BOURNE CONSERVATION TRUST



INTO THE WOODS

(See page 4)

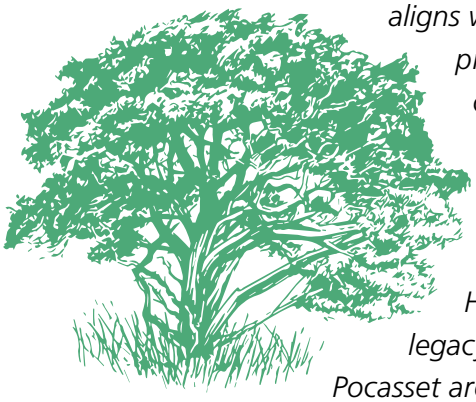
FALL 2026 Number 58

Note from Jack Dawley	2	Nature's Small Miracles	8
Events	3	Kahlin's Korner	10
Into the Woods	4	Ways of Giving	11
Out on the Trails	6	Wagler	11

A NOTE FROM JACK DAWLEY

Williams Woods—The Trust's Latest Land Preservation Initiative

In January, the Trust closed on the acquisition of its most recent land conservation purchase, a 7.34-acre tract of land located at 940 County Road. The parcel, located behind the Christadelphian Church is bordered to the north by Valley Farm Road and the County Hospital land and to the south and west by the Handy cranberry bogs and the Trust's 40 acre Red Brook Pond Conservation area. The parcel thus knits together several preserved parcels and aligns well with the Trust's mission of acquiring and preserving parcels that can be preserved for the long-term enjoyment of all and for the benefit of our area's critical natural resources. The acquisition was funded by $690,000 in donations from local Trust donors, several Charitable Foundation donations and a pledge from the Town of Bourne's Community Preservation Act fund.



The name—Williams Woods. *The Trust in coordination with the seller, Sally Howes, decided to name the parcel "Williams Woods" in recognition of the legacy of her mom, Beatrice Williams, and her family's deep roots in the Cataumet/ Pocasset area.*

Sally's mom was the daughter of Seabury and Priscilla Gibbs (of the local Swift family). This parcel along with many nearby and/or adjoining properties were owned by either Seabury Gibbs, Sally's great grandfather, or the Swift family dating back to the late 1800s. Priscilla taught 1st and 2nd grade in the nearby 2 room schoolhouse for over 20 years. Similar to other BCT properties we have leaned into the history and character of what makes Bourne so special in the selection of Williams Woods as the name for this parcel.

I thank all who have contributed to this project in any way and to all who have contributed to the Trust's 2026 annual appeal. Your past, present and continued support for what we do is greatly appreciated.

And lastly, thanks to Dick Murphy and his merry band of Trail Meisters for all they do to keep our properties the special places that they are.

See you on the trails,



President
Bourne Conservation Trust

BCT EVENTS



Tree planters included, left to right: Jen Dimmick, Betsy Woodley, George Gillis, John Woodley, Tod Dimmick, Ben Allen, Rick Bagdonas, Sue Davis, Dick Murphy, Dave Dimmick, and Bob Davis

Dimmick Family Christmas Trees

The Dimmick family has a grove of Christmas trees right in their back yard in Cataumet, and when a group of trees are ready for some holiday decorating, they sell them, donating all proceeds to the BCT. Last year was a growing and planting year, and many of you helped the Dimmicks plant a new crop of trees; thank you for that. This year there will be a Christmas tree sale in early December. We hope many of you will walk through the lot and choose your own fresh cut tree. And when you do, please thank the Dimmicks for all they do to support the BCT.

Spring Hill Farm Preps for Spring

Spring Hill Farm on County Road is BCT's home. Our headquarters are located there. Our goats live there. Horses are boarded and exercised there. Events are sponsored and to the delight of our children, it's where the Easter Bunny stops by every spring to toss candy. There is a community fence with commemorative plaques across the property, fun for walkers as they tour the property. Every spring there is a cleanup: to rake, trim, plant and keep the farm looking good. Thanks to all of you who come and help!

