



OYSTER POND
ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST
P.O. Box 496 Woods Hole, MA 02540



Spring newsletter, May 2025

Canada Goose goslings on Oyster Pond. Photo: Connor S. Thomson

Why We Protect What We Love: Conservation in a Changing Time

This spring, as the trees around Oyster Pond bud with new life and the quiet water reflects the changing light, we are reminded that conservation is not just a goal: it is a responsibility. For those of us who live near Oyster Pond, walk its trails, or spend quiet afternoons watching its birds, turtles or any of its other wildlife, this place holds more than ecological value. It holds memories, peace, and a sense of home.

Land conservation in the Oyster Pond watershed protects more than scenic views. It guards the integrity of the pond itself: its water quality, its biodiversity, and its resilience in the face of a changing climate. Every acre of forest, every buffer of wetland, every protected parcel of land helps filter stormwater, reduce nutrient runoff, and maintain the delicate balance that Oyster Pond's ecosystem depends on. Without this, we risk losing not only habitat for native species, but also the very character of our community.

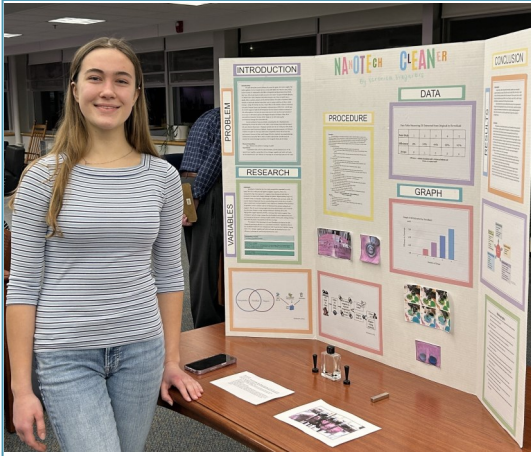
On a personal note, many of us came to love this place because of its quiet beauty. But that beauty is not accidental. It is the result of decades of thoughtful stewardship, local partnerships, and a shared vision. OPET has been doing this work for more than 30 years because we believe that places like Oyster Pond matter. They matter to the wildlife that depend on them, to the children who will explore them, and to the generations that will live here after us.

Recent actions from the federal administration signal a significant shift in national conservation priorities. While past years saw robust federal support for conservation and climate adaptation, the current administration has moved to reevaluate and, in some cases, roll back these initiatives. These changes raise concerns about the future of conservation funding and protections, and highlight the importance of local stewardship. OPET's commitment to land and water conservation remains steadfast, ensuring that Oyster Pond continues to thrive for wildlife, residents, and future generations. Protecting land and water is not only about ecology; it is about ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, has access to clean water, open space, and the benefits of a healthy environment.

Oyster Pond is part of this broader story. The work we do, whether monitoring water quality, promoting sustainable land use, or educating the public, echoes these important values. And it all starts here, with each of us, making the choice to care. This spring, we invite you to walk the trails, look closely at the blooming wildflowers and returning birds, and remember that conservation is not just about saving nature: it is about strengthening community. Thank you for being part of OPET's mission. Your support is the reason this place continues to thrive.



Americorps Cape Cod members Kaycee Doherty, S.J. Stout, and Tom Bedard perform trail maintenance on the OPET trails in April. Photo: Chris Brothers.



Falmouth High School 9th grader Veronica Vizgaitis received an OPET sponsored award at the Falmouth Public Schools 47th annual STEAM Fair in March. In her letter thanking OPET, Veronica says she enjoys paddle boarding in Cape waters and sometimes sees a rainbow sheen on the waves, the result of oil pollution from nearby roads or off-coast oil spills. Based on research from MIT, Veronica decided to test the efficiency of using ferrofluid in cleaning up oil spills. Adding drops of ferrofluid to the oil made the oil magnetic and allowed her to extract the oil from the water using a magnet. Veronica concluded, “there’s hope we can combine modern technology and science to help save our oceans.”

Veronica Vizgaitis. Photo: Carmela Mayeski.

Species Spotlight: Periodical Cicadas: They’re Back!

By the time you get this newsletter, you may already have periodical cicadas emerging in your yard. They usually emerge when soil temperatures reach about 64 degrees. A few early arrivers have already ventured above ground, crawled up the nearest tree, and split out of their larval exoskeleton to become adults. Five days later, males begin singing using a sound-producing tymbal on their abdomen. Their sometimes deafening choruses, which sound like some kind of spooky UFO, signal that they’re ready to mate. The females will then deposit up to 800 eggs in slits they make with their sharp ovipositors in twigs and small tree branches. After six to ten weeks, the eggs will hatch, and the nymphs will burrow back down underground to feed on first grass, then tree roots, not to be seen for another 17 years. They last appeared on Cape Cod in 2008.

There are seven species of periodical cicada in the United States, all evolved from a common ancestor. The cicadas that emerge in any given year form a brood. Brood XIV, which is the second largest, will be emerging on Cape Cod and in fourteen states total this spring with numbers in the billions. Three of the species emerge at 17 year cycles and four at 13 years. Why do they do this? The massive numbers of cicadas that emerge synchronously is a survival mechanism called predator swamping. The predators of cicadas, including birds, fish, and other insects, can’t possibly eat them all, ensuring that some will survive. Cicadas apparently can keep track of time by monitoring the seasonal fluctuation of the tree sap they feed on. Scientists at the University of Connecticut are tracking cicada sightings. You can contribute your observations to cicadas.uconn.edu. Although we won’t see Brood XIV for another 17 years, we can in the meantime enjoy the annual cicadas which buzz from our treetops every summer.



Cicadas mate soon after emergence after spending 17 years underground. Photo: Chris Brothers

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW Your contributions allow OPET to continue our work to protect Oyster Pond and its watershed. This is the time of year when we ask you to renew your membership in OPET. It is through your generosity that we are able to continue to monitor, maintain, and advocate for Oyster Pond, Trunk River, and our 29 acres of conservation land and trails. To renew, please use the enclosed envelope or go to www.opet.org.

Sincerely,

Alfredo Aretxabaleta, President

Chris Brothers, Administrator



Scan this quick response code to go directly to the OPET web site.