



Help us Save the Oyster Pond Headwaters



Photo by Hannah Buessler

This beautiful cove is part of the Headwaters land that OPET is purchasing from WHOI.

We are happy to announce that OPET is purchasing nearly 22 acres of woodlands, wetlands and vernal pools for \$2 million from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI). The five combined parcels that we call the "Oyster Pond Headwaters" join together with the 7 acres of OPET's Zinn Park conservation land, abutting Spohr Gardens. Altogether this purchase will protect 34 acres of contiguous open space and conservation land in the Quissett area of Falmouth. The Oyster Pond Headwaters property will be the largest, legally protected conservation area in the Quissett/Woods Hole area.

Purchasing and protecting these 22 acres is very important to preserving the health of Oyster Pond as they are the last large developable properties in the watershed. The land drains into Mosquito Creek, the only surface freshwater source to the pond.

An engineering plan estimates that at a minimum, a 10 lot subdivision could be built here. If a developer used the 40B provision of the Falmouth planning bylaws, up to 70 housing units could be built. The additional nutrients from septic systems and surface storm water runoff would be devastating to Oyster Pond's already stressed water quality. A major new development would result in added pollution of the ground water which eventually finds its way to the pond.

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Upcoming Events

Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan Workshop

**An important meeting for
all Oyster Pond
area residents**

**Wednesday, July 30th
6:30 pm to 9 pm**

SEA Auditorium
171 Woods Hole Road

OPET Annual Meeting

featured talk

"Land Conservation on the
Cape in the 21st Century "

by Mark Robinson
Executive Director,
Compact of Cape Cod
Conservation Trusts

**Thursday, August 14th
7:00 pm**

SEA Auditorium
171 Woods Hole Road
Light Refreshments Served

Walking Tour of the Oyster Pond Headwaters

**Saturday, August 16th
10am**

Meet at the end of Fells Road

Join OPET Today

Your Donations make it possible to continue our work to conserve and protect the natural environment and ecological systems of Oyster Pond

Visit our web site at www.opet.org

Or send us an email at info@opet.org

OPET does not have an official phone, but you can leave a message at 508-540-3263.

We'll gladly get back to you!

*We are a 501 c3 organization.
Contributions are tax deductible.*

Officers & Directors 2012–2013

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David Sykes

Lou Turner

OPET Board meetings are open to all OPET members.

Meetings are usually held on the 3rd Sunday of the month, at 4:30 pm in the winter and 7:00 pm in the summer at the Treetops Clubhouse.

We'd love to have you come!



A Message from the OPET President

Dear All,

I hope by now everyone who receives our newsletter knows of the very ambitious project we have embarked upon – namely to buy 22 acres of land in our watershed from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI). After WHOI made it known a year or so ago that they would be willing to sell lands given to them for which they have no institutional plans, we approached them about purchasing these 22 acres to insure the land remains undeveloped and in conservation in perpetuity. The land in question was given to WHOI by Frederica and Holger Jannish who originally proposed that part of the land away from the pond might be used for student, postdoctoral or visiting fellow housing, but land closer to the pond be kept pristine (see the map on page 4).

A subcommittee of OPET's Board negotiated with WHOI and a price of 2 million dollars was agreed upon. Although 2 million dollars for 22 acres in the Quissett area is quite reasonable, the task for OPET to raise such a sum is enormous. We are a small organization without much in the way of resources, but we are blessed with a number of dedicated, enthusiastic, and hard-working members.

We are closing in on a plan for securing the needed funds, from both public and private sources. A lead pledge of \$400,000 started the ball rolling and then the Town voted to support us with a grant of \$250,000. We were on our way! With the help of our state legislature representatives, a line item for \$800,000 toward the purchase was inserted into the recently approved State bond bill. Applications for support in the \$400,000 range from both the State and Federal governments have been submitted, and feelers extended to local foundations that support environmental causes. On the private side, we are gearing up for a fundraising campaign with the help of a professional fund raiser. A brochure describing our case statement and how important it is for the health of our pond to purchase this land has been prepared and is now ready. You can see a copy of it on our web site at www.opet.org.

Obviously, you all will hear much more about our efforts to complete this purchase, and we hope that you will be generous in your contribution to the project. If you would like to become involved in any aspect of the project, or have ideas about it, we would most welcome them. We are hoping to complete our campaign by the end of next summer, so there is much to do.

I thank you in advance for whatever you can do to help us reach our goal and to help protect our pond for the ages.

