

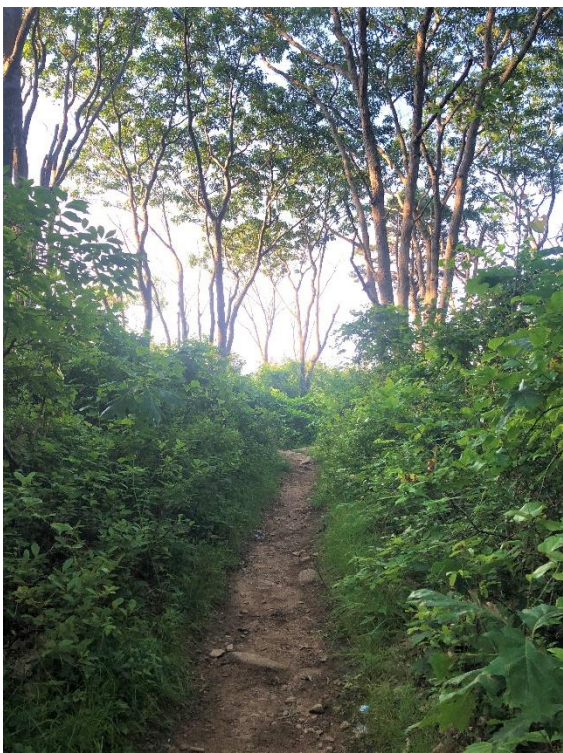


## Cape Ann Trail Stewards E-News

August 7, 2023

### Cape Ann Trail Stewards Celebrates its 10-Year Anniversary!

Cape Ann Trail Stewards was formed as a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit in the spring of 2013, and we are happy to be celebrating our 10th year in operation this year, in 2023! We are an organization of volunteers that is supported by one part-time Operations Director on staff. We are very proud of our accomplishments from our first 10 years, and look forward to continuing and expanding our work in the years to come!



Over the last 10 years, CATS has helped to maintain hundreds of miles of trails by organizing and managing thousands of hours of volunteer work, including clearing, blazing, trash pickup, boardwalk permitting and installation, graffiti removal, invasive species control, and other activities. Our volunteer Trail Stewards actively work to monitor and maintain our 18 Stewardship Sites throughout Cape Ann, and as many of you know, we also host public trail work days at many of our Stewardship Sites throughout the year.

We have worked to support enhanced trail access through the creation of trail maps and installation of trailhead kiosks throughout the area, and we actively advocate for land protection, trail protection, and funding for trail improvements and access on behalf of our many partners within the local conservation community.

Each year, CATS has increased its offerings of free guided hikes throughout the Cape Ann trail network, and we have joined forces with the Cape Ann Sunday Hikes Group (carried on from the tradition of guided hikes by the late Ted Tarr) to host regular Sunday Morning Hikes each month, year-round. For the past 6 years we have also hosted our annual Dogtown Trail Race- a 5+ mile run which highlights some of the most beautiful and challenging trails in this conservation area.

In the years ahead, Cape Ann Trail Stewards looks forward to continuing to provide support and advocacy to protect land and recreational trails on Cape Ann and to ensure continued and enhanced, increasingly equitable public access.

**Our members and donors are essential for us to be able to continue this important work!** Thank you to all who have supported us over the past 10 years!

You can [BECOME A MEMBER](#) if you are interested in further supporting our work, or [RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP](#) if you have already been a member in the past!

You may also [DONATE](#) online, or by check, at any time!

*(above photo) Trail to Rafe's Chasm in Gloucester (maintained by CATS), photo taken July 2023*

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#### Other Articles (below):

- [\*\*\\$10,000 Grant from 100 Women Who Care\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*Spring Interpretive Walk/ Climate Resiliency\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*Trail Race\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*Spring 2023 Trail Work Days\*\*](#)
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## CATS Receives \$10,000 Grant from 100 Women Who Care Cape Ann



On June 12, Cape Ann Trail Stewards was chosen to be the recipient of a \$10,000 grant from [100 Women Who Care Cape Ann](#), a giving circle of 100+ local women who each contribute \$100, meet quarterly to learn about local organizations that support the Cape Ann community, and vote on the charity that will receive their collective \$10,000+ donation.

CATS will use these grant funds for operational expenses to increase staff hours for our part-time Operations Director, Amy Blondin. While a large part of our mission work is carried out by volunteers, adequate professional staffing is essential to organize volunteers, projects, and internal records to maximize the effectiveness of our work. This funding will also enable us to begin working on creating new and updated trail maps, improving the information and resources on our website, and expanding our volunteer Trail Steward program.

CATS is the fifteenth recipient of funds from 100 Women Who Care Cape Ann. Since the 100 Women Who Care organization was started four years ago, almost \$200,000 has been donated to the Cape Ann community. Other organizations supported include Wellspring Education Resource Collaborative, Backyard Growers, Gloucester Education Fund, Gloucester Emergency Relief Fund (via Action, Inc.), The Grace Center, Cape Ann Kids Holiday Fund, Generous Gardeners, The Cornerstone Creative, Together Gloucester, Cape Ann Art Haven, Maritime Gloucester, The Sunrise Fund, and Cape Ann Animal Aid.

All 501(c) (3) charities on Cape Ann are eligible to receive funds from 100 Women Who Care. Charity nominations can be made online, and the next meeting will be held in September 2023 at the Annisquam Yacht Club. You can visit the 100 Women Who Care website ([100whocarecapeann.org](http://100whocarecapeann.org)) for more info.

