

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY

THE FLYER

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The **Norman Bird Sanctuary** was established in 1949 at the bequest of Mabel Norman Cerio. Its mission, under the charge of her will, was to maintain 235 acres of land "for the propagation, preservation, and protection of birds, and where birds and bird life may be observed, studied, taught, and enjoyed by lovers of nature and by the public generally so interested in a spirit of humanity and mercy."

Over the years, NBS has grown to include more than 325 acres of diverse habitats, and its mission remains true to Mabel Norman Cerio's original vision. Today, the mission of the Norman Bird Sanctuary is to preserve and protect its habitats and resources for the benefit of birds and other wildlife, and for people's education and enjoyment.

Cover photo: Mark Pagliarini

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Photo: Mark Pagliarini

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Dear NBS Friend,

As I have gotten older I have found the value in planning for things. When I was young I had the mantra of "just do it" which seemed like a succinct and simple way to get things done, but got more difficult as life got more complex and the stakes became higher. Now the process of planning is a creative time when I can imagine all of the possibilities and then slowly boil them down to the logical and necessary. I still try to leave room for change and spontaneity but having a road map to reach goals can be tremendously helpful.

The Norman Bird Sanctuary has a long history and has evolved significantly over the past 65 years. The changes that have occurred on our campus and property have been the result of thoughtful planning by dedicated volunteers and staff. Oftentimes I find that the most important thing that comes out of the process is what we don't want to do as much as what we do want to do.

In the past few years a lot of plans have been completed and some are in the works as I write this. In 2013 we adapted a five year Strategic Plan that outlines our goals and strategies for the next steps in our growth as well as financial projections to accompany those goals. The financial planning was a vital step in setting goals that help us meet our mission while being sustainable and realistic.

During that process more plans were born. We came to realize that in order for us to be sustainable and to manage NBS at the highest level we must truly understand what we have. With the support of some generous funders we are now in the process of completing a Master Plan which inventories and assesses all of our trails, plant life, invasive species, buildings, facilities and significant points of our property. In addition, a Cultural Landscape Report will be part of the completed Master Plan and assesses our designed landscape, historic and cultural significance and landmarks on our main campus. When complete these documents will be a tool to help us know and understand what we have and what it will take to maintain the incredible resource of the Norman Bird Sanctuary. These documents will inform future ideas and projects and will no doubt lead to more plans!

I sometimes still take the "just do it" approach on projects but when it involves the long term health of the Norman Bird Sanctuary I have learned to slow down and take the time to plan carefully; this place is most definitely worth it!

Natasha Harrison, Executive Director



Do you know where your last drink of water came from?

Most of Aquidneck Island's drinking water comes from a small network of streams and reservoirs (see map of reservoirs) maintained by the Newport Water Dept. There are nine surface water reservoirs located on the island and two off island, one in Little Compton and the other in Tiverton.

This system supplies all of Newport, 70% of Middletown and 67% of Portsmouth, while private or community wells supply the rest. Newport has only 1% of the watershed area within its boundaries, Middletown has 37% and Portsmouth has 62%. Of the total watershed area, only 51% is on conserved land, leaving the remaining 49% open to development. The watersheds encompass your homes, business, schools, parks, farms, roads, open space and every other land use.

We all have an impact on the health of our watersheds. Our daily actions on our own properties, including how we care for our yards and dispose of our waste, may seem unimportant, but these small actions have a huge effect on water quality for our entire community. There are many ways you can help improve your watershed.

1. Disconnect your downspout and let the water run into your garden or yard so it can filter back into the water table.
2. Install a rain barrel to capture rain and utilize it when needed.
3. Install a rain garden - a landscape depression that can absorb and filter water from rooftops or driveways.
4. Plant a tree. There are at least 100 reasons.
5. Landscape with native plants. They require less water and fertilizer, are adapted to your area and attract pollinator species.
6. If you have a lawn, make it a low-input one (no fertilizer, pesticides, or irrigation).

7. Pick up after your dog. Dispose of it in your toilet, seal it in a plastic bag or bury it in your yard and let the microbes in the soil break it down.

8. Maintain your septic system. Have your system inspected every two to three years and have it pumped as recommended.

9. Properly dispose of Hazardous Waste. This includes paints, motor oil, pesticides, etc. DO NOT dump down sink drain, septic, or storm drains that end up in our waterways.