John Dowling



Want to know about the latest news and events at OPET? Sign up to receive our brief, occasional E-newsletters. Send us an email at info@opet.org, add your email address to our donation envelope or sign up on our web site.

Wastewater Treatments Options for Oyster Pond Area under Consideration

The Town of Falmouth Water Quality Management Committee (WQMC) continues to look for the best way to meet the nitrogen Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement for Oyster Pond and thus bring its water quality up to Federal standards. As you may recall, too much nitrogen from backyard septic systems, fertilizers and stormwater is degrading Oyster Pond's water quality and habitat. It is estimated that 65% of the current amount of nitrogen entering the pond must be removed to return Oyster Pond to a healthy ecosystem.

To meet this number, the TMDL, the Town has hired Wright/Pierce as a consultant to explore alternative means for removing this excess nitrogen. Wright/Pierce released the latest chapter of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP), the "Alternatives Analysis" in June. You can find the document on OPET's home page. Look for it in the column to the left of the page.

We received some neighborhood feedback on this chapter at the June 19, 2014 WQMC meeting. Those comments are being reviewed and will be incorporated in a slightly revised edition which should be available later in July.

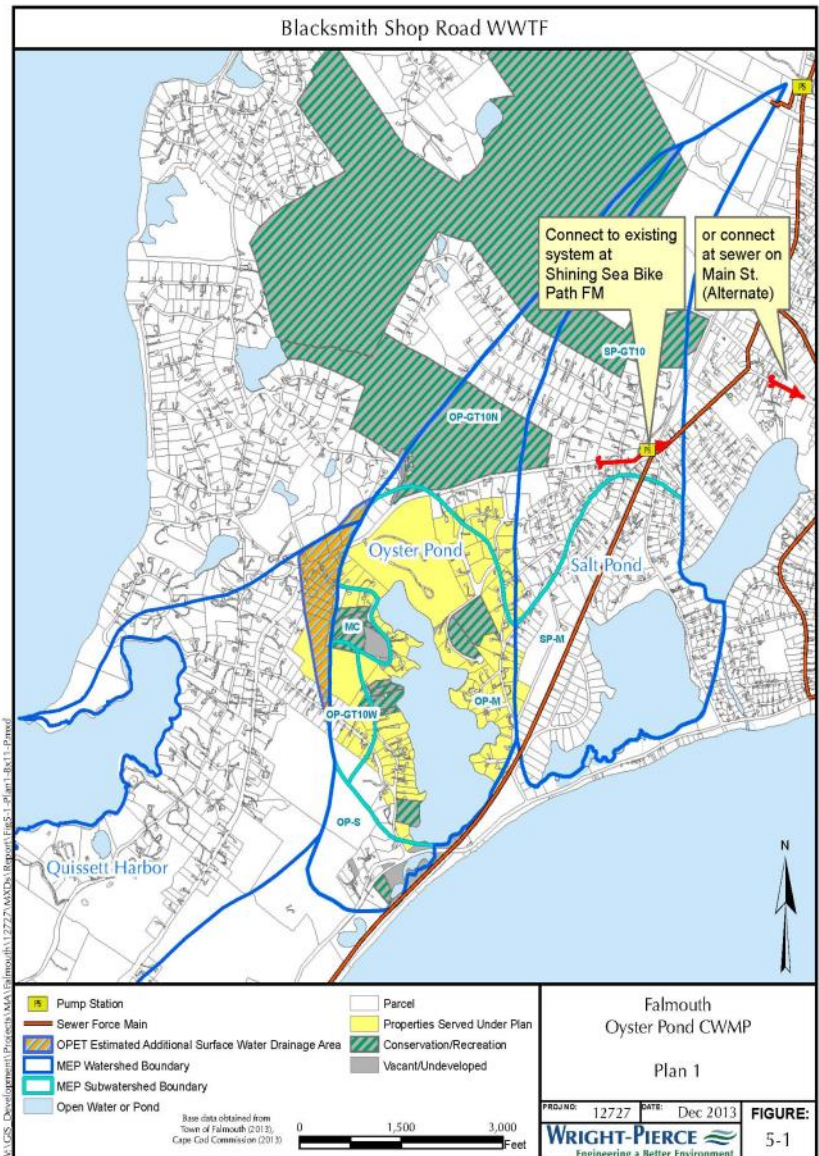
There should be much more time for education, questions and answers than at the June 19th meeting. Light refreshments will be available and there will be time to meet more of your neighbors.