The Easter Bunny Back in Town

Spring Hill Farm fields covered in candy. A great big colorful bunny. Golden eggs. Goats and horses. Sounds like a kid's delight and it truly is. The BCT is so happy to be a part of this community event, the annual Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by the Cataumet Civic Associates with help from the Cataumet Methodist Church and the BCT.

The Mushroom Walk

In September, a new BCT event: The Mushroom Walk with Jonathan Kranz in the Austin Woods. Many people are fascinated with mushrooms. This was an opportunity to learn how to identify them; find, prepare and eat them; and, pretty important, discover which are dangerous and toxic. Thirty people were able to join the walk at no charge (donations always welcome to offset costs). Thanks to Jonathan for spending this time with us.

Yoga and Reiki Day on Spring Hill Farm

Led by Diana Young from Ascend, 13 people took part in our third annual restorative Yoga and Reiki day on a beautiful September morning, under the watchful eyes of the farm's goats and horses.

Events Notice

If you want to be kept posted on BCT events and activities at Spring Hill Farm, send your email address to bct.trails@gmail.com. You'll then receive advance notice of our programs, with dates, times and details.



INTO THE WOODS...



By Gordon Schimmel

When I signed up for a mushroom walk with naturalist Jonathan Kranz I already knew I had much to learn. When grocery shopping, I usually can't tell the difference between a shiitake and portobello mushroom without first checking the label. Now, thanks to him I have a new appreciation for their role in our ecosystem beyond tasty cuisine accouterments. Nearly 30 fungi enthusiasts gathered in the Trust's Austin Woods property on Saturday, September 5th to enjoy Jonathan's deep understanding for what we miss if we don't slow down to carefully consider what is around and under us on downed dead trees and stumps.

His instruction had more information than I could possibly absorb, much less cover in this short summary, but I did come away with two key points. The first was about what mushrooms do for our planet as decomposers in the woodland landscape. Mushrooms and trees are in a symbiotic relationship with one another, one that is crucial to the health of any forest. News to me: trees don't get any of their water directly from their roots. They get it from a subterranean web of mushrooms. Mushrooms provide a network of mycelium, a white web of filaments to convey water, nitrogen and phosphorus to the roots of trees, bushes and grasses. Mushrooms have no chlorophyll and cannot make their own food so they depend on these above ground neighbors to make food from sunlight that provide them with sugars and carbohydrates. It's an indispensable and important pas de deux in the natural world.

Jonathan's second salient point was on the topic of what in the world of fungi is OK and what is not OK to eat. He stressed that if he is uncertain about whether a mushroom is edible, he considers it inedible until proven otherwise by further study. There are millions of species of mushrooms in the world and one can never be too careful. Once he is sure it's edible, he always cooks everything he finds to kill bacteria that are present.

If you slow down as you hike the BCT's trails, you discover that mushrooms are everywhere, in the soil at your feet, under, on and around trees





Lillian Spratt and Laelah Loud show off their fungi finds.

and stumps. We thank Jonathan for sharing his extensive knowledge about the hidden dynamics of fungi that are essential to our survival. The dedication to his subject helps us understand and appreciate how these magnificent fungi play a major role in keeping our planet healthy. Mushroom caps off to you, Jonathan!

More about his work can be found at https://www.kranzcom.com/mushroom-walks-and-talks/



Our intrepid BCT photographers found a number of different mushrooms on various BCT trails, especially those on the Cataumet Greenway. The mushrooms above are, top row, left to right: Ringless Honey Mushrooms, Chicken of the Woods, The Sickener (Russela emetica); middle row: False Chantarelle, Viscid Violet Cort (Cortinarius iodes), Honey Fungus; bottom row: Beefsteak Fungus, Orange Gilled Waxy Cup, Amanita.

MYSTERY MUSHROOM!

Following our walk, Jonathan contacted us with surprising news: "I found an interesting Amanita that I didn't recognize. It turns out that my books, and the available online resources, don't recognize it either!

One of my mushroom club associates…believes it's a rare mushroom that should get DNA analysis AND preservation within a fungarium/herbarium for further research. The Farlow, at Harvard University, would be our first choice."

