

Conservation Land Stewardship Program



Stewardship Manual



*Department of Health and Environment
Conservation Division*



This manual was written by Nichole Proctor-English,
AmeriCorps Cape Cod Member 2011-2012.

AmeriCorps Cape Cod is a fulltime residential service program committed to addressing the environmental and disaster related needs of Cape Cod's community and fragile natural resources. The program engages the community through service, education, and outreach. Up to 32 service-minded adults are brought on as members to participate in hands-on projects with Cape Cod towns, Barnstable County departments, the Cape Cod National Seashore, the American Red Cross, private land trusts, and other established environmental, educational, and disaster related organizations in the region.

As an AmeriCorps member, each individual is expected to perform **1,700 hours of service** over the 10 months of the program. AmeriCorps Cape Cod members serve at individual and group service sites providing environmental, disaster, and community focused services to Barnstable County's 15 towns.

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Introduction	1
Conservation Land Steward Responsibilities	2-3
Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines	4-5
Common Issues Encountered	6
Example Potential Signage	7
Safety & Liability	8
Appendix A: Contact Information	9
Appendix B: Map of Conservation Areas	10
Appendix C: Stewardship Field Report Form	11-12

“A land ethic, then, reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of land.”

-Aldo Leopold

Introduction

The Town of Chatham Conservation Division would like to thank you for your interest in the Conservation Land Stewardship Program. This program is committed to protecting and conserving the natural resources of the Town of Chatham for public access, enjoyment, and use by current and future generations. Without the assistance of volunteers (such as yourself) this goal would be unattainable.

Chatham is home to historic and astonishing natural landscapes that attract visitors year-round. Land Stewardship and conservation is crucial if we are to protect and preserve these natural resources. By becoming a Conservation Land Steward, you are demonstrating your commitment to make a positive and meaningful impact on the fragile environment within your own community. This manual will provide the information necessary for you to begin your journey as a Land Steward. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or need any assistance.

Thank you for your service,
Town of Chatham Conservation Staff

"Let every individual and institution now think and act as a responsible trustee of Earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure."

— John McConnell, founder of International Earth Day

Conservation Land Steward Responsibilities

As a volunteer for the Chatham Conservation Division Land Stewardship Program, your fundamental responsibility will be to act as a concierge and steward to town-owned conservation property. You will be asked to commit a minimum of four days per year (one year commitment) for conducting property visits and to report your findings. Training will be provided. On your property visit you will be asked to make observations and monitor the property for hazards and changes.

The responsibilities of a Land Steward are restricted to the following:

- Attend one mandatory Orientation and Training Workshop.
- Conduct at least four property visits throughout the one year commitment.
- Observe the conditions of the land, including hazards and changes as listed on page 5.
- Submit the Land Steward Observation Form online, by mail, fax, or hand deliver to the Chatham Conservation Division and upload any photographs online within 14 days of the property visit. See Appendix A for contact information.
- Assist with keeping trails clear and support clean-up efforts.
 - * This includes using hand pruners and loppers to clear vegetation overhanging the trail.
 - * Participate (if possible) during volunteer work parties.
- Using gloves, pick-up small scale trash and litter.
- Report hypodermic needles to staff.
- Report large scale dumping such as mattresses, cars, furniture, trash, and debris to the Chatham Conservation Division.

Chatham Conservation Division 508-945-5164
Chatham Police Department 508-945-1213

Conservation Land Steward Responsibilities

Do Not:

- Construct new trails, post signs, or introduce new plants without approval from the Chatham Conservation Division.
- Remove signs without approval from the Chatham Conservation Division.
- Organize volunteer work days without approval from the Chatham Conservation Division.
- Remove invasive species without assistance from the Chatham Conservation Division.
- Use power tools, pesticides or herbicides to perform trail maintenance.
- **Enter into confrontational situations with others who are causing harm to the property or performing illegal activity.**

If you witness dumping, illegal activities, or other potential safety hazards please document vehicle information, location, and/or description of the person or persons. Report to the Chatham Conservation Division and the Chatham Police Department (non-emergency) as soon as possible.

