



2009

## JOHN KENRICK WOODS AND EXTENSION

### ■ Introduction

The Town of Orleans acquired three contiguous parcels of land between John Kenrick Road, Route 28, and Namequoit Road for conservation purposes. These parcels are collectively known as the John Kenrick Woods Conservation Area.

- The Earle parcel, 389 South Orleans Road, of 8.68 acres was acquired in 2002.

In accordance with the May 13, 2002 Town Meeting Article 5 for the Proposed Land Acquisition states: *Voted standing vote, For - Unanimous, motion carries that the Town purchase or take by eminent domain, for conservation purposes, to be held in the care and custody of the Conservation Commission...a parcel of land in Orleans...shown as Assessor's Map 74, Parcel 48 on a plan of land recorded with Barnstable Registry of Deeds at Plan Book 522, Page 274, containing 8.68 acres.*

- The Sparrow parcel, 353 South Orleans Road, of 12 acres was acquired 2002.

In accordance with the May 13, 2002 Town Meeting Article 6 for the Proposed Land Acquisition states: *Voted standing vote, For - Unanimous, motion carries that the Town purchase or take by eminent domain, for conservation purposes, to be held in the care and custody of the Conservation Commission...a parcel of land in Orleans...shown as Assessor's Map 68, Parcel 8 on a plan of land recorded with Barnstable Registry of Deeds at Plan Book 800, Page 337, containing 12 acres.*

- The Sparrow parcel, 61 Namequoit Road, of 20.31 acres was acquired in 2003.

In accordance with the May 12, 2003 Town Meeting Article 37 for the Proposed Land Acquisition states: *Voted standing vote, For - Unanimous, motion carries that the Town purchase or take by eminent domain, for conservation purposes, to be held in the care and custody of the Conservation Commission...a parcel of land in Orleans...shown as Assessor's Map 69, Parcel 75 on a plan of land recorded with Barnstable Registry of Deeds at Plan Book 574, Page 94 and a portion of Lot 4 on a plan recorded in said Registry Plan Book 535, Page 43, containing 20.31 acres.*

In December 27, 2007 the Town purchased an additional 6.45 acres from the Sparrow family across Namequoit Road from John Kenrick Woods leading to the shore of Areys Pond. This property is referred to as the Extension in this Management Plan.

- The Sparrow parcel, 58 Namequoit Road, of 6.45 acres was acquired in 2007.

In accordance with the May 7, 2007 Town Meeting Article 34 for the Proposed Land Acquisition states: Voted, voice vote carried by 2/3 majority *carries that the Town purchase or take by eminent domain, for conservation, open space, and passive recreation, land located at 58 Namequoit Road approximately 6.45 acres, Assessor's Map 69, Parcel 34 shown as Lot 5 on a plan recorded with Barnstable Registry of Deeds in Plan Book 535, Page 43.*

## **Legal Protections**

The Town of Orleans acquired the parcels that make up John Kenrick Woods Conservation Area for conservation, open space and passive recreational uses. It is protected from conversion to other uses. The Town cannot simply decide to put John Kenrick Woods to other uses, such as housing, schools or cemeteries, or dispose of or sell the property. Some of the obstacles to conversion or development are noted below:

The John Kenrick Woods Conservation Area is owned by the Town of Orleans, but managed by the Conservation Commission and the Orleans Conservation Trust holds a Conservation Restriction over approximately 20.31-acres of land purchased with assistance from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services. Conversion to uses other than conservation and passive recreation would require: special legislation, town meeting vote, and designation of an alternative parcel of land that is of equal quality and value as contained in the Article 97 Transfer procedures. In addition the Orleans Conservation Trust would have to grant permission and the Conservation Restriction would have to be removed if such a transfer affected the 20.31-acre parcel.

## Management

- The Orleans Conservation Commission is responsible for the overall management of the property, including periodically reviewing usage, issues and problems and recommending improvements.
- The Orleans Parks and Beaches Department provides routine maintenance, such as seasonal pruning, cleanup and trash removal.
- The Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services is the State agency that oversees the care and use of land purchased for conservation, open space and recreational purposes.
- The Orleans Water Commissioners in cooperation with the Water Superintendent are responsible for protecting municipal, potable water supply and any activities that may affect groundwater quality.
- The Orleans Conservation Trust is responsible for reviewing activities for compliance with requirements of the CR over the 20.31-acre parcel at 61 Namequoit Road.

