

SHERIFF'S  
MEADOW  
FOUNDATION



A MARTHA'S VINEYARD LAND TRUST

# 2019 Annual Report

CEDAR TREE NECK SANCTUARY





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**Editor**

Kate Feiffer

Founded in 1959 by Henry Beetle  
Hough and Elizabeth Bowie Hough

# Report of the Executive Director

*On the year concluded June 30, 2019*

Thanks to strong support from our donors, continued donations of land, and the hard work and dedication of our volunteers and staff and contractors, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation ended its fiscal year on June 30, 2019 in strong form. The past year featured the creation of new sanctuaries, expansion of existing preserves, continued ecological restoration work, the adoption of an all-Island trail plan, and strong financial support from our donors.

On June 15, 2018, the Sheriff's Meadow Foundation Board of Directors held its Annual Meeting. The Board elected Elizabeth Packer, Sara Tucker, and Jim Vercruysse as new Directors. President Brien O'Brien, Vice-President Peter Getsinger, Treasurer Walt Looney, and Assistant Treasurer Susannah Bristol were all re-elected to one-year terms in these officer positions. Bill Howell was elected to a one-year term as Assistant Treasurer, and Hillary Noyes-Keene was elected to a one-year term as Clerk. The Board bade farewell to Directors Jennifer Blum and Samme Thompson, who left the Board after a decade of dedicated service.

Lisa and Mike MacKenty of Edgartown hosted the 2018 Annual Summer Benefit on their land beside Wintucket Cove in Edgartown on the evening of July 16. Some 450 supporters of Sheriff's Meadow Foundation gathered that evening, and Mr. MacKenty shared his family's history on the land. Of particular interest was the conservation restriction that John MacKenty had donated to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation some years earlier, further down the cove. Many



*Champ Family Preserve, Photo: Kate Feiffer*

guests also fondly recalled childhood visits to an old summer camp known as Camp Wintucket, which is located on MacKenty property just down the cove.

In the summer of 2018, Director of Property Management, Elizabeth Loucks was exploring the marshes at Caroline Tuthill Preserve and spotted a patch of *Phragmites* reed that looked a bit different than the others. Ms. Loucks investigated, and consulted with the State Botanist. Ultimately, the Commonwealth confirmed that Ms. Loucks had discovered a native—but rare—strain of *Phragmites*, known as *Phragmites americanus*. The botanical discovery was reported in the journal *Mass Wildlife* as well as in an article in the *Martha's Vineyard Times*.

On September 11, 2018, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation launched a new initiative known as the "Take a Break" Campaign. Envisioned by West Tisbury resident Susan Silk, the Take a Break campaign involved placing wooden benches approximately one mile from each other along all public trails on the Island. All of the benches were made by volunteers, including the wood shop students at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, and many of the benches were hand-made from Vineyard-grown wood. Doug Ruskin of West Tisbury made the first bench of catalpa, and it was placed along the Garrett Family Trail at Caroline Tuthill Preserve on September 11.



*Mike MacKenty, Photo: Sarah Piazza*



*Phragmites americanus, Photo: Robert Wernerehl*

Sheriff's Meadow Foundation continued its effort to support Island agriculture over the past year. The Foundation leased a pasture off the Lambert's Cove Road to Bruce Marshard, who grazed a team of draft horses on the land. At Quansoo Farm, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation worked with the Grey Barn & Farm to return cattle to the land. In August, several of the cows bore calves, the first calves to be born at Quansoo Farm in perhaps 80 years.

On October 11, 2018, the David and Elizabeth Ames Irrevocable Trust and Elizabeth Ames donated 5.2 acres of land on Chappaquiddick to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation. Found near Sampson's Hill, the highest point on Chappaquiddick, the donated land abuts other Sheriff's Meadow Foundation conservation land—including land donated by David Ames and his family—as well as land protected by the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission.

On December 28, 2018, Norman Champ donated a 5.7-acre property on North

Neck, on Chappaquiddick, to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation for conservation. Known as the Champ Family Preserve, the land features glorious views from high atop the bluffs. From the cliff top, one can see the entirety of Cape Poge, the Cape Poge Gut, all of Edgartown Outer Harbor, and the breadth of Nantucket Sound. In accepting the gift of land, the Foundation also agreed to raze the house on the property, thereby undeveloping the land and returning it to a wild and natural state.