Chatham Conservation Division 508-945-5164
Chatham Police Department 508-945-1213



Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines

You will want to bring the following items:

- A copy of the Land Steward Observation Form and writing implement
- Property and/or trail map
- Wear visible clothing (fluorescent orange, bright blue, yellow) during large game hunting season (Oct– Feb) and don't venture off trail
- Gloves and small trash bag for picking up small volume litter and debris

If you have them, it is suggested that you bring/wear the following:

- Field guides of invasive species, plant, and/or wildlife
- Digital camera for taking pictures
 - * Keep track of the photos, where and the direction you took them on the Conservation Property map
- Walking shoes appropriate for the site
- Gloves and clippers for pruning vegetation encroaching trails
 - * Vegetation that is hanging into the trail impacting walking can be trimmed back. Do not cut down entire plants without approval from the Conservation Division.
- Tick repellent, poison ivy block, first aid kit, medications you might need
- Compass, map, charged cell phone

Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines

What to look for, report on the form, and mark on your map

- Signs of erosion
- Encroachment of vegetation on trails
- Illegally trimmed vegetation
- Litter and debris- vegetative or trash
- Evidence of wildlife (footprints, scat, dens, nests etc.)
- Vandalism
- Trail signage that needs repair or replacement, or areas that need signage
- Safety hazards (overhanging dead trees, downed trees on the trail)
- Invasive species
- Social trails– unauthorized trails that have been installed
- Dirt bike use
- Other significant changes from previous visits

If possible, inspect property boundaries for encroachment

Not all properties have property border signs, fences or stakes. Properties requiring inspections will be individually reviewed with the Conservation Land Steward.



Evidence of dirt bike use,
Old Comers Woodland

← Vegetation dumped on
Conservation Land ↓



Common Issues Encountered

Property Border Encroachment ↓



Illegally trimmed tree (Valley Farm) ↓



Debris from Cemetery
Red River
Conservation Area



Erosion and dirt bike use.
Erosion evident by exposed roots. Dirt bikes create a gully especially around corners.



Examples of Potential Signage

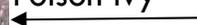
Rules & Regulations



Deer Tick Habitat



Poison Ivy



Trail Markers



Temporary Signs



Trail Arrow



Property Sign



Interpretive Sign



Property Sign



Safety and Liability

All Land Stewards are considered volunteers and no liability insurance exists for participants of this program. As such Land Stewards will not be asked to participate in any activities with which they are uncomfortable. It is expected that you understand the risks and hazards associated with working outdoors and that your physical condition is appropriate for participation in the Land Steward program.

Cape Cod is home to deer ticks, dog ticks, poison ivy, mosquitoes, and other pests. Please take the necessary precautions to protect yourself from these hazards.

The Cape Cod Cooperative Extension's webpage has resources and information available on deer ticks and disease prevention:

<http://www.capecodextension.org/>

"A Guide to the Prevention of Tick-Borne Diseases"

"We are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. We can never have enough of nature."

-Henry David Thoreau

Appendix A: Contact Information

Contact Information

Please direct all questions, comments, or concerns pertaining to the Conservation Land Stewardship Program to the Conservation Staff:

Chatham Conservation Division

261 George Ryder Road

Chatham, MA 02633

Phone: 508.945.5164

Fax: 508.945.5163

Town website: http://www.chatham-ma.gov/Public_Documents/ChathamMA_Health/conservation

Conservation Land Website:

<http://chathamamericorps.wix.com/chathamconserv>

2013 Chatham Conservation Division Staff

Kristin Andres
Conservation Agent

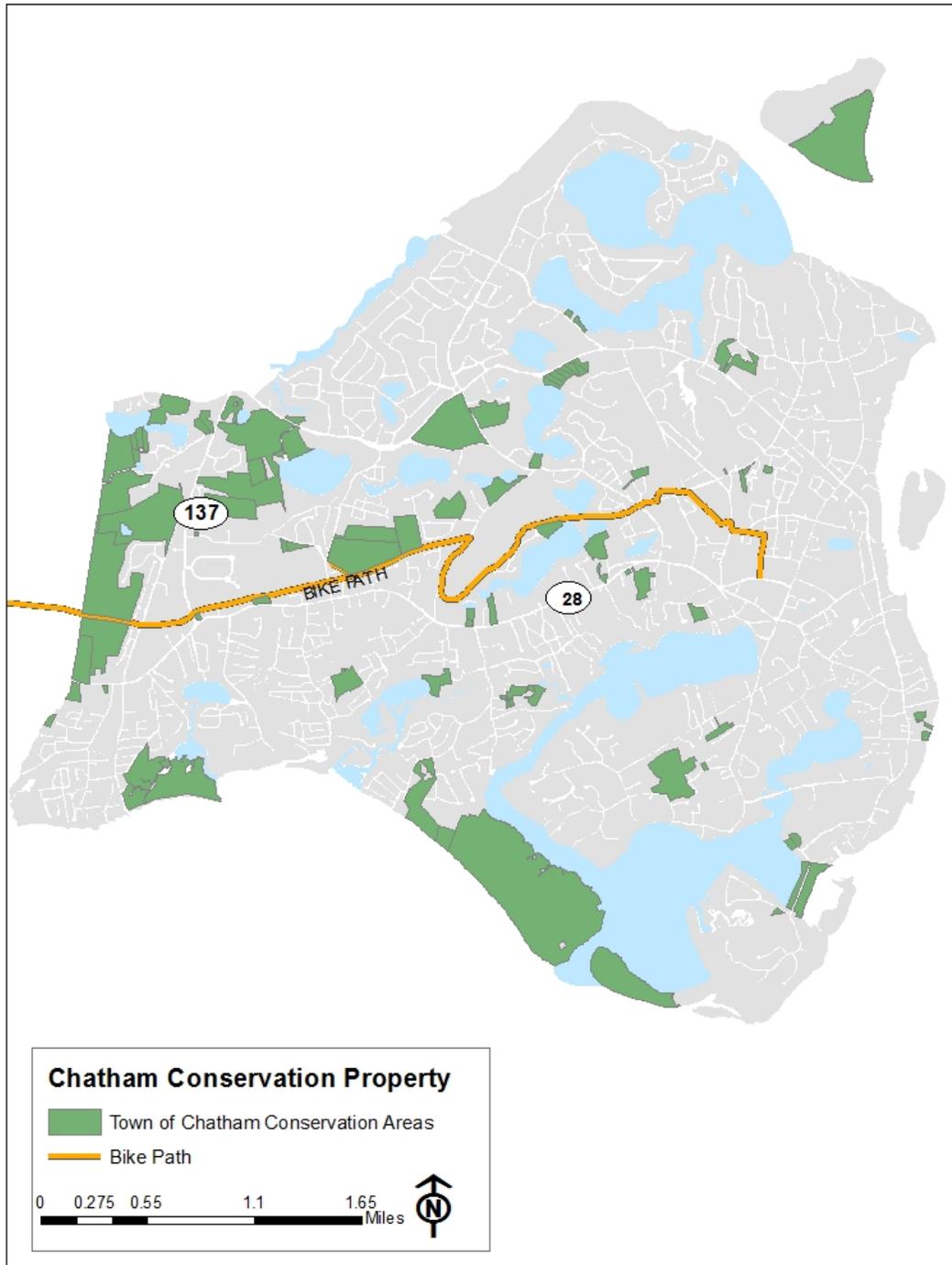
Lara Slifka
Assistant Conservation Agent & Environmental Technician

Mary Fougere
Secretary

Bethany Reynolds
2013-2014 AmeriCorps Cape Cod Member
chatham.americorps@gmail.com

Open Monday thru Thursday 7AM-4PM
Friday 7AM-12:30PM

Appendix B: Map of Conservation Areas



Visit website for map labeled with Conservation Property names.