Jonathan informed us that the herbarium requires permission from the landowner to accept specimens; a possible bit of fungi history made in our own Austin Woods and we were happy to oblige.

Another reason to slow down and, in this case, perhaps discover something completely unique!



OUT ON THE TRAILS

By Dick Murphy

The BCT Trail Meisters total around 40 members, all loyal to our mission of caring for the conservation land and trails acquired by the BCT. They give of their time in all different ways and we thank them all. In the blizzard this past winter a few took the lead in the massive cleanup and we recognize them here. But we thank every Trail Meister for his or her support throughout the year.





The blizzard, what a big mess that was. After the epic storm finally ended, it was clear to all of us Trail Meisters that any BCT trail cleanup would be huge and delayed. Not only did we have to dig out our families, we were faced with trails buried in snow and downed trees. In about 10 days, the challenge was on and met with enthusiasm, skill and energy. Teams were assigned.

Paul Rossi, Carl Wirsen, Joe Hurley and Al Cunningham forged their way into the entrance to Bourne Sisters on County Road. They were immediately confronted by two trees over the entrance bridge to the trails, which had to be cut up just to access the trails. There were fallen and leaning trees and branches everywhere, making progress slow due to the fallen snow and amount of damage. It took about four months to completely finish the cleanup job; it now looks great at Bourne Sisters.

John Holden, Paul Palo and Chuck Bushey found somewhat better conditions at the Baxendale Woods. There were a number of trees that needed to be cut and removed from the trails, work that took about four days.

Joe & Sandy Hurley and Paul Rossi adopted the Nickerson-Aptuxcet trails. Though shorter than most, these trails had a dead tree blocking the entrance and snow-laden pine limbs everywhere, making it almost impossible to walk. This project took five days to open the trails for walkers, an impressive effort for three people.





Rob Whitaker, Jay Fisher and Ben Allen encountered some huge challenges at the Cataumet Greenway and Dimmick trails. One tree with a diameter of 18 inches completely blocked a trail. It required surgical cuts to fall on the forest bed and then be cut up into smaller pieces. Because of the size of the Greenway, there were dozens more trees and limbs to cut and move. The trail behind the Post Office was so covered with fallen pine limbs it was almost impossible to find a trail.

Meanwhile, Brian Sauro, who is our very able Trail Meister at Cataumet Garden Center, was working tirelessly by himself cutting down dozens of fallen limbs and hauling them to the back of the property for disposal. John Lawrence and Rob Whitaker led the team at Little Bay, disposing of all the many trees covering the trails.

If you know a Trail Meister, or others that aided in this huge effort, please say thanks. They rose to the challenge and worked seriously, safely and professionally, enabling the BCT to open our trails so that walkers and hikers could enjoy them. We are lucky to have so many skilled and devoted members of our team. With hundreds of hours spent on the trails cutting, clipping, lifting and moving trees, logs and limbs, there were no injuries. Thanks to all of you from the BCT, and from Dick Murphy, their fearless leader.



Left page, middle: Steve Buckoff tackles a fallen tree at Bourne Sisters in early May; below: Carl Wirsen and Joe Hurley at the Bog Stream Bridge in Bourne Sisters.

This page, left: A tree leaning precariously over a Little Bay trail; below: logs removed from Cataumet Greenway in the Robinson Conservation area; bottom of page: Ben Allen checking out a huge tree in the Greenway on Joyce Path.



Want to Help on the Trails?
Call 508-563-2884 or email bct.trails@gmail.com

Want a Trails Map?
Visit www.bourneconservationtrust.org, or pick one up at Ballentine's Boat Shop, Parker's Boat Yard, Kingman Marine, Bourne Public Library and Bourne Town Hall. And remember, each trail is unique and fun to walk.

NATURE'S SMALL MIRACLES: Reverence for the Sublime

By Gordon Schimmel

In day-to-day living, just trying to get everything accomplished on an endless to-do list makes it easy to ignore the importance of what we share with the natural world. We know we are part of nature and whatever we might choose to believe about how we might fit into an Eternal Grand Plan, it is too easy to lose sight of the common, ordinary experiences that remind us of our place in the scheme of things.