Land donations continued in 2019. In 2019, Elizabeth and Brian McBride donated to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation three-tenths of one acre of land along the Indian Hill Road. Although small in size, the donated land expanded the boundaries of Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary, and lengthened by 363 feet the protected frontage along the Indian Hill Road.

Edited by Kate Feiffer and designed by Susan Hughes, a new special edition of the Sheriff's Meadow Foundation newsletter was launched in 2019. The first special edition was devoted entirely to the Sheriff's Meadow Sanctuary. Future special editions will focus broadly on trails and trail connections across Martha's Vineyard.

Building on the success of the TrailsMV mobile app, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation adopted an All-Island Trail Initiative in March 2019. The initiative is based on working with willing landowners and a partnership with colleague organizations, including MassAudubon, The Nature Conservancy, the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission, The Trustees of Reservations, the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation and more. The initiative includes a five-year plan to link all of the trails on the Island into one, interconnected web. In addition, the plan envisions a single, all-Island Trail that links Vineyard Haven, Aquinnah and Edgartown into one grand loop. The plan calls for \$2,000,000 to be raised over five years, with half of the money to be spent on the trails and half to be set aside in a fund for future trail connections.

The Foundation continued to reach out to its supporters throughout the year, both

on-Island and off-Island. In March, Sheriff's Meadow held its first ever reception in Washington, DC, at the elegant Army & Navy Club. Those whom attended enjoyed hearing the remarks of President Brien O'Brien and Land Trust Alliance President & CEO Andrew Bowman. During the time spent in Washington, Executive Director Adam Moore and Board member Sara Tucker met with Rep. William Keating and with staff members for Senator Warren and Senator Warner. In April, Nancy and Jeffrey Randall hosted a reception for Foundation supporters at The Country Club in Brookline, MA and in May, the Foundation greeted its New York City supporters at the Yale Club of New York City.

In May, the Foundation received a very generous bequest from the estate of Harriette Otteson. Ms. Otteson, who died on October 28, 2018, gave to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation her 3.6 acre property on Menemsha Crossroad in Chilmark. Ms. Otteson is a member of the Poole family of Chilmark. In 2007, she had reached an agreement with Sheriff's Meadow Foundation as to her bequest intentions, which included guidance for Sheriff's Meadow on the use and disposition of the land. Sheriff's Meadow Foundation expresses its profound gratitude for this most generous bequest.

On June 21, 2019, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation held its Annual Meeting at the Wakeman Center. At that meeting, the Board elected new Directors Stever Aubrey, Matthew Dix, Thomas Enders, Geoffrey Lauprete, Thomas Rapone, and Amy Weinberg. All of the current Officers were re-elected, and Emily Bramhall was named an Honorary Director. Finally, the Board expressed its sincere gratitude to Jim Ver-cruysse and Molly Glasgow, who stepped down as Directors for their dedicated service, and to Chris Alley, Susannah Bristol, and Kathy Ham, who each left the Board after completing a decade of devoted service to the Foundation.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam R. Moore  
Executive Director



*Adam Moore, Rep. Bill Keating, and Sara Tucker in Washington DC. Photo: Courtesy Bill Keating staff member*



# Report of the Treasurer

Sheriff's Meadow Foundation successfully completed phase one of our *For Future Generations* capital campaign during fiscal 2019 and in July 2019 launched the public part of the campaign. We also received several generous gifts of land during the year, including the magnificent Champ property on Chappaquiddick. With these contributions, along with the continued generous support of our annual donors, we strengthened our resources significantly and finished the year in a strong financial position.

During the fiscal year our activities focussed on acquiring and rationalizing our land interests, as well as expanding and improving our trail system, with a long-term goal of creating an Island-wide interconnected trail network. We also invested in improvements on our properties, such as the restoration of wet meadows and the removal of invasive plants at Sheriff's Meadow Sanctuary. And of course we carried on our regular property stewardship and program activities, which expand in scope as our properties increase.

The following discussion highlights certain financial information about our fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. Our complete audited financial statements are available on request.

## Assets and Liabilities

Our total assets at June 30, 2019 were \$72.03 million, compared with \$67.07 million at the end of the 2018 fiscal year, an increase of \$4.96 million.

The largest components of our assets are the land and land improvements we hold. These totalled \$59.58 million at the end of fiscal 2019, an increase of \$3.63 million since the end of fiscal 2018. The increase reflects the Champ donation and other land interest contributions, offset by the sale of a property in which we retained a conservation easement. Our land holdings are reflected on our financial statements at their fair value at their acquisition date. Over time the value of our land has appreciated significantly, so that the current value of the land significantly exceeds its balance sheet valuation.

