

NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2011

Message From the President

Dear Friends,

Since September, the Board of Directors has met twice to finalize plans in a number of areas. Most significantly was the conclusion of our extensive efforts to determine the role of QHPT (Quissett Harbor Preservation Trust) should an oil spill threaten the harbor. We have decided not to buy our own booms, based on an assessment of the safety, effectiveness, cost and availability of other resources. You will find the details in the ***Oil Spill Response Strategy Finalized*** story in this newsletter. However, we will continue to be actively engaged in this issue. QHPT Chairman Chip Morse and I are attending the December meeting of the Southeastern Massachusetts Port Safety and Security Forum in Hyannis to educate ourselves on what an organization like ours can do to help in the event of a spill.

Secondly, we made a decision regarding our financial investment strategy, putting in place a plan we believe will continue to protect our assets while increasing the opportunity to generate income and preserve the value of QHPT. See ***Board Votes for New Investment Strategy*** story for more information.

I want to thank Paul Hogan for his leadership regarding both of these issues.

On the habitat-conservation-and-management front, we have completed several projects and are in the permitting process for others. You'll see in the stories in this newsletter, ***Quissett Association Helps Defray Project Costs*** and ***QHPT and Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries Enhance Knob***, that we conduct many projects in partnership with other environmental organizations. Not only does this help us to use our financial resources wisely, it also strengthens our relationships with those organizations working toward similar goals.

Finally, my husband, Rick, and I would like to wish all of you a happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Weatherly Dorris
President



Weatherly and Rick Dorris

QHPT and Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries Enhance Knob

Working with Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries, we made several enhancements to the Knob over the past few months, including:

- **Replacing Armor Stone:** One of the armor stones, the large stones put in place when we repaired the Knob, came loose last winter and ended up in the water. Now that the Knob is finished, we are no longer able to take large equipment out there, so we had to cut the stone into two pieces to put it back in place.

Dana Rodin, Katharine Taylor (Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries) and Chip Morse inspect new railing



- **Rethinking the Armor Stones:** Keeping the armor stones in place requires ongoing upkeep of the filler in the spaces between the stones, which is known as rethinking. We spent a few days on the project over the summer.
- **Installing New Railing:** During the summer, we installed a new railing on the stairway that leads from Buzzards Bay Beach to the causeway. The rope railing fits into the natural environment and improves safety.

Quissett Association Helps Defray Project Costs

The Quissett Association is providing a portion of the costs associated with several projects. They include:

- **Embankment Restoration:** When the town of Falmouth repaired the fire hydrant near the third parking lot on Quissett Harbor Road, part of the embankment collapsed. We replaced the sand, put there temporarily, with soil;

planted bayberry and other plants; and mulched the area.

- **Eldred Landing:** The project to restore the coastal bank and vegetation for the landing adjacent to the boatyard is in the permitting process and scheduled to begin in the spring of 2012.
- **Middle Parking Lot:** The middle parking lot is located on the landward side of

the road between the Quissett Harbor Boatyard and the public parking lot at the entrance to Carey Lane. We will be removing the decaying cement-block wall and replacing it with a more durable stone wall, better suited to the natural environment. We hope to have it permitted by the Falmouth Conservation Commission and completed by late spring.

Oil Spill Response Strategy Finalized

After extensive review by the Oil Spill sub-committee (Chip Morse, Weatherly Dorris and Paul Hogan) the Board of Directors voted that the QHPT would not purchase its own booms to deploy during an oil spill. Said Paul Hogan, who led the committee's effort, "With the help of outside professionals who understand both the issues related to oil spills and our local waterfront, we researched the options and determined owning the equipment was not the most prudent course of action for QHPT." Paul cited four reasons for the decision: safety, effectiveness, cost and other available resources.

- **Safety:** At the time of the Bouchard Oil Spill in Buzzard's Bay in 2003, most of the oil barges coming into the Bay were single-hull vessels. That is, the hull was comprised of one layer. Since then, governmental safety regulations have changed. By 2014, all commercial barges coming into the Bay will have to be constructed with double hulls. If the outer hull were pierced, there would be another layer providing protection. In fact, 90 percent of the commercial barges entering the harbor are already double-hulled.

Any that are currently single-hulled are required to have a second tugboat guide, piloted by someone who knows the area. As a result, there has been a significant improvement in safety.

- **Effectiveness:** While the booms would be effective under some conditions, they would not be in all. High winds and waves could send the oil over the booms. Also, deploying the booms requires personnel. While we have wonderful volunteers, managing an environmental emergency is a significant undertaking that we believe requires governmental and professional leadership.
- **Cost:** To purchase and insure a set of booms and equipment would cost \$150,000. The lifespan of a boom is seven to 10 years. To maintain effectiveness, we would need to purchase replacements continually.
- **Other available resources:** Massachusetts has stored booms around Buzzards Bay over the past few years. We used booms belonging to the Town of Falmouth during our training exercise in 2009. Other towns on the Cape and Islands also have booms. We believe we would be better served supporting the town of Falmouth and the other governmental

agencies that have responsibility for an environmental emergency rather than trying to respond on our own.

While we won't be purchasing booms, we will continue to take an active role in enhancing the safety of our harbor. We have already created an Oil Spill Response Plan, with the assistance of the Buzzards Bay Coalition, which is online at the Department of Environmental Protection's website (<http://www.mass.gov/dep/cleanup/os/Pages/grp.html>, listed as a Geographic Response Plan.) We will continue to maintain the plan, which includes contact information for the appropriate authorities. We remain in touch with the appropriate local and state authorities, and we are looking into the possibility of contracting with a professional oil-spill-protection company so that we have immediate access to professional advice during an emergency.

Finally, we continue to educate ourselves on the issue. We believe all of these steps provide the most effective strategy for QHPT to live up to its mission of preserving, maintaining, protecting and enhancing Quissett Harbor.

Board Votes for New Investment Strategy

As our members know from reading our annual reports, for several years we have followed a financial strategy of low-risk, liquid investments. We were a new organization and wanted to approach investing cautiously, protecting our members' contributions while building a reserve fund.

In November, the Board of Directors voted to adjust the strategy slightly to include higher-yield investments with the aim of creating operating income. "If we leave everything in bank deposits, we probably won't lose money, but we also will not be generating the income needed to support the organization," said Paul Hogan, treasurer, QHPT. "We think it is prudent to put a portion of our financial resources into investments that have some risk but that also give us the opportunity to generate income and preserve value."

Paul stated that the strategy is still a conservative one: "We are still keeping 40 percent of our income in bank deposits." The other 60 percent will be divided between stocks and bonds. The stocks will be



put into an S&P 500 Index Fund, which tracks performance of the 500 largest United States-based companies and has very low fees.

Finally, Paul said the board has created an investment committee. Consisting of Paul, Dick DeWolfe and Dave Barry, all of whom have significant experience in the financial industry, the committee will monitor progress.