This is the stage at which we have in hand some relatively concrete proposals from the

The WQMC will hold a major workshop on this report for all residents and property owners of the Oyster Pond watershed at S.E.A., 171 Woods Hole Road from 6:30 pm to 9 pm Wednesday July 30. All are invited and we look forward to meeting you.

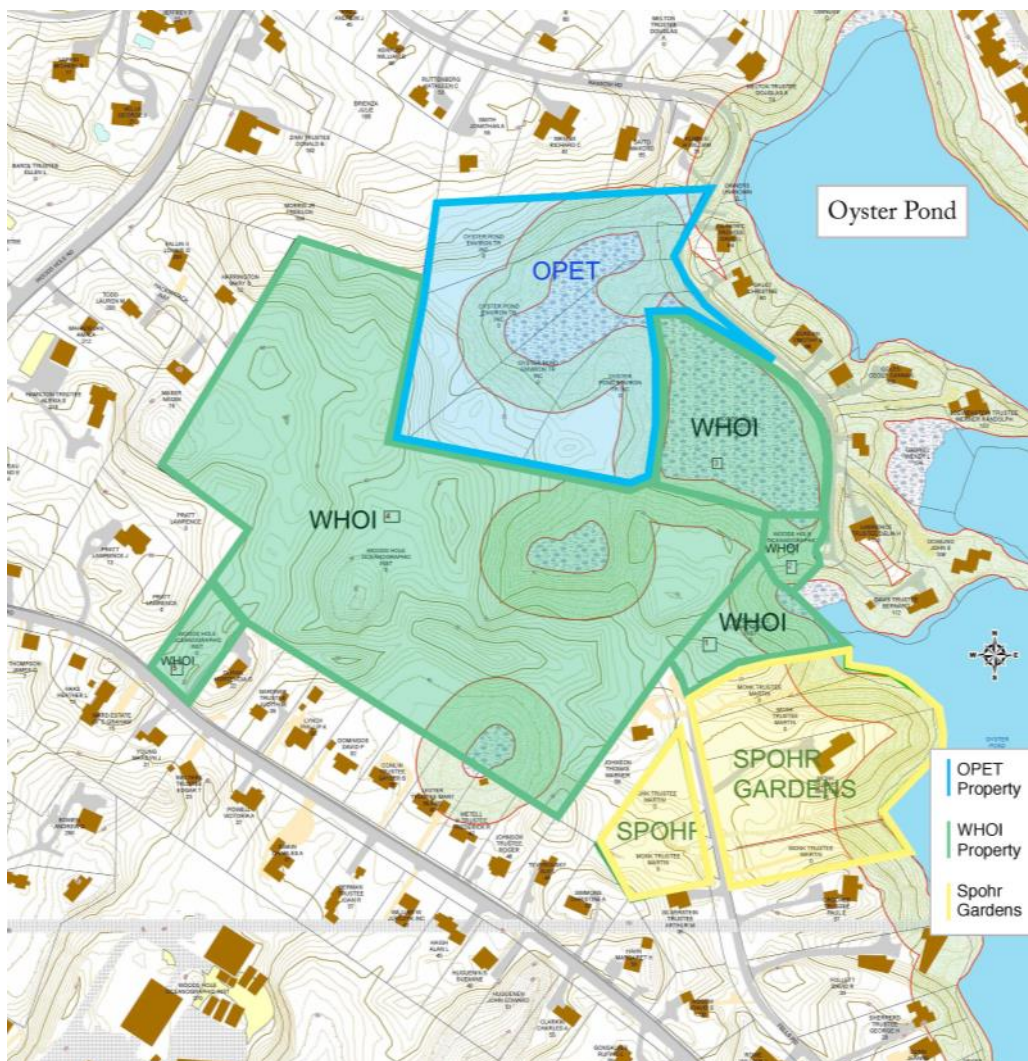
contractor, including rough cost estimates. Now is the time for affected residents to study these carefully and consider the implications for function and eventually, financing. The whole project is a fascinating design challenge and we welcome your inputs to help us solve the puzzle in the best way for all. Please do your homework before the workshop by reading the report and bring your questions and suggestions to the workshop on July 30.

Steve Leighton, OPET Board and WQMC member



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Protecting Oyster Pond's water quality and conserving the Headwaters property will benefit alewife, river herring, white perch and the American eel as well as other pond wildlife that depend on it. Oyster Pond is home to alewife spawning grounds and is the third largest herring run in Falmouth. Alewife herring are listed as a Species of Concern by the National Marine Fisheries due to their dwindling populations throughout the eastern seaboard. The protection of the Headwaters of the pond can be the foundation to the health of the North Atlantic ecosystem as a whole. The success of Oyster Pond as a rookery provides a crucial food source for predatory game fish (striped bass, bluefish, tuna, bonito, swordfish) and many birds. The pond is also an important habitat for the many American eel, which is also suffering serious population declines and is under review for listing as an Endangered Species.