## ■ Site Description

**Entrance** to John Kenrick Woods and the Extension is from a small gravel parking lot off of Namequoit Road. The Conservation Area is bounded on the east by State Highway Route 28, (with the Extension) on the north by Arey's Pond and on the south by John Kenrick Road. Access from John Kenrick Road is gained via a 10-foot easement from John Kenrick Road. The main trail transverse the property between Namequoit Road and John Kenrick Road. There is a bench and viewing area of the vernal pool on this trail. There are 2 loop trails off of and back on to the main trail. One of the loop trails has a spur trail to Namequoit Road where it crosses over the road on to the Extension. There is a loop trail on the Extension with a bench and viewing area of the Namequoit River and Arey's Pond and a spur trail to Arey's Pond.



The John Kenrick Woods Conservation Area is an integral part of an extensive greenbelt on the lower Cape covering over 500 acres. It is the largest contiguous parcel on Cape Cod for Groundwater protection. The groundwater from this parcel is part of the watershed contributing to Areys Pond, which is a subembayment of Pleasant Bay. This small subembayment with limited flushing capacity is experiencing a decline in the water quality due to nitrogen loading. Holding these acres in conservation will help protect it from additional anthropomorphic impacts to the estuary ecosystem.

## **History**

Prior to 1696, this part of South Orleans was known by the Indian name of Satucket. In a letter dated, July 10, 2007, the Massachusetts Historical Commission verified that “There are two ancient Native American archeological sites and multiple recorded historical archaeological sites within and adjacent to the parcel” (the Extension). Near here was Portanimicut Village, a major Indian reservation during the 1600’s and 1700’s.

This Conservation Area was once part of a 150-acre piece of property owned by John Kenrick II. Kenrick lived from 1819 to 1898. He was a farmer, merchant, and a schoolteacher at the age of only 19. Kenrick was the first chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Orleans Public Library, a Selectman for 14 years, Assessor and Overseer of the Poor for the Town of Orleans. In addition to these accomplishments, he was also Superintendent of Schools for 8 years, a 25-year member of the school committee, a trial justice from 1850-1857, and from 1852-1853 he was a representative in the State legislature as a known and pronounced Whig. (From Peter Sparrow, descendant of John Kenrick II, and the American Series of Popular Biographies, 1901, Graves and Steinbarger, 15 Court Square, Boston, MA)

Much of the land had been deforested and John Kenrick II undertook the task of reforesting the area. Larch, Elm, White and Scotch Pines were originally planted by Kenrick. The tall, straight lumber from Kenrick Woods was coveted for flagpoles as well as spars and planks for sailing vessels of the eighteen and nineteen hundreds. Peat was historically cut out of the bog, then dried and used as a heating fuel when cordwood was scarce or too costly.

The property features part of an historic **old gully trail**, which likely predates the 1900’s. Old Gully Trail was also known locally as Mosquito Lane, which led from Namequoit Landing to Brewster via the Bakers Pond area through the existing municipal well field area and the Route 6 Highway. This historic cartway also connected to the main road into Chatham at a location west of the current intersection of Namequoit Road and Route 28, in the current location of the municipal well field property.



## Woodlands

The predominate vegetation community on this site is a White Pine-Oak Forest with a dominance of white pine (*Pinus strobus*) as described in The Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts. The description of White Pine-Oak Forest mentions vernal pools as common in this forest type. A substantial pool of 1.5 acres sits partially on this property next to South Orleans Road to the west of the forest. Also mentioned under the vegetation classification for White Pine-Oak Forest were chestnuts (*Castanea dentata*). At least twenty-five American chestnuts are surviving within this parcel. **Chestnuts** (*Castanea dentata*) were an important wildlife food source up to the early part of the 20th century. There are no longer any large chestnut trees due to imported Chestnut diseases. Many trees separated throughout the woodlands survive long enough to flower and fruit before succumbing to the blight. If Flowering Chestnut trees are observed, the Conservation Commission will contact the American Chestnut Foundation.

White pine woodlands are unusual on the lower Cape where most of the forests were removed for farmland and the majority of forests that exist today are pitch pine and oak. This woodland is mature enough to provide for animals that prefer white pine woodlands such as blackburnian warblers. The White Pine-Oak Forest arises up a steep slope from the vernal pool and continues into a fairly level area above. Except for the vegetation surrounding the vernal pool, white pine dominates the majority of this property including The Extension. Several of

the trees reach almost 2' in diameter at breast height (DBH) but the majority of the trees are even aged about 1' in (DBH). Oaks of different sizes are interspersed throughout the woodland. Several of these oaks are large, over a foot in (DBH). One other large tree growing mainly on the level area at the top of the slope is the non-native scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). Several of these have reached substantial size of over one foot (DBH). The secondary trees listed in the classification are pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) and large red maples (*Acer rubrum*) in the vernal pool area.