Some time ago I began to document a few unusual events I have experienced before the usual busyness caught up with me, making me forget the goosebumps that made them memorable. Here are a few of what I have collected on or near Bourne Conservation Trust lands and I offer them with the hope that it might inspire others to record something similar for themselves. Bucket lists are popular, but doing this might just be a kind of reverse-bucket list: recording something



Emily L. Ferguson photo

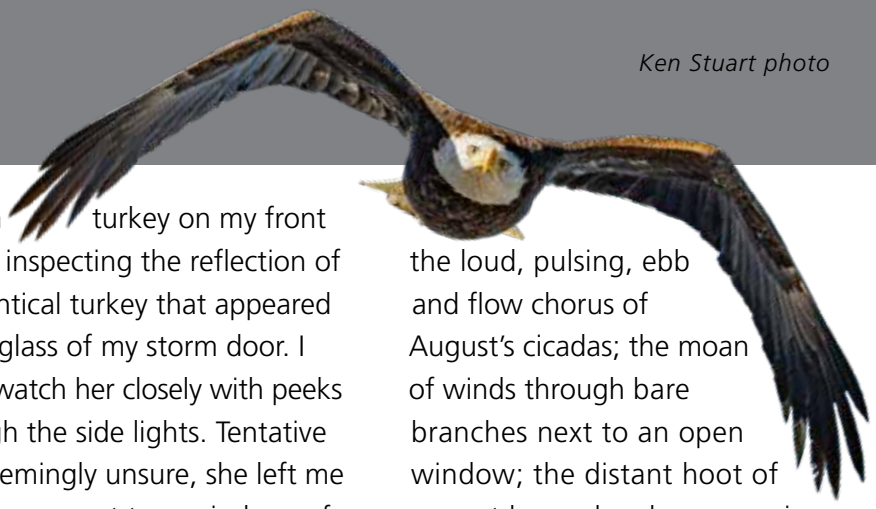
from wildness that was totally unplanned and unexpected that surprises and reminds us to pause a bit to observe and savor the small but important things in the world around us.



- Looking up, I was surprised to see the Eider ducks, who over-winter in the Cape Cod Canal, rise up in one large thousand fold flock, like a giant airborne dragon kite. Together they departed as one, beginning a long trip north to familiar summer nesting grounds. Soon after, all were gone except for a dozen or so that obviously didn't get the memo.
- Again, looking up, in of all places, a grocery store parking lot, I spotted a bald eagle thermaling higher and higher. Soon I was joined by others who gathered to gawk with me. Our necks outstretched, mouths agape while other shopers—in spite of the commotion we were making—continued loading their groceries, oblivious to what they were missing. It's the national bird; we all should be saluting!



- Out on a BCT trail next to Red Brook Pond one November, I was able to hear the "hiss" of the first snow as flakes hit the water.



Ken Stuart photo

They portended dramatic changes in the landscape that were on the way and, in just a few hours, a black and white world with shades of grey adorned the landscape. Magic!

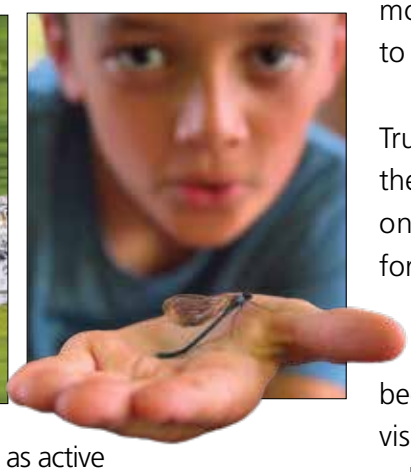
- More from the same pond in Spring: A painted turtle makes the trek across my yard to dig a nest for her eggs. It's a slow, determined, deliberate act of optimism in the face of long odds, given many predator's interest in finding those eggs or newly-hatched, tiny turtle-ettes.
- Late April snowflakes suspended in very little wind, big and flat as half dollars, defying gravity, some times up, sometimes down, floating sideways. It's Spring and they were gone in seconds, a silent last farewell to a long and hard winter.
- A dragonfly landing on my hand, an amazing aerial artist but quiet for a moment sitting on my knuckle. I love its mastery of flight, as well as a consumer of mosquitoes. It cocked its head as if to study me more closely before pirouetting backwards and upwards to disappear over my head.