Our investments are the second largest component of our assets. Cash and cash equivalents and investments as of the end of

fiscal 2019 were \$9.47 million, compared with \$8.45 million at fiscal year-end 2018. The increase of \$1.02 million reflects both favorable securities markets and strong support from our donors during the 2019 period. Our current endowment distribution policy provides for the withdrawal of about 4.5% of our average available investment balances each year to support our program activities. Our finance committee reviews our distribution policy at least annually in the light of earnings expectations and cash needs.

Our total liabilities at fiscal year-end were \$0.65 million, compared with \$0.56 million at the end of the previous fiscal year. We have no outstanding borrowings.

## Revenue and Expenses

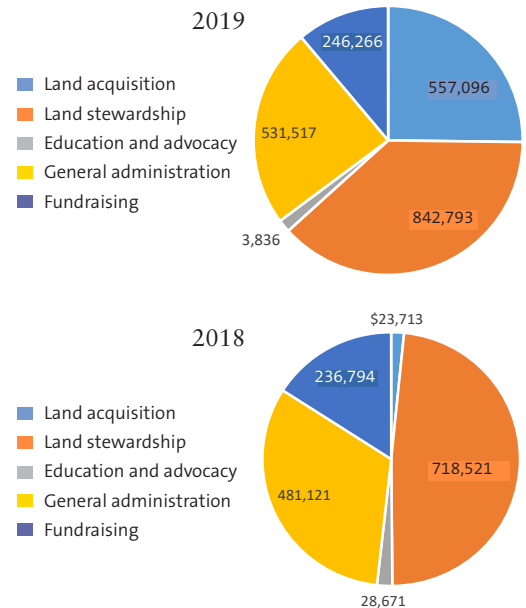
Our total support and revenue in fiscal 2019 was \$7.08 million, compared with \$2.49 million during fiscal 2018.

Donations of land and conservation restrictions totalled \$4.12 million during fiscal 2019. We had no contributions of land interests in fiscal 2018.

We received other donations (including support for our summer benefit and donated services) of \$2.05 million in fiscal 2019 and \$1.94 million in fiscal 2018 (a portion of which in each year were restricted as to use). Approximately \$1.48 million of our non-land donations in fiscal 2019 were unrestricted. Unrestricted cash contributions are critical for meeting our land acquisition, stewardship and on-going program needs. We depend heavily on the President's Circle, our annual fund appeal and the summer benefit to provide our funding, and we continue to look for ways to broaden our support.

The other major component of our revenue was income on our investments, which was \$0.49 million in fiscal 2019 and \$0.42 million in fiscal 2018. Our endowment provides support to supplement annual giving. During fiscal 2019 we completed the private phase of a campaign to increase our endowment, and in July 2019 launched the public phase of the campaign. We anticipate that an enhanced endowment will provide additional long-term strength and flexibility to our operations, but we will continue to rely heavily on our annual donors.

Our expenses in fiscal 2019 were \$2.21 million, compared with \$1.49 million in the preceding fiscal year. The components of our expenses are:



During fiscal 2019 the costs of acquiring new land interests, disposing of one property, re-negotiating existing easements and preparing for possible future land transactions resulted in higher land acquisition and general and administrative expenses. Our trail work and other improvement projects, among other activities, as well as our growing land portfolio resulted in higher stewardship costs. Although we carefully control our expenses, we expect stewardship costs will increase in the future as we maintain and enhance more land, restore the ecological values of certain properties, improve accessibility, build trails, and strive to provide exceptional management for our properties.

We are enormously grateful to the more than 2,000 donors and volunteers who support Sheriff's Meadow Foundation. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Walt Looney  
Treasurer





# Message from Brien O'Brien

*Board President*



*Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary, Photo: Kate Warner*

Henry Beetle Hough was by no means a rich man, but like all of us who read this newsletter, he was a man who appreciated the beauty of the Island and cared deeply for it. In December of 1958, Hough, an Edgartown resident and the editor of the Vineyard Gazette, took the proceeds he received from the recent sale of a book and purchased ten acres of land to place into conservation. These 10 acres, along with the ice house pond and John Butler's Mudhole, are the area we now call Sheriff's Meadow Sanctuary. Hough had the presence of mind and foresight to recognize that if he and others did not step forward and start to conserve places of unique beauty on the Island, they would be forfeited to the whims of developers.

