in extreme precipitation than any other region in the United States." The study states it is challenging to predict precipitation, however, "the frequency of heavy downpours is projected to continue to increase as the century progresses."

"I do think we are getting a lot more rain, and it's impacting the trails, and we need to keep that in mind for how we proceed in the future," says Bill Bridwell, SMF Property Manager.

After a fierce rain storm in November 2018, Director of Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary Suzan Bellincampi wrote in the Vineyard Gazette: "We all know that water at its purest is simply H₂O.

Rain, however, is often adulterated with different particulates present in the air. In coastal area like ours, rain can have salt content, while other gases such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ammonium, and other particulates may be part of each drop."

In a recent email exchange, I asked Bellincampi about the impact of extreme rainfall on conservation properties. She wrote back explaining that rainfall can lead to erosion, washouts, and can send sediments into ponds: "Sediments can include particles which can increase turbidity, and therefore water temperatures, when particulate matter heats up, decrease oxygen as warmer water holds less oxygen, leading to a decline of species that are sensitive to temperature."

"We are trying to incorporate the impact of rainfall in the design of the trails, so that water in controlled somewhat," says Bridwell. "As we're cutting, we try to minimize the grade, meaning the incline of a trail, where possible, and cut at a tilt to make it so that water will go across, not straight down. And we're putting in *water bars* and *water breaks* on areas that the erosion is already affecting the trails." Bridwell explains that a water bar is a structure, usually a log or stone, that is above the grade of the trail, set across a trail to drain the water off to the side. Water breaks are like a step that is used to help slow water down on places where it may be rushing.

SMF Executive Director Adam Moore adds that SMF is working on preparing properties by paying greater attention to erosion potential on trails, and the need to manage water during storm events. "In the future, we will need to place a greater emphasis on the infrastructure supporting our conservation lands. For example, we need to make sure that our culverts are adequately sized and properly sited, so that roads will not wash away in a deluge. We need to pay greater attention to the designs of footbridges, and the slopes of trails, and the increasing maintenance needs of trails and access roads. This is an opportunity for us to set a new standard for conservation design."

In Conversation with Hillary Noyes-Keene

The SMF Newsletter recently sat down with Hillary Noyes-Keene for an update on the Master Plan projects she's been working on. Below are her remarks, edited for space and clarity.



Photo: Sara Piazza

The Master Plan committee was formed in 2017, after Sheriff's Meadow Foundation held a Strategic Plan retreat, during which board members were asked to speak about different parts of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation. Adam asked me to speak about stewardship. I was fairly new to the board at that point and was a little nervous about speaking, but after a lot of thinking I came to the conclusion that it would be really great if Sheriff's Meadow could look at their properties within the greater context of the Vineyard, and within that umbrella view, also look at the properties individually, to try to create consistency through the properties while honoring each property's individual sense of place on the Island.

Martha's Vineyard has a landscape that's unique, and when people who are sensitive to their environment and to the landscape come



Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary. Photo: Bill Bridwell

here, something about the Vineyard stays with them, and that's a sense of place. It's that feeling that a location has, whether it's a woodland area, the outwash plain, or a meadow. It's how the landscape impacts you individually; how it meets the sky, how it meets architecture, and what happens in between. Sheriff's Meadow properties can honor that sense of place and the Master Plan committee is figuring out how to dovetail

that honoring of a sense of place with making the spaces functional for people to visit them.

In part, we want to do this by making sure that signs are consistent at all of Sheriff's Meadow properties by addressing trail heads and

parking, kiosks and sheds, storage facilities, and the introduction of bathroom facilities and benches. Pretty much anything that you would find on every property.

The first project that we looked at was Cedar Tree Neck. The Taylor Gate parking lot was introduced, and that set the tone for what a trail head could look like. It's beautiful. It's an extension of the existing stone walls, and brings in more native vegetation to screen the cars. It's very simple, but it's a strong statement to the public that this is the entrance: This is Sheriff's Meadow, this is how Sheriff's Meadow wants to present itself.

Down at Cedar Tree Neck, we are in the process of restoring and renovating the existing Daggett parking lot, and that entails separating the caretakers house, which we're trying to make a little bit more private from the public area. One of the ways we're doing that is by building a shed/bathroom. The shed is for Sheriff's Meadow maintenance use, and the bathroom is for people who are using the Cedar Tree Neck area. We're also formalizing the parking area so that people actually know where to park, because in the past people have parked all over the place down there.

Kathleen Forsythe is helping us standardize the design of the larger kiosk, which will have historic and educational information, basic signage, maps, newsletters, and pamphlets. Also, the Irvin trail is going in and then a new small parking lot for that as well, so Cedar Tree Neck will actually have three parking lots, and then when Irvin trail is added, another one and a half mile of trails.

Caroline Tuthill Preserve is one of the next properties that we're looking at. We're working with landscape architect Kristen



Reimann, who is helping us with the landscape designs. Right now the parking down there is not safe at all. Everyone just pulls off of Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road, so the idea is to introduce a safe parking area,

probably for six to eight cars, and create a very clear trail head with a similar kiosk to what we have down at Cedar Tree Neck, that incorporates the history of the land and an educational piece.