- A hen turkey on my front porch, inspecting the reflection of an identical turkey that appeared in the glass of my storm door. I could watch her closely with peeks through the side lights. Tentative and seemingly unsure, she left me a poopy present to remind me of her visit.
- We don't always have to be on the trails to enjoy what the woods may hide. On two separate occasions I've witnessed the undulating, serpentine scamper of a Fisher cat crossing County Road and each time I thank them because I know they keep the Porcupine population under control. Porky's favorite food is tree bark and their feasting event usually kills the tree. So think of Fishers as active participants in forest preservation.

"Not everything is seen. Often there are only sounds in the darkness..."



- Not everything is seen. Often there are only sounds in darkness: the loud, pulsing, ebb and flow chorus of August's cicadas; the moan of winds through bare branches next to an open window; the distant hoot of a great horned owl, announcing the beginning of January's nesting season.

And, as always, the best, most serendipitous experiences are witnessed through the eyes of small children. Their world of wonderment when finding a salamander under a log or seeing fireflies twinkle-dance in mist over a cranberry bog brings back powerful memories of our own childhood discoveries. Picture a rocket-speed cormorant, swimming torpedo style, furiously chasing a fish in shallow water, circling my grandson while he sat, transfixed, in a tide pool. It raised the spirits of all who witnessed the event, a once-in-a lifetime experience that feeds the soul. These are moments that stun, small miracles to savor.

Of course the Bourne Conservation Trust is not solely responsible for these events but, without question, on-going stewardship to the land for so many years has helped my personal encounters with the extraordinary and sublime become more frequent. From the visionary leadership of a few, to the volunteer work of many, BCT access to wildness around us is forever preserved, free for all to enjoy.

Kahlin's Korner

Kahlin's Korner is dedicated to the memory of Kahlin Jespersen, a child full of sunshine and a love of nature, and also to all children for whom we preserve a part of the natural world.



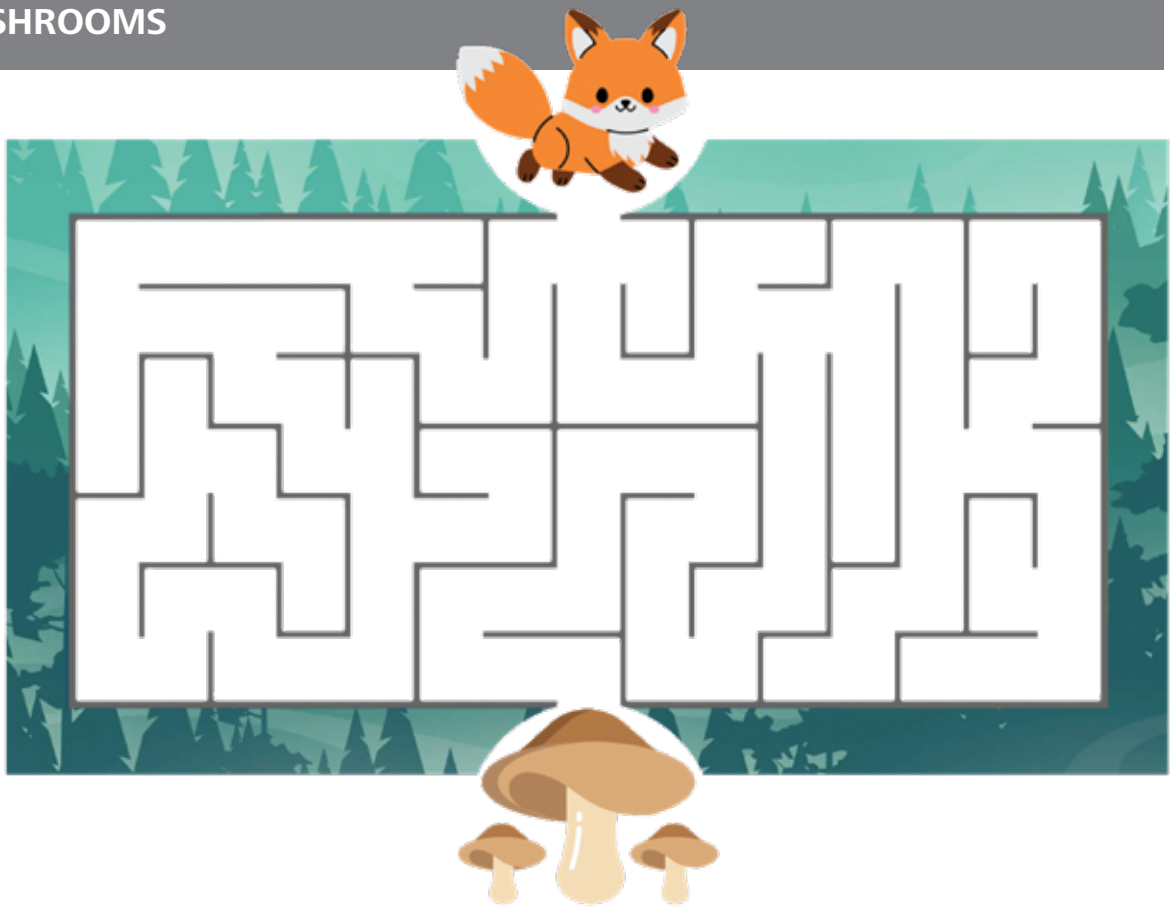
Send us your photos and artwork!