Today, thanks to Henry Hough and many other generous benefactors, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation preserves and protects over 2,900 acres of rolling grass plains, forests, ponds, wetlands and sea shores on our wonderful island. Our marquis properties, like the Sanctuary in Edgartown at the foot of Henry Hough's backyard on Pease's Point

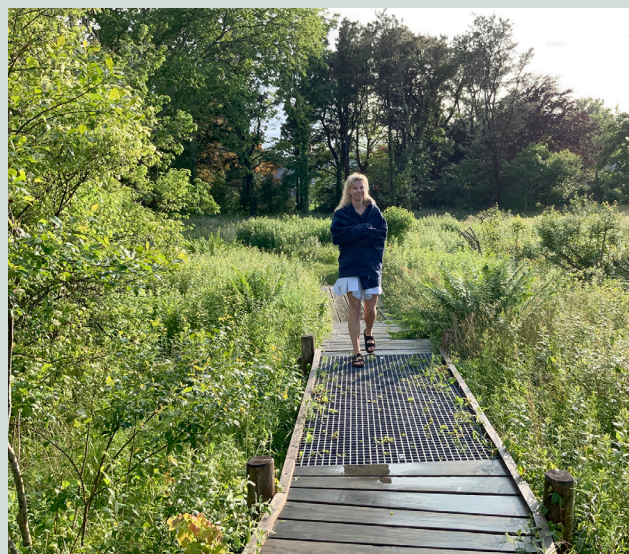
Way, Caroline Tuthill Preserve, Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary, Quansoo Farm, West Chop Woods, and our other properties across the Island, serve as places to connect with nature, to walk, and explore with family and friends. Sheriff's Meadow Foundation properties enrich our lives and our relationships—whether you're escaping summer traffic with a hike through Middle Road Sanctuary, bundling up to take in the golden afternoon winter light on Quansoo Farm, heading out to The Hal & Olive Tilghman Preserve on Chappaquiddick, or bird watching at Little Beach...if you have read this far, you know of what I speak!

**Please join me and my family in making a special gift to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation's campaign *For Future Generations*.**

I would like to ask you to think about the future Martha's Vineyard and what you can do to pay back the debt we owe to Henry Beetle Hough and his group of initial supporters. Each of us, whether we are weekend visitors, monthly renters, seasonal or year-round residents, has an opportunity to pay that debt forward to help future generations enjoy this special island.