10. Join your local watershed organization! Visit EPA's Surf Your Watershed to find a local organization near you - <http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>

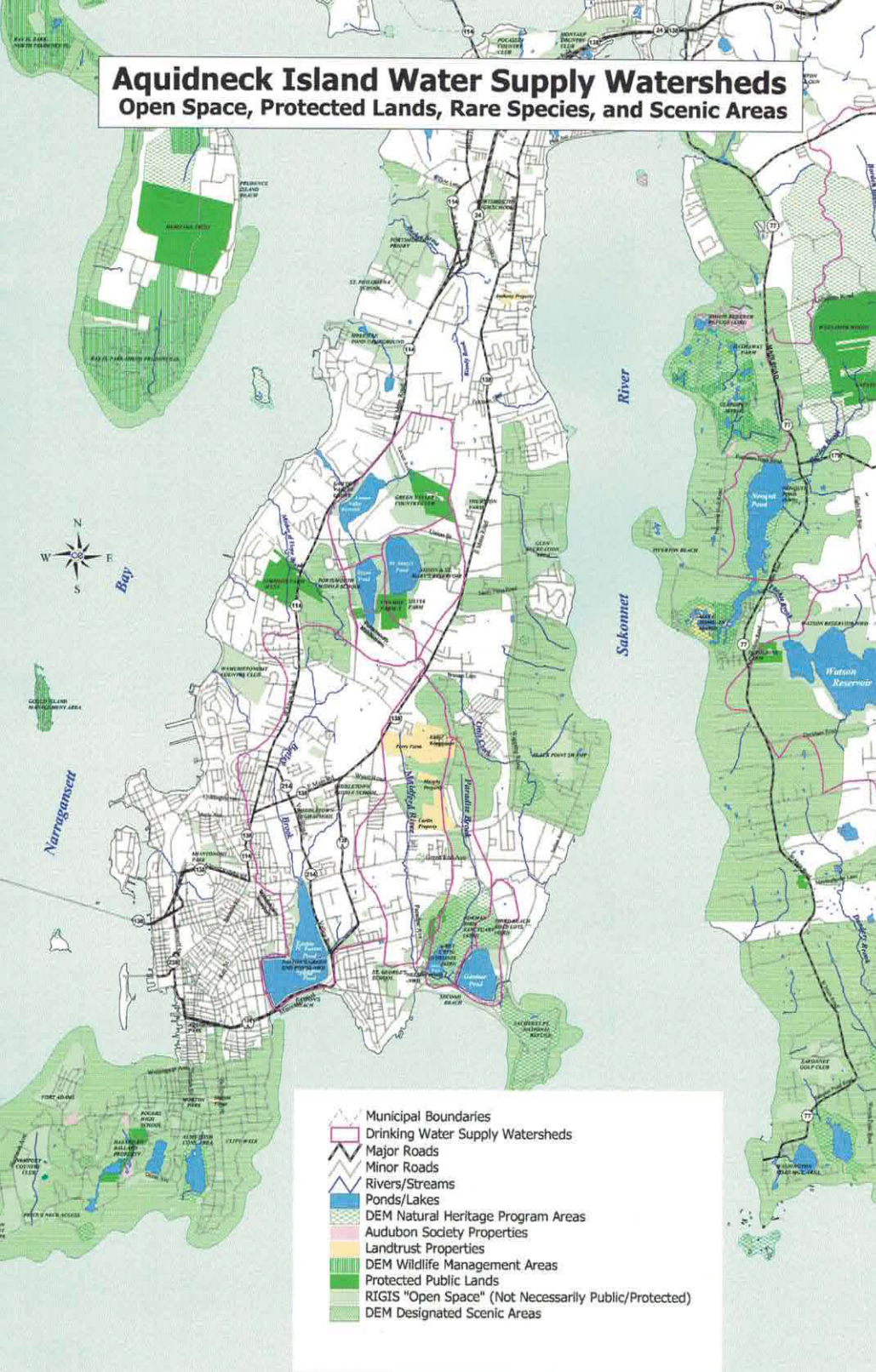
Water quality and quantity are important for wildlife, our health, quality of life, agriculture, our economy and life itself. Of course, thanks to your support, undeveloped open spaces like the NBS filter pollutants and recharge the water table, protecting clean drinking water for generations.

Think water!

The Education department is pleased to offer a variety of programs highlighting watershed systems. Our goals are to improve understanding of how these areas function as a part of our ecosystem and to inspire ways that everyone can positively affect our valuable water resources. This past fall, we hosted a successful adult lecture series, ED Talks, which focused on the amazing plants and animals that live in and around wetlands. Teachers can supplement their classroom curriculum by booking an in-class outreach or field trip based on watershed education. We look forward to an energetic summer with Coastal Camp down at the Third Beach Education Center. Don't miss a variety of upcoming public programs that showcase the wetlands, the animals that live there, and how our choices can improve the waterways around us!