We think Kahlin would agree that it's fun to draw and photograph your visits to BCT properties. We invite anyone of any age to make art inspired by these sights. Have fun and show us your favorite spots, friends and family exploring nature, or special discoveries you encounter.

Email copies of original files to bct.trails@gmail.com or mail to BCT, Box 203, Cataumet, MA 02534.

FIND THE MUSHROOMS

Can you help the fox find the mushrooms? Help the fox find the mushrooms at the end of the maze through the forest.



Did you know? The largest and oldest living organism on the planet is a mushroom. It spans 2,385 acres and weighs up to 35,000 tons. That's one Humongous Fungus!

WAYS OF GIVING BACK

Here are some of the ways you can support the BCT's ongoing goal of building up its daily operating funds and its long-term Endowment funds, to keep us up and running now and for years to come. As always, our supporters and donors are the foundation of our success.

- Send a check or cash; mail it to Box 203, Cataumet, MA 02534.
- Go to the website and donate online via PayPal or Network for Good (bourneconservationtrust.org)*
- Sign up for automatic withdrawal; contact your bank or financial institution to automatically send a monthly donation to the BCT from a checking or savings account.
- Name the BCT in your will or as beneficiary of a life insurance policy.
- Give the gift of real estate or sell it to the BCT, perhaps for less than its fair market value. The difference is a charitable donation.
- Host a fundraising event.
- Offer a matching gift. Our donors respond generously when they know their contribution will be matched.
- Volunteer

Questions on how to donate or volunteer? Call 508-563-2884.

*The BCT does not currently accept credit cards. To donate using a credit card, a good option for you would be PayPal.

The Bourne Conservation Trust is tax-exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Within IRS guidelines, contributions and gifts may be tax deductible from your taxable income. The trust's tax identification number (TIN) is 04-2767827. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

Wagler, the BCT Dog, knows we love our pets.



He also knows others may not. That's why it's so important to:

- Pick up poop and take it with you for proper disposal, don't just drop the bag and forget it.
- Keep your dog under control at all times, not shaking, not jumping, not running at other walkers.
- Leash your dog from Grasslands Lane to the Lawrence Island bridge, and then from the bridge back to your car.
- Keep your dog off private property.
- Control excessive barking.

Please be considerate of other walkers and respectful of BCT properties and private properties abutting our lands.

Board of Directors
Jack Dawley, President
Matt Stone, Treasurer
Steve Ballentine, Trustee
Eugenie Birch, Trustee
Tom Corcoran, Trustee
Philip DeNormandie, Trustee
Dick Murphy, Trustee