*Caroline Tuthill Preserve, Photo: Steve Chapman*



*Alex O'Brien at Sheriff's Meadow Sanctuary, Photo: Brien O'Brien*



# Annual Report Facts

## *For year ended June 30, 2019*

### *Through your generosity ...*

Total Acres Conserved: 2,896

Total Acres Owned: 2,086

Total Acres under Conservation Restriction: 810

Total Number of Preserves: 74

Total Miles of Trails: 23

Total Miles of Trails on TrailsMV app: 200

Total Miles of Conservation Boundaries: 90

Total Properties in Agriculture Production: 9

Total Number of Donors: 817

Total Number of Volunteers: 80

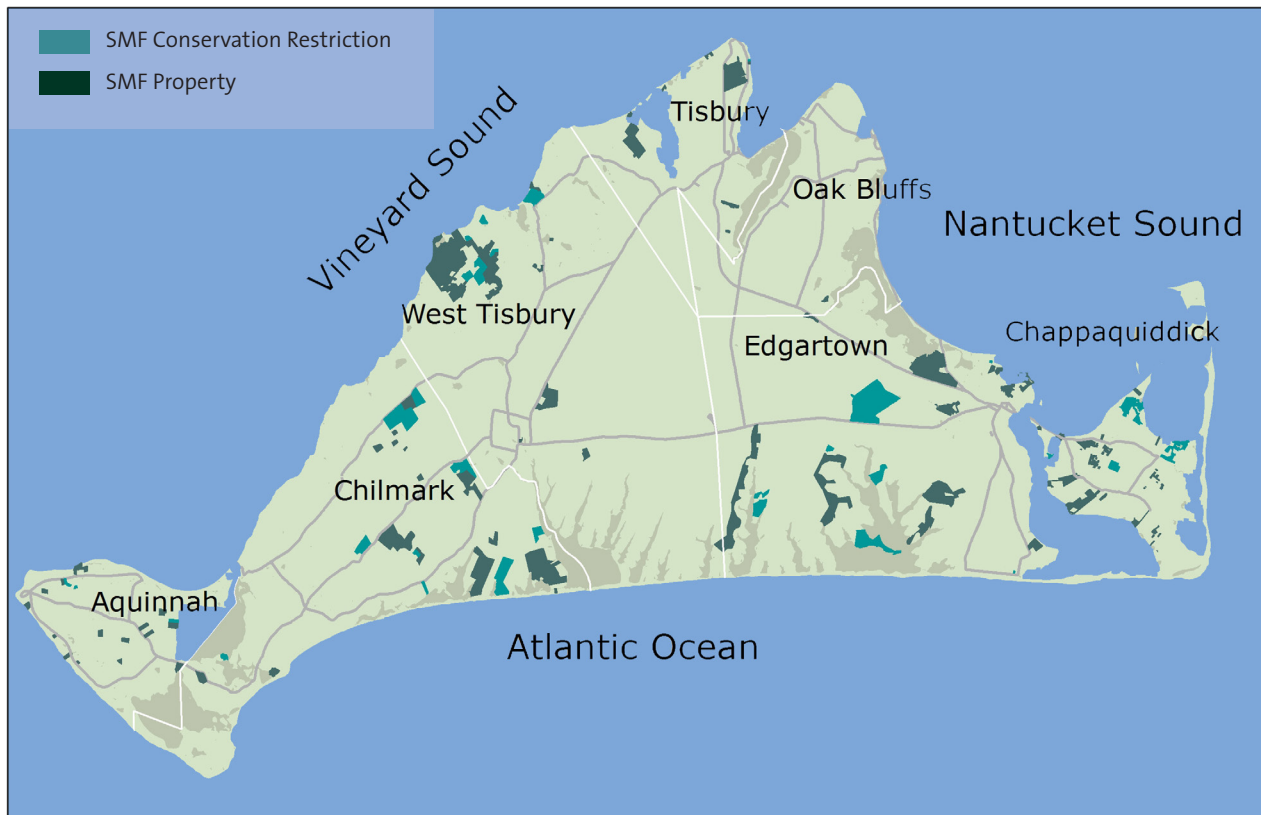


*Wood anemone, Photo: Kristen Geagan*

### *2019 Financials*

Total Liabilities:	\$ 651,820
Total Net Assets:	\$71,379,398
Total Liabilities and Net Assets:	\$72,031,218
Total Support and Revenue	\$ 7,079,052
Total Expenses:	\$ 2,221,508

### Sheriff's Meadow Foundation Properties







## THE CAMPAIGN FOR SHERIFF'S MEADOW FOUNDATION

### *For Future Generations*

#### *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

We aim to raise \$6 million for the perpetual stewardship of the lands entrusted to us. Our goal is to ensure the permanence of our conservation lands and our ability to provide the best possible care for them.

- \$5,000,000 annual fund and operations

Sheriff's Meadow Foundation is very fortunate to enjoy the support of many dedicated donors who love Martha's Vineyard and enjoy the outdoors. Our goal is to continue this level of support throughout a five-year campaign and to ensure that donations of all sizes count as campaign contributions.

- \$2,000,000 trail fund – half for current trail use and half for long-term fund

We have launched an all-Island Trail Initiative to connect all of the Island's trails into one contiguous interconnected web. The trail fund will support staff and equipment needed to maintain the trails over the next five years. The trail fund will also create a long-term fund designated for the purchase of trail easements and trail corridors and for other critical trail connection needs.

- \$1,000,000 land acquisition fund

Our land acquisition fund will enable Sheriff's Meadow Foundation to act nimbly to purchase key, connecting properties when opportunities arise.

- \$1,000,000 land enhancements and education

Two key parts of our strategic plan and master planning initiative are the enhancement and presentation of our properties to the public, and our educational programs.

**Total Goal: \$15 million**

**Current Status: \$10.6 million raised in cash, bequest intentions, and pledges.**

**Needed to meet overall goal: \$4.4 million**

*Please join the campaign...the future needs your commitment today.*



*Ox Pond Meadow, Photo: Barbara Reynolds*



*Nat's Farm, Photo: Nina Bramhall*



*Eastman Preserve, Photo: Staff member*



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*Sheriff's Meadow Sanctuary, photo: Brien O'Brien*



*Piping plover chick, Photo: Jeff Bernier*



*Quansoo Farm, photo: Adam Moore*