Aquidneck Island Water Supply Watersheds

Open Space, Protected Lands, Rare Species, and Scenic Areas





Thoughts on the Property

Dear Trail Walkers,

The flightless birds rise up out of the trees and out of sight into a boundless sky, one after the other, as if to say "Don't look so surprised. All birds are happy in flight and unhappy on the ground."

So every day in the summer I was surrounded by the life of the sanctuary: a part of that was the mink. Joseph asked me if I had seen him. To my surprise I hadn't, but within that day he showed himself. I couldn't believe it. Away from the water where I expected him to be, he was on the ridge chasing a rabbit. The violence finished later in the week on Hanging Rock Road. I found him on the street, mouth bloodied and still. I imagined him full. I told Joseph looking for an answer but the mink was too maimed to preserve. He was gone and there was other work to be done. I painted 3rd Beach buildings, cut grass again and again, cleared walls and made fence posts. This was summer and winter is a time for crossing lines.

As visitors to the sanctuary you and I walk a line and there are constant reminders not unlike us. A doe walks the edge of the south fields at the space between grass and yew forest. Robins will move together through privet and multiflora rose edging along woodland. The boardwalk gives way to trail, gives way to ridge, gives way to sea.

Our line, however, is more akin to Turkeys. Scared from their roosts given an infinite horizon they fall comfortably out of sight back into the Gray Craig, waiting. Or we could be like the mink I saw on Third Beach road not three weeks ago. Alive, it ran across the street, stopped, looked back and walked where the snow had made the impassable passable.

