



## Education Program Proposal for Town of Brewster Sea Camp Properties



Mass Audubon congratulates the Town of Brewster on the acquisition of the Cape Cod Sea Camps properties on Long Pond and on Cape Cod Bay. We look forward to deepening our relationship with Brewster in support of these special places and, in partnership with the Brewster Conservation Trust, protect the Long Pond parcel for the benefit of the community including open space for wildlife, nature-based public recreation, and environmental education programming.

The purpose of this Educational Program Proposal is to provide a snapshot of what types of programming could be offered on the Sea Camps properties by Mass Audubon for the benefit of the community. While not comprehensive, we hope it will also serve as a reference document for potential activities on the property that may operate in harmony with other uses and activities of the land. It is not intended to serve in opposition to any other uses of the property.

### **About Mass Audubon**

Mass Audubon protects more than 40,000 acres of land throughout Massachusetts, saving birds and other wildlife, and making nature accessible to all. As Massachusetts' largest nature conservation nonprofit, we welcome more than a half million visitors a year to our wildlife sanctuaries and 20 nature centers across the state which includes two nature centers (Wellfleet Bay and Long Pasture) and six wildlife sanctuaries across the Cape Cod region. We are also a nationally recognized environmental education leader, offering camps, school, and adult programs that engage over 225,000 kids and adults outdoors every year.

On the Cape, our education programming includes deep dives into natural history for adult learners, community events, public lectures, family programs, a nature preschool, and a summer day camp. Mass Audubon Cape Cod educators also work closely with school districts from Provincetown to Falmouth to provide high quality nature-based environmental education, connecting students and teachers to local habitats and wildlife, as well as conservation and climate change initiatives. Much of our programming is offered free-of-charge to local schools, while discounts and financial aid offer Cape residents access to high quality day camp programming during the summer months.

Community engagement and inclusive access to nature are both important objectives of Mass Audubon's Action Agenda that are also echoed in the Town of Brewster's early vision for the Cape Cod Sea Camps parcels. These objectives will drive the design and implementation of programs that meet the needs of Brewster community members of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

### **Mass Audubon and Brewster**

Mass Audubon Cape Cod has deep roots working within Brewster. The education team has engaged Brewster school children in multi-session programming for over 25 years by offering natural history and environmental education classroom lessons and field trips.

In recent years, Mass Audubon has conducted increasing amounts of environmental programming in Brewster. In particular, we already have had a strong partnership with the Brewster schools and Brewster Conservation Trust. We work with the town's teachers, science coordinator, and administrators to provide free classroom lessons for all the students at both Stony Brook and Eddy Elementary, complemented by outdoor field investigations in the schoolyards and on Brewster Conservation Trust owned parcels.

Brewster's beautiful beaches and open space have also been destinations for Mass Audubon's adult field trips and college workshops focusing on everything from birds to sea turtles to coastal erosion and freshwater wetlands, as well as guided kayak trips on the local ponds. Many Brewster children also attend the summer day camp held at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. The Cape Cod Sea Camps parcels offer the exciting potential to host a similar style nature camp for local children.

Our staff are also part of the Brewster community as residents whose children attend Stony and Eddy Elementary schools, participate in Brewster Recreation Department and walk our beloved nature trails maintained by the Town and Brewster Conservation Trust. For example, the current Education Manager for the Cape Region grew up in West Brewster, attended Brewster and Nauset schools and has now returned to Brewster to raise her sons and lead the educational initiatives in Mass Audubon's Cape Cod Region. Brewster is more than just where we offer programs to different audiences, it is our home and our community.

### **Nature-based Recreation and Education Opportunities**

The Sea Camps parcels are valuable in so many ways—including the opportunities they afford for all ages to engage with the natural world through exploration and learning about the unique natural habitats of Cape Cod. Below is a description of possible programming Mass Audubon could deliver, along with the simple infrastructure needs to make it possible.

While we focus primarily upon the Long Pond parcel in this document, we do recognize the tremendous opportunities and potential for partnerships at the Bay parcel, as well. We welcome an opportunity to be a part of and support your community's vision for both sites. In regards to Long Pond, the area of that parcel that is of interest for Mass Audubon programming is the south west corner of the property (see red circle area in Photo 2), loosely defined as from the smaller beach by the existing lifeguard stand along the shore to the rustic American Camp Association (ACA) accredited cabins and nearby fire pit.



*Photo 1 Long Pond Parcel*



*Photo 2 Area of Program Interest*

This area was previously accredited by ACA for CCSC's use in camp, making it an ideal setting for Mass Audubon programming and separating it from the larger swimming beach.

With the programming rights to use this area for educational programming during the months of July and August and less frequent use in the offseason, we hope to provide nature-based programs to a wide audience based on existing fee-based structures that include reduced rates and financial aid for local children.

In addition, the Bay parcel provides many other opportunities for group and adult programs such as Mass Audubon's Cape Cod Natural History Conference as well as buildings and facilities designed for ACA accredited camp which could quickly and easily be fitted for a Mass Audubon Day Camp.

## Natural History Programs

### *Long Pond Parcel*

With rights to use the above-mentioned area of the property (red circle in Photo 2) and the minimal investment of *a small trail network, portable toilets, annual road grading, and limited parking access*, Mass Audubon educators could use the Long Pond parcel for birding and other natural history walks as well as part of our multi day adult field school and naturalist certificate programs focused on natural history and conservation topics for residents and non-residents.