Appendix C: Stewardship Field Report

Conservation Land Stewardship Field Report

Please submit only one per conservation area, per property visit.



Steward Name: Happy Steward	Date of visit: 12-10-2013
Property Name: Valley Farm Conservation Area	

Access Location (If there is more than one access location at the conservation area please describe which one you used.)
Valley Farm Road

TRAIL INFORMATION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Are you able to clearly follow the trails?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No trail markers. Social trails need to be reviewed.
Are there any obstructions on the trails?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poison ivy growing into center trail; see below
Are there any storm damaged or hazardous trees that need to be removed from the trail?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See below
Was there any evidence of erosion by water or overuse on the trails?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trails do not seem to be used frequently.
Have any new trails been created since last visit?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approx. 200 ft. east of entrance on north side of main trail (VF Rd.) leading to House on Barn Hill Road.
Is there any evidence of dirt bike or ATV use (rutted out trails)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All trails show signs of ATV use.

Please expand on your trail observations, describe the approximate location of issues and/or mark the location on map. Example: Approximately 200 feet after eastern entrance on west side of trail, leading to house. Two, 3-5 inch DBH pitch pine trees leaning over Valley Farm Road, near house to the north of Valley Farm Cons. Area. Trail is not wide enough to access trees with a truck.
- Poison ivy growing into central trail, mostly on the western side.

FLORA & FAUNA INFORMATION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Did you observe, see evidence of, or hear any birds, butterflies or other wildlife?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Redtail hawk, deer tracks.
Have any trees or shrubs been cut?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree trimmed- center trail, approx. 20 ft. east of main trail (VF Road, See photo 2)
Did you observe any invasive species?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shrub honeysuckle

Please expand on your plant observations, include those that you know are threatened or endangered.
Trailing arbutus on center trail is expanding population size.
Winterberries are still on shrubs in wetland area.

If yes, please identify the plant, location, and square footage of the stand. Shrub Honeysuckle- Approximately 10- 25 feet east of parking area, north side of Valley Farm Road, 30 square feet.

Appendix C: Stewardship Field Report

OTHER	YES	NO	COMMENTS				
Are all property signs present as noted on the Stewardship Folder?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Missing trail arrow.				
Was there any evidence of dumped trash, materials, debris?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	yard clippings and a wreath				
<p>If yes, please describe scale, type, and location of dumping observed. (Examples: small scale trash including plastic bottles found along north eastern part of trail; large debris including brush and yard clippings found near western trail entrance; large items including 1 tire and a couch found in southwestern area of site to the left of the trail.)</p> <p>Approximately 40 feet east of parking area, north side of Valley Farm Drive. Consists of yews, leaves, honeysuckle. Pile is approximately 5 feet long by 5 feet wide, 0.5 feet tall.</p>							
Did you observe possible property boundary encroachment? <i>See folder to determine if bounds are marked.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bounds are not clearly marked for this property.				
<p>If yes, please describe observation and approximate location and/or mark on map. Although bounds are not marked, it appears that the House at 13 Meadowlark has a caper stored on town property. Camper was not present the previous visit.</p>							
<p>Additional comments; expand on the problems you found and describe where on the property.</p> <p>Two other walkers observed, one had large dog on a leash</p>							
<p>For Office Use Only</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date entered into spreadsheet:</td> <td rowspan="3">Tasks completed:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date followed up on issues:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Notes:</td> </tr> </table>				Date entered into spreadsheet:	Tasks completed:	Date followed up on issues:	Notes:
Date entered into spreadsheet:	Tasks completed:						
Date followed up on issues:							
Notes:							
<p>\\Chathamgis\annex\Conservation Properties\Conservation Projects\Stewardship\Field Report.docx Rev. 10/07/2013</p>							