Enjoy,

Jesse B. Stokes – *Land Technician*

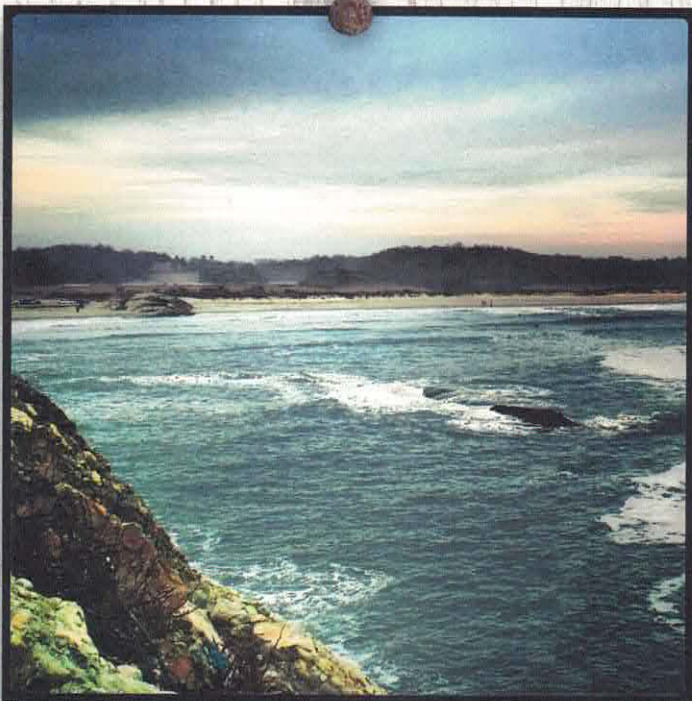


Photo: Mark Pagliarini

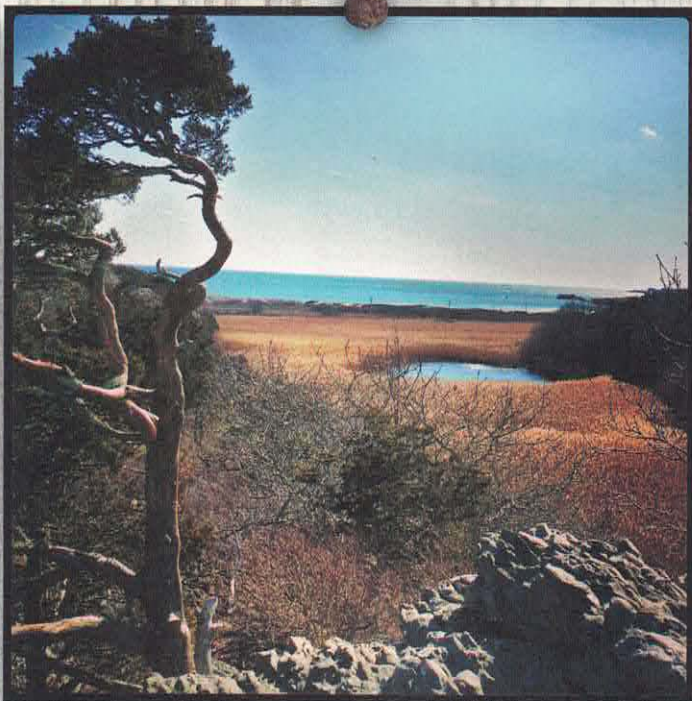


Photo: Mark Pagliarini



Spring Migration at NBS

For most Rhode Island birders, "Spring Migration" brings to mind the month of May when hundreds of thousands of birds pour into the region from southern wintering areas. But most of us will tell you that Spring Migration is a much more drawn out event that starts as a trickle in early March and becomes a flood by May. If you have been wondering when specific birds start to show up at NBS, read on!

The month of March is an uneasy time for birds. While the weather is warming, it's still unpredictable. Many of the birds that can be found at this time are hearty species that have spent the winter here. Red-wing Blackbirds begin to return and establish territories in the reeds of Red Maple Pond, while migrating waterfowl such as Green-winged Teal rest and feed on Nelson Pond. The fields are still alive with overwintering White-throated Sparrows, most of which will have left for their more northern breeding grounds by mid-April.

April brings with it continuing warmer weather and an increase in bird diversity in the forests and fields of NBS. The first flocks of Glossy Ibis can be seen overhead searching for wet meadows where they can forage for food. American Woodcocks can

be seen displaying at dusk or dawn in the fields. And at long last our first warblers of the spring begin to fill the forest with their songs: Black-throated Green, Palm, and Yellow Warblers are among the first species back, most years returning before we flip our calendars to May.

May of course is when the flood gates truly open. Last year alone, an amazing 103 species of birds were recorded here at NBS in the month of May. A host of songbirds such as Blue-headed Vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Great-crested Flycatchers fill the forest, while Bobolinks, Willow Flycatchers, and Yellow Warblers begin singing from the fields. Down at Red Maple Pond, Great Egrets, Green Herons and Black-crowned Night-Herons return to patrol for small fish and invertebrates.

Spring Migration truly is a sight to see no matter what month it may be. We hope that you will be inspired to come explore our property while observing the exciting diversity of birds that are coming and going early this year.



News from Summer Camp

If you were around last summer during our 55th year of Summer Camp, you might have noticed a new face amongst our camp staff. Matt Schenck joined our education team last March as Education Assistant and Assistant Camp Director. Matt fit right in to our camp program and did an outstanding job interacting with campers and families, managing staff and handling most of our office administration. This year, we are excited to announce he will be taking on the roll of Camp Director. While Nicole Souza, our past Camp Director, will still be on hand to answer questions and oversee major camp operations, Matt will take on the daily tasks of running camp. We know Matt's experience and enthusiasm will continue the unique combination of fun, excitement and learning that our campers love. Interested in learning more about Matt and his Summer Camp experience last year? Check out his favorite parts about our camp program!



Matt's Top Five Things to Love about Camp at NBS

Here at the Norman Bird Sanctuary we use a combination of many different types of programs and experiences to make our Summer Camp so unique. This makes it hard for me to pick one thing as my favorite part about summer camp at NBS, so I chose my top 5 to share with you below.

5. Trips to the Fairy Forest: the fairy forest is an enchanted corner of NBS where campers can make forts, enjoy a snack, or just explore with their group. Its convenient location is not too far down the trail so even the youngest campers can enjoy its magic!

4. Beach Day: Who doesn't love a day at the beach? Whether exploring the tide pools at Crab Town or seining the beach with Charles, our beach day teaches campers that there is more to the beach than just sand & surf.

3. Puddingstone: The official camp snack of NBS and a hit with campers this interactive snack helps campers learn about the Geology of NBS, and it usually includes a hike to Hanging Rock.

2. Ponding: No week of NBS Summer Camp is complete without an adventure to Red Maple Pond. As campers busily collect pond life specimens with their dip nets they also learn how valuable our watery habitats can be!

1. Friday Fiesta: Even though it means another camp week is coming to a close Friday Fiesta is a very exciting time at camp. Campers and counselors alike share what they learned at camp, sing songs, tell stories, and of course snack on watermelon.