We call these lands the Headwaters of Oyster Pond because the land drains into a creek that is the source of the only surface water to Oyster Pond. Groundwater seeps up into the wetland system here and flows under Ransom Road and directly into Oyster Pond. Any pollutants on these properties will migrate through the soils, enter the groundwater and wetland system and make their way to the pond.



The diversity of ecosystems found in the Headwaters and Oyster Pond area also provide significant habitat for birds. Thousands of migratory and resident birds depend on the area for breeding, migratory stops and over-wintering. Over 200 species of birds utilize the wetlands, forests, thickets and open water surrounding Oyster Pond including many that are on the State's list of threatened species.

Additionally, there are two vernal pools on the headwaters property. Vernal pools are a unique type of wetland that is full of water in the early spring and can be completely dry by mid-summer. These seasonal wetlands are home to unique species that depend on them for part of their life cycle. Vernal pools on private land are not fully protected by law. By conserving the upland buffer area to these wetlands and by blocking any possibility of development, we can protect and maintain the integrity of these wetlands and the species that live in the surrounding upland areas.

The preservation of the Headwaters properties will protect unobstructed movement between habitats necessary for foraging, breeding, shelter and over wintering protection for mammals and birds. By protecting the interior wetlands and surrounding upland on the properties, and by providing connectivity to Zinn Park and Spohr Garden, this will help maintain and enhance an important wildlife area in this part of Falmouth.

Purchase of this property will also preserve the popular pathway between Fells Road and Ransom Road, a well-used path used by the neighborhood and nearby institutions to access the beaches and the bike path. This land will be protected in perpetuity with a Conservation Restriction. Years later, if OPET is no longer in existence, the Headwaters will continue to be protected.

The vision for this 22-acre conservation area includes the creation of a simple walking trail loop, starting and ending at a proposed trailhead on Fells Road. In addition, OPET envisions partnering with Spohr Gardens to expand their existing child educational programs to include information on wetlands, vernal pools and woodland habitats and their inhabitants.



One of the vernal pools. Vernal pools are a unique type of wetland that is typically full of water in the early spring and can be completely dry by mid-summer. These temporary wetlands are home to unique species that depend on them for part of their life cycle. Due to their ephemeral nature, many vernal pools have been lost to development.



OPET is pursuing public and private funding sources as discussed in our letter from our President, John Dowling. We are also applying to private foundations for support. All of these potential funding sources are very competitive, that is why we need your help! We have begun our capital campaign to raise private donations and we will be contacting you for your help in reaching our goals. As of this newsletter, we have received over \$500,000 in private donations and pledges.

We need your help to raise the \$2.1 million to purchase this Headwaters property. We are up to the challenge, especially with your financial help!

Learn more about the Oyster Pond Headwaters Acquisition Project at our Annual Meeting, on Thursday, August 14th.

Wendi Buessler

Gifts to OPET in Memory of...

- ♥ Martin White from Tanya White
- ♥ My Wife from Emil Tiejie, Jr.
- ♥ Beth Schwarzman from Olviann and John Hobbie
- ♥ Patricia Hancox from Capt. F.J. Hancox



A Tip to Help Oyster Pond—Maintain Vegetated Buffers along the Pond's Shoreline. Buffers are critical for a healthy pond ecosystem. Buffers intercept fertilizer & pesticide runoff, stabilize soils, prevent shoreline erosion and provide habitat in the vital zone between land and water. Let natural vegetation grow on the shoreline or plant cleared areas with native plants. Remember to contact the Conservation Commission prior to any work within 100 ft of the edge of the pond.

**"Land Conservation on the Cape in
the 21st Century"**

Come learn about OPET's purchase of
the Oyster Pond Headwaters--22
acres of wetlands, woodlands, pond
&
shoreline and vernal pools.
Hear a timely talk titled

Presented by Mark Robinson
Executive Director
Compact of Cape Cod Conservation
Trusts
SEA Auditorium
171 Woods Hole Rd
Light Refreshments Served



Trail on the Oyster Pond Headwaters Property

OPET Annual Meeting—Thursday, August 14th at 7pm



**The Oyster Pond
Environmental
Trust**

**P.O. Box 496
Woods Hole, MA 02543-
0496**

stamp