



Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

3242.7 acres, representing 5.6% of Martha's Vineyard, have been conserved by the land bank since voters created it in 1986. Please visit them; maps are available at town halls and libraries; online at www.mvlandbank.com; and at the land bank office in Edgartown.

Acquisitions

A complicated exchange – involving Howard Hillman, the land bank and the town of Chilmark — was consummated. It was prompted by a planned swap between the town and Mr. Hillman; the land bank was involved because some of its land was intertwined with the town's. Because the outcome for the town was to be land for affordable housing, and because none of the land bank's goals here was jeopardized, the land bank agreed to participate. In the end, the land bank's **Tiasquam Valley Reservation** increased by 6.4 acres, at no acquisition expense.

Whippoorwill Farm, 4.7 acres in West Tisbury, was conserved using an agricultural preservation restriction. As part of the transaction, farmer Andrew Woodruff opened a scenic vista between the Old County and Old Holmes Hole Roads. The price was \$200,380.

The land bank purchased, at tax auction for \$23,570, a 0.1-acre property on Chappaquiddick Avenue in Edgartown, in order to create a trail link into the **Three Ponds Reservation**.

Perhaps no other land bank reservation has resulted from so much land assembly as has the **Wapatequa Woods Reservation** in Oak Bluffs and Tisbury. From its modest start in 1988 as a 14.0-acre woodlot, the protected area now comprises 188.2 acres. Some 36.1 of those acres were acquired in 2014 from George Fisher, at a price of \$925,000. Mr. Fisher's dwelling there has been converted into a caretaker's cottage and its residents oversee the reservation in exchange for rent.

A 12.7-acre sheep pasture in Chilmark was conserved via the gift of an agricultural preservation restriction from Clark and Pamela Goff. **Goff Farm** will continue to be owned by the family, which will lease it out for farming.

In addition, the land bank continued to pursue partial interests in properties across the island.

Land management

Ecological inventories and studies continued at many land bank properties: Aquinnah Headlands Preserve, Cove Meadow Preserve, Great Rock Bight Preserve, Manaquayak Preserve, Pecoy Point Preserve, Poucha Pond Reservation, Quammox Preserve, Short Cove Preserve, Trade Wind Fields Preserve, Wapatequa Woods Reservation and the Waskosim's Rock Reservation

Management plans for the Doug's Cove Preserve and Short Cove Preserve were approved under both the land bank law and the endangered species law; pending is the plan for the Cove Meadow Preserve. The Toms Neck Preserve, scheduled to be acquired in 2015, was extensively studied and permits were obtained for implementing the management plan. A forestry plan for the Wapatequa Woods Reservation was commenced.

Invasive species at the Pecoy Point Preserve were removed, in hopes that the northern gamma grass will expand into the newly opened areas. The land bank employed a goat herd to graze down overgrowing fields at the Fulling Mill Brook Preserve, Old County Arboretum and Waskosim's Rock Reservation.

New properties were opened. The land bank staff installed a trailhead at the Doug's Cove Preserve and cut a trail there straddling the Lagoon Pond and the salt-pond behind it. Another straddling trail, this time between the Tisbury Great Pond and a landward sheep pasture, was also opened; comprising some two miles in length, it is accessed by an expanded trailhead on the Tiah's Cove Road as part of the Short Cove Preserve. The Toad Rock Preserve was opened, including its trail atop Surveyors Hill, with its views of the Squibnocket Pond and Atlantic Ocean.

Trail systems were expanded or improved on and near existing properties. Muskoday Farm was linked to the Katama Road; a loop around the pondside pasture at the Tiasquam Valley Reservation (east) was cut. Old Courthouse Road and Pine Hill Road were connected at Square Field. Erosion on the steep slope down to the beach at the Great Rock Bight Preserve was healed.

The land bank field crew continued ongoing maintenance on various land bank properties across the island.

Cross-island hike

The land bank's twenty-second annual cross-island hike celebrating National Trails Day — annually the first Saturday in June — witnessed a few “firsts” this year. A record 100 hikers started at Lambert's Cove Beach and a record 37 completed the entire 16.8 mile hike at the Chilmark Pond Preserve. Among the hikers was an eight-year-old from California, the youngest person ever to complete one of the land bank's cross-island treks.

Budget and related matters

The following chart synthesizes the land bank's annual finances. Anyone wishing to read the budget in its entirety, which includes a narrative describing the purpose of each line item expenditure, is welcome to obtain a copy at the land bank office:

	fiscal year 2014 budgeted	fiscal year 2014 actual	fiscal year 2015 budgeted
	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total	cash amount and percentage of total
revenues	\$7,000,000	\$10,003,803	\$8,500,000 *
administrative expenses	(\$ 487,145) 6%	(\$ 498,755) 5%	(\$ 511,888) 6%
land management expenses	(\$ 839,516) 10%	(\$ 794,238) 8%	(\$ 864,586) 10%
debt service expenses	(\$6,716,028) 84%	(\$ 6,381,500) 64%	(\$6,842,928) 81%
reserve expenses	(\$ 30,000) 0%		(\$ 30,000) 0%
transferred funds	\$1,072,689	\$ 0	\$ 0
unencumbered new receipts	\$ 0	\$ 2,329,309 23%	\$ 250,598 3%

Transferred funds are receipts from previous fiscal years to be utilized for current debt service. As of December 1, 2014 the land bank treasury contained an unencumbered \$8,989,567.39

The asterisk (*) indicates the land bank's revenue projection.

Gifts

The land bank gratefully accepted several gifts of cash: \$193,537.07 from the Chappaquiddick Open Space Committee; \$1300 from Kimberly Cartwright and T. Ewell Hopkins,

Jr.; \$1000 from the Aquinnah / Gay Head Community Association; \$100 from Tammy Kallman in memory of Wayne Kallman; and \$100 from Rebekah Zanditon and David Rogers.

Transfer fee revenues

Fiscal Year 2014 transfer fee revenues were:

	transfer fee revenues received July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014	percent of total
Aquinnah Fund	\$ 106,701	1 %
Chilmark Fund	\$ 580,354	6 %
Edgartown Fund	\$ 2,286,025	23 %
Oak Bluffs Fund	\$ 677,933	7 %
Tisbury Fund	\$ 934,652	9 %
West Tisbury Fund	\$ 446,856	4 %
<i>central fund</i>	\$ 5,032,520	50%
	\$ 10,065,040	100%

This represented a 12% increase over the previous year.

Commissioners and staff

2014 saw the departure of two long-time land bank commissioners, who between them had served, with distinction, a total of 44 years: Edith Potter, representing the commonwealth; and Thomas Robinson, representing the town of Tisbury.

The land bank commission comprises the following members: Pamela Goff, Chilmark; Glenn Hearn, West Tisbury; John Anthony Nevin, Tisbury; Priscilla Sylvia, Oak Bluffs; Sarah Thulin, Aquinnah; and Edward Vincent, Jr., Edgartown. The year-round land bank staff comprises the following individuals: Matthew Dix, foreman; James Dropick, conservation land assistant; Jean-Marc Dupon, conservation land assistant; Maureen Hill, administrative assistant; Jeffrey Komarinetz, conservation land assistant; Cynthia Krauss, fiscal officer; James Lengyel, executive director; and Julie Russell, ecologist.

Respectfully submitted,

James Lengyel
Executive Director