Even though these are some of my favorite parts of camp it is all of these things and more that make our summer camp such a wonderful place for children to have fun while learning about nature. I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to serve as the director for such a fantastic summer camp, and I look forward to seeing all of our camp families this summer!

Summer Camp is filling up quickly!

Register today at:

www.normanbirdsanctuary.org



Events at The Norman Bird Sanctuary

2015 SAVE THE DATES

For complete information: www.normanbirdsanctuary.org

DINE TO DONATE SERIES

- Dinner at Stoneacre Pantry – **February 18th**
- 5th Annual Executive Director's Dinner – **February 27th**
- 8th Annual Fluke Wine, Bar & Kitchen Dinner – **March 11th**

Music performance by the Newport String Project – **April 30th**

33rd Annual Birds & Breakfast* – **May 17th**

9th Annual 5K in honor of David Leys, Jr.** – **June 20th**

Bird Ball, 10th Anniversary – **August 15th**

41st Annual Harvest Fair – **October 3rd & 4th**

UPCOMING SPRING EVENTS

* Birds & Breakfast | Sunday, May 17th

After a cold, long winter, what better way to welcome spring than with a delectable breakfast buffet prepared by Executive Chef, Rich Silvia, of the White Horse Tavern, bird walks led through the beautiful trails of the Norman Bird Sanctuary and nature activities for kids. A cherished community event, the 33rd Annual Birds & Breakfast is a must for winter weary folks of all ages.



** 5K in honor of David Leys, Jr. | Saturday, June 20th

If you haven't already discovered the "Best 5K in RI" (RI Monthly '12) or what a record-setting 400 runners and walkers found in 2014, you can't miss the Norman Bird Sanctuary's 9th Annual 5K Run/Walk in honor of David Leys, Jr. Traditionally held Father's Day weekend, on a breathtaking USATF course beginning and ending at NBS, the Frosty Freez Kid's Run for the under-12 set and music to get the heart pumping welcomes both the veteran competitor and the occasional jogger. Gather your friends, family, co-workers, create a team or come out and cheer – add this race to your "must do" list!



Stay connected to NBS
through social media!



Membership update!

Our membership has received a facelift! This fall we issued new member swipe cards, which bring a couple of great benefits. NBS has formed a partnership with local businesses called our "Birds of a Feather" friends, who offer NBS member discounts for their goods and services. Present your valid member card when shopping and receive a 'feathered friend' discount.

Our current Birds of a Feather Partners:

Audubon - 10% off programs & 1/2 off admission to the Environmental Education Center in Bristol.

Farmaesthetics Apothecary - 15% off purchases over \$25.00

Healing Arts Professionals - 10% off services

Innerlight Center for Yoga - 10% discount on class passes

Island Retreat: A Medical Spa - 15% off products & services (excluding Botox Cosmetic & Juvederm)

Life is Good Newport - 10% off all regular priced items

Marc Leandro, Private Chef - 10% off all dinner party and catering services

Natural Creations, LLC - 10% off any service

newportFILM - Discounts vary monthly - Aug 28- \$5 off tickets to the pre party of newportFILM at NBS. Call (401) 649-2784 to purchase.

Pour Judgement - 15% off any lunch entrée

Robin Hollow Farm - 10% off any on-farm purchases at Plant Sale, May 9 & 10, 2015, and Holiday Sale December 5 & 6, 2015. Or \$10 off any special order

Kim Fuller Photography - 10% off portrait photography

Saluté Spirits - Buy 10 bottles/Get 2 FREE!

Salvation Café - 10% early bird discount from 4:30-6:30pm

SpaTerre at the Hotel Viking - 20% off all services and retail items

Train with Jane Athletics - Pilates & More - 10% discount on intro package or 10 class card. (one-time only)

Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA) reciprocal membership program. Be sure to take your membership card on your travels around the country. Your new card allows you access to more than 200 nature centers in the USA and Canada. To find a reciprocal member go to www.natctr.org

For a complete list of our new partners, visit www.normanbirdsanctuary.org. Check in frequently because new "Birds of a Feather" partners are continually being added.

Additionally, visitors who come to walk the trails at the Sanctuary can now 'swipe in' and be counted automatically as we monitor the annual foot traffic on the sensitive ecosystem of our beautiful trails. This helps support the ongoing mission of NBS to ensure our ability to responsibly preserve, protect and share this enormous treasure.

NBS is grateful for the support of its 1,100 member families and we are growing. In the month of January, 50 new members joined the NBS family. Thank you!



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