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## Spring Interpretive Walk Educates Locals on Climate Resiliency



*Walk Leader Eric Hutchins (right) discusses the cobble dune formation (and migration) at Cape Hedge Beach.*

In addition to hosting regular group hikes around Cape Ann, Cape Ann Trail Stewards also offers “Interpretive Walks” to educate the community about various environmental topics. This spring CATS board member and NOAA habitat restoration scientist Eric Hutchins led a popular interpretive walk at Cape Hedge Beach in Rockport called “Rockport Barrier Beach Walk: The Future of These Beaches with Respect to Sea Level Rise”, which filled to its capacity of 50 participants within hours of online registration opening!

Eric began the talk discussing the natural formation of the “cobble dunes” at Cape Hedge Beach, and explaining how this landscape feature serves to effectively dissipate the impact of the ocean on the land, especially in storms and during storm surges. On the walk, he pointed out on-the-ground evidence of how the landscape is continually changing over time, including “migration” of the salt marsh and dunes, particularly as the sea level rises. Bringing attention to visible examples on-site, he explained how roads, houses, and other human development interfere with the natural migration of these “barriers”, which play a crucial role in protecting the land from the effects of ocean storms and in mitigating inland flooding.

He also covered a range of other related topics, such as recent culvert and marsh restoration projects in Rockport in the vicinity of the beach, the nesting of endangered Piping Plovers on the cobble dunes, and the migration of American eels from the ocean (having travelled thousands of miles) to a small pond behind Cape Hedge Beach.



*Eric highlights a recent culvert restoration project at the entrance to Cape Hedge Beach.*

Throughout the talk many questions were asked and answered, and all who attended learned a great deal!

The event was also attended by Kathryn Glen from Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management and Michelle Rowden from the MA Municipal Vulnerability Program, who helped to answer some of the participants’ questions and added to the information that Eric provided.

**Due to the popularity of this event, we plan to offer it again in late fall for those who were not able to make it this spring—stay tuned for more details and an exact date!**

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## 6th Annual Dogtown Trail Race



*Runners at the start of the May 20, 2023 Dogtown Trail Race*

The Cape Ann Trail Stewards Annual Dogtown Trail Race was held on May 20 this year and had over 100 registrants, from the North Shore area to many towns throughout Greater Boston, as well as other parts of New England (from Rhode Island to Maine), and beyond!

This was also the first year that we encouraged walker participation in addition to the runners, and we had approximately 20 walkers among our finishers. Many of the walkers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to come and hike a well-marked, scenic route in Dogtown with a water stop and volunteers present at numerous points along the course. A number of these walkers, just like the runners, are looking forward to challenging themselves to try to complete the 5.4-mile course a little faster next year in order to beat their overall time from this year!

Despite the fact that the course is highly "technical" overall, with widely varied terrain (including plenty of boulders, roots, and rolling hills!), spirits were high, and everyone seemed happy to embrace the challenge of a true "trail" experience!



*Walkers enjoying participating in this year's Dogtown Trail Race*

All participants were treated to free soup and snacks from Coastal Greengrocer after the race, and prizes and gift certificates were distributed to overall winners, age group winners, and random finishers of all levels thanks to donations from New England Running Company, Ipswich Ale Brewery, Common Crow Natural Market, Riverside Cycle, and Shaw's and Market Basket! Thank you also to Cape Ann Savings Bank and WORKS by JD, LLC for race sponsorship donations that helped cover our event costs.

And of course we are also indebted to the many volunteers (helping with parking, at registration and check-in, on the race course as supporters and safety monitors, at the finish line, and those who swiftly cleaned up all markings on the route and everything at the start-finish line immediately after the event ended), whose help and supportive presence made the event the success it was!



*Runners mid-course during the race*

We look forward to continuing this annual event going forward, and we are excited to welcome runners and walkers to **next year's Dogtown Trail Race**, which will be held on **May 18, 2024!**

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## Spring 2023 Trail Work Days



*One of the entrances to Andrews Woods in Rockport, shown here after volunteers did extensive clearing of catbriar and other overgrowth during the May 2023 Trail Work Day*

Group Trail Work Days are at the heart of Cape Ann Trail Stewards' mission, as we strive to involve and engage the local community in ongoing maintenance of the Cape Ann Trail networks.

We often work in partnership with many other local groups and organizations who share similar goals, and this spring we joined forces with Manchester Essex Conservation Trust and the Town of Manchester for a trash cleanup day in the West Manchester Woods where volunteers did extensive removal of heavy-duty trash that had been dumped over time onto Town property, threatening the wildlife and wetlands. We also partnered with the Rockport Rights of Way Committee for trail work days at Andrews Woods, DeLamater Sanctuary, and Keiran Preserve in Rockport.

These group trail work events supplement the ongoing trail monitoring and maintenance work done by our CATS volunteer Trail Stewards throughout the year.

We plan to hold **additional group Trail Work Days this fall** at some of our other Stewardship Sites, so check our website for updates on these events!



*(first photo) CATS board member Michael McDonagh hauls out large trash items from the West Manchester Woods during the May trail work day.*



*(second photo) Large trash pile that was collected on the MECT/ Manchester/ CATS trail work day, which was later removed by the Manchester DPW.*

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**Cape Ann Trail Stewards** helps to maintain existing trails, improve access, and support the responsible and safe use of the Cape Ann Trail network and recreational areas. Our work area includes: Rockport, Gloucester, Manchester and Essex.

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