Quansoo Farm has been an ongoing project in the Master Plan with the renovation of the Hancock-Mitchell House and restoring the farm to as close to its original use. Grey Barn Farm is leasing land, so cows and sheep have been down there. Driveways have been rerouted. Part of the master plan involves moving the road so that it goes directly to the Mitchell house and not to the two other houses on that property, and to create more of an educational hub down there. Eventually there will be a kitchen garden and probably some fields planted, but that's to be determined.



About Hillary Noyes-Keene

Hillary Noyes-Keene grew up in rural upstate New York and summered on Martha's Vineyard, which led to a true love of landforms and nature. She attended Macalester College in St. Paul, MN, graduating with a degree in fine arts and elementary education and continued her education at the University of Colorado, Denver, graduating with dual master degrees in Landscape Architecture and Architecture. With degrees in hand, Hillary moved to Martha's Vineyard and started her own business, Noyes Design. After ten years, Hillary traded in her design tools for a camera and easel, making her way back to the fine arts. In the midst of those transitions, Hillary married John Keene, and together they have four children who roam Vineyard landscapes and waterways, as well as our greater world.

Do You Know...

What these steps are called?



Frankie Drogan at Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary

- a) tread
- b) gradation bridge
- c) stile
- d) cairn

Correct Answer:
c. Stile

The origin and definition of the word "Stile," according to Online Etymology Dictionary: Old English *stigel*, stile "device for climbing, ladder," related to *stigen* "to climb," from Proto-Germanic *stig- "to climb" (see stair). An arrangement to allow persons to pass but not sheep and cattle.

Birding in the Classroom

By Kristen Geagan

2019 was a busy year for Sheriff's Meadow Foundation's educational initiatives.



Artwork by Ada Coffey

At the Edgartown School, Samantha Look, SMF education coordinator, and I worked with thirteen students in the Fifth Grade Enrichment Program. This program is an educational, project-based learning class. "Community experts in various fields of study are invited into the classroom to share their knowledge and expertise with the students," explains Sue Costello, the Edgartown school enrichment program coordinator. "The lessons are meant to enhance

student skills, and broaden their educational perspectives of the world around them."

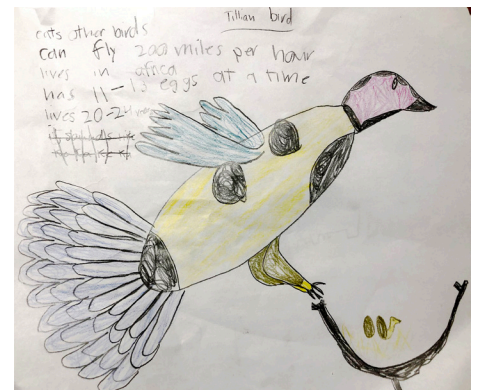
Sam and I created a curriculum from materials provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. We met with students six times in the classroom, and took one field trip. Some days we brought props, like stuffed animals, fake insects, and berries, to show what birds eat, and we brought feathers, real bird nests, and supplies to make nests. We also played a bird song identification game called Bird Song Hero, which the students loved! We had a Powerpoint presentation that we created for four of the classroom sessions, and had two sessions on nest making.

The program at the West Tisbury School started on October 29th and was part of a larger after school program. Sam and I met weekly with a group of ten students for about an hour. We had hoped to do a lot of outside birding, but rainy afternoons interrupted our plans, so we brought in the presentations that we used with the Edgartown school. We also played the Bird Song Hero game, and had students draw their

favorite bird, then draw an imaginary bird to present to the rest of the group. We were able to take the students out twice and went birding with them around the school.

We will be starting up again with this group in January and are looking forward to continuing, and expanding, SMF's educational initiatives in 2020.

SMF would like to thank Lizzie Glidden Boyle for her encouragement and support of the Edgartown bird program.



Artwork by Tessa Bryant



A MARTHA'S VINEYARD LAND TRUST

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Upcoming Events

SPECIAL EVENTS

Summer Benefit

Monday, July 20, 2020

Location to be determined.

GUIDED WALKS

Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary, West Tisbury

Saturday, February 1, 2020
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Explore the wooded hills of our largest property. Prepare for a strenuous hike over rugged terrain. Please park at the Taylor Gate parking area off of Indian Hill Road.

Sheriff's Meadow Sanctuary, Edgartown

Saturday May 9, 2020
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Join us for a guided walk and find spring ephemerals, at Sheriff's Meadow Foundation's first property, which offers a loop walk and views of John Butler's Mudhole, Eel Pond and Nantucket Sound. Meet at the Kiosk on Plantingfield Way. Please carpool or walk, as parking is limited.

Caroline Tuthill Preserve, Edgartown

Tuesday, July 28, 2019
9:00 am - 11:00 am

Meet us for a guided walk and explore the woods, salt marshes, and shoreline at one of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation's largest sanctuaries. Plan to meet at the kiosk which is located 0.4 miles west of the Triangle in Edgartown.

RECEPTIONS

The Army and Navy Club, Washington, DC

Thursday, March 5, 2020
6:00 - 8:00 pm

Save the date for a reception in Washington, DC. Please plan to join us for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and to meet Executive Director Adam R. Moore and Will Shafroth, of National Park Foundation. Details to follow.

Union Club, Boston, MA

Wednesday, April 15, 2020
6:00 - 8:00 pm

Save the date for a reception in Boston, MA. Please plan to join us for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and to meet Executive Director Adam R. Moore. Details to follow.