Photo 3. *Kayak rack and smaller Long Pond beach adjacent to ACA cabins*

With use of the existing kayak racks adjacent to the ACA cabins, Mass Audubon could offer guided kayaking and stand-up paddleboard (SUP) programs during the summer and shoulder seasons. These programs utilize watercraft to observe and study birds, ecology, conservation and natural history of the area.

### *Bay Parcel*

Given the infrastructure at the bayside parcel, we can envision many uses that would enhance community engagement including a small, volunteer-run nature center designed for all ages. *If existing dorm bunkhouses are maintained by the town*, Mass Audubon's off Cape (and some local) school, college and group audiences could make use of these for fee based overnight housing. *If meeting space is maintained by the town*, Mass Audubon Educators could host workshops, lectures and events such as the Cape Cod Natural History Conference.

## Nature Day Camps

For more than 60 years, Mass Audubon camps have provided children with a memorable summer experience at 18 camps across the state. At Mass Audubon's summer camp programs, children spend time outdoors, discover the natural world, meet new friends, play noncompetitive games and have fun! All our camps are American Camp Association (ACA) Accredited as leaders in the camp industry. As illustrated by the discounts and financial aid offered Cape residents for our day camp in Wellfleet, we are committed to making high quality camp programming accessible for local families financially and by working with local partners.

### *Long Pond Parcel*

With rights to use a small section of the property (red circle photo 2), the ability to self-contain that specific area of the property to maintain ACA security and safety standards for campers, and an approved parent pick up and drop off area, Mass Audubon could utilize the four existing accredited cabins (photo 4) to meet ACA facility requirements for a 30-camper summer day program focused on natural history and nature play. Mass Audubon is interested in working further with Brewster Recreation to provide complimentary programming to the Brewster Rec Summer Program (example: afternoon session at Long Pond based from Brewster Rec at end of morning programming).

The ability to use the existing lifeguard stand of the smaller beach (see photo 4) and potentially some of the existing dock structures would allow the camp to have a limited waterfront program in addition to nature programming.

Based on previous use by the Cape Cod Sea Camps (CCSC), Mass Audubon could explore the possibility of providing rustic, seasonal housing accommodations for a camp director in one of the existing structures. These uses could be established with limited off grid green energy (small refrigerator for medicines, laptop for camp documents etc.), trucking in potable water, porta potties and satellite phones as established by CCSC use prior.



*Photo 4. Life guard stand at smaller Long Pond beach*

If the town were to consider bringing in water, phone or electricity to the adjacent beach area Mass Audubon could make use of those amenities for this section of the property. Shoulder season use of the ACA cabin area could include family fireside programs, teen camping trips and adult programming warm up space.

See Figure 1 below for a sample of how a summer program schedule might play out at the Long Pond parcel.



Photos 5. Photo 6. American Camp Association Accredited Cabins at Long Pond Parcel

**Figure 1: Sample Summer Program Calendar for Long Pond Program Area**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00-3:00 Day Camp	9:00-3:00 Day Camp	9:00-3:00 Day Camp	9:00-3:00 Day Camp  7:00pm Family Fireside	9:00-3:00 Day Camp  6:00pm Afternoon bird watch by Kayak	7-9:00am Sunrise Bird Watch SUP  6:00pm Afternoon bird watch by Kayak	7-9:00am Sunrise Bird Watch by SUP

*Bay Parcel*

Based on the existing American Camp Association structures as well as seasonal onsite staff housing, Mass Audubon educators could run a small to medium day camp focused on natural history and nature free play out of the bay campus with minimal modifications as the entirety of the site was established to be ACA accredited. In the event that Brewster Recreation moves to the property, we would be excited to work with them to either coexist and/or to provide science and nature instruction to the Brewster Rec Summer Program model.

## Partnership Programs in the Community

### *Long Pond Parcel*

With the maintenance of a *bus turn around*, Mass Audubon educators can begin to bring Stonybrook and Eddy School students as an additional field trip to study the natural history of kettle ponds (Long Pond is a kettle pond—a globally rare ecosystem) and conservation success stories. Mass Audubon already has a strong presence in both schools but time and grant funding would be needed to bus the students to this location.

Mass Audubon can use this opportunity to strengthen its connection with the Brewster community by developing adult programming in collaboration with current and new potential partners (Brewster Conservation Trust, Association to Preserve Cape Cod, Brewster Ponds Coalition, and the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History). These programs would provide in depth and fun educational opportunities for adult residents on Brewster specific natural history, pond ecology and other conservation topics. We could also reach out to current and potential local partners about the ability to add value to their work by running programming with their audiences at this location. Examples include Brewster Recreation department outdoor club and vacation week camps, Brewster Pond Coalition school programming and Nauset Youth Alliance afterschool care for local students.



*Photo 7. Fire pit adjacent to ACA cabin area*

While not an exhaustive list, this document outlines many of the exciting programming opportunities and tangible benefits to the community that Mass Audubon expertise and experience could bring to these Brewster Town Properties. We look forward to working with municipal leaders, town residents, and volunteer committees as they determine how best to make Brewster’s vision for the Cape Cod Sea Camps properties a reality.