In the majority of the property the dominant trees are close enough together to provide a thick layer of needles and limit the understory to patches of shrubs or groundcovers where the light intensity is enough to support them. The understory on The Extension is heavy with poison ivy. Two relatively open habitat types currently exist in small areas (50-foot diameter or less in size) within the Conservation Area. An open area characterized by numerous standing and fallen dead wood, a thick herbaceous community, and a high density of various species of lichens is located just east of the parking area off Namequoit Road. Another lightly forested area exists between the Earle Property and the 12-acre Sparrow Property just north of the trail. This area is characterized as having a thick herbaceous community dominated by Hair Grass (*Deschampsia tomentosa*) and Pennsylvania Sedge (*Carex Pennsylvanica*) and a noticeable lack of shrub cover.

At the bottom of the slope the ground is fairly level to the edge of the vernal pool. This vernal pool has been certified with the State as # 3135. The vernal pool appears to have been used for cultivation of cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) at some time in the past as there is a ditching system but no cranberries are in evidence at this time. The cranberry bog has reverted to the native flora in the area except where there are some invasive cultivated species upland of the pool such as myrtle (*Vinca minor*), Shrub Honeysuckle (*Lonicera x. bella.*) and privet (*Ligustrum spp.*).

In the State's classification system this vernal pool would be grouped with the natural community of an Acidic Shrub Fen. An Acidic Shrub Fen is described as a deciduous shrub dominated community with a peat layer. Growing in the vernal pool itself is the shrub, water willow (*Decodon verticillatus*) and clumps of rushes (*Juncus spp.*). Sweet pepperbush is found on the edge of the pool to the south, as well as large red maples, several of which are growing on the edge to the northeast with an understory of meadow sweet (*Spiraea alba*). There is a small island of large shrubs such as high bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) in the pool to the south. As this pool has no outlet the shrub border is a reflection of occasional flooding from times of high water level. With the area closest to the pool having more obligate wetland species such as high bush blueberry and the edge of the flat area bordering the incline having more facultative species such as catbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*), poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) and several patches of club mosses (*Lycopodiums spp.*), red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), and oaks (*Quercus spp.*).



#### 4. Wildlife

With the acquisition of this 47.44-acre parcel a wildlife corridor 400' wide extending from the Town of Orleans Watershed to Pleasant Bay will be maintained and preserved.

Birds and mammals recorded on site included red-tailed hawks feeding, gold finches, chickadees, warblers, redwing blackbirds calling, white tailed deer droppings, and chipmunks. Other common small mammal residents in this classification would include mice, gray squirrels, shrews, and voles. Birds that commonly nest in White Pine-Oak Forests include eastern wood pewee, red-eyed vireo, brown creeper, hermit thrush and red-tailed hawk. Birds associated with denser white pine forests include blackburnian warblers, ovenbird, yellow warbler, Cooper's hawk, northern goshawk and the generalists chickadee and red-breasted nuthatch.

Reptiles and amphibians recorded on site included salamander eggs found in the vernal pool, which designated it a vernal pool (Certified #3135). Spotted salamanders and newts are listed as common residences of this community, breeding in the vernal pools and living in the duff of the forest floor. Rare species associated with Acidic Shrub Fens include the Jefferson salamander and the spotted turtle.





## ■ **Land Uses, Limitations and Prohibitions**

This Conservation Managed Land is set aside for Nature Preservation and public appreciation of the indigenous environment of Cape Cod.

The area features:

- Bird watching
- Trail walking
- Watershed Protection Zone II (Largest single continuous parcel on Cape Cod for Water Protection)
- Wildlife Corridor
- Vernal Pool
- White Pine Upland Forest (less common on Cape Cod)
- Stand of American Chestnut
- Proximity to the Pleasant Bay ACEC

There are **limitations** on hours of use of the property and use by groups as follows:

- The area is closed from sunset to sunrise.
- Groups of more than 10 people require a permit from the Conservation Office

In addition, certain activities **are prohibited** at all areas under the management of the Conservation Commission, including:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Littering
- Trash disposal
- Unrestrained dogs
- Open fires and cooking
- Paint Ball games
- Erection of tents or camping
- Discharge of firearms
- Harassing wildlife
- Motorized vehicles

## ■ **Implementation Actions**

### **Action Required:**

- Maintenance of parking and walking areas
- Town budget funding for routine maintenance

### **Party Responsible:**

Parks Dept.  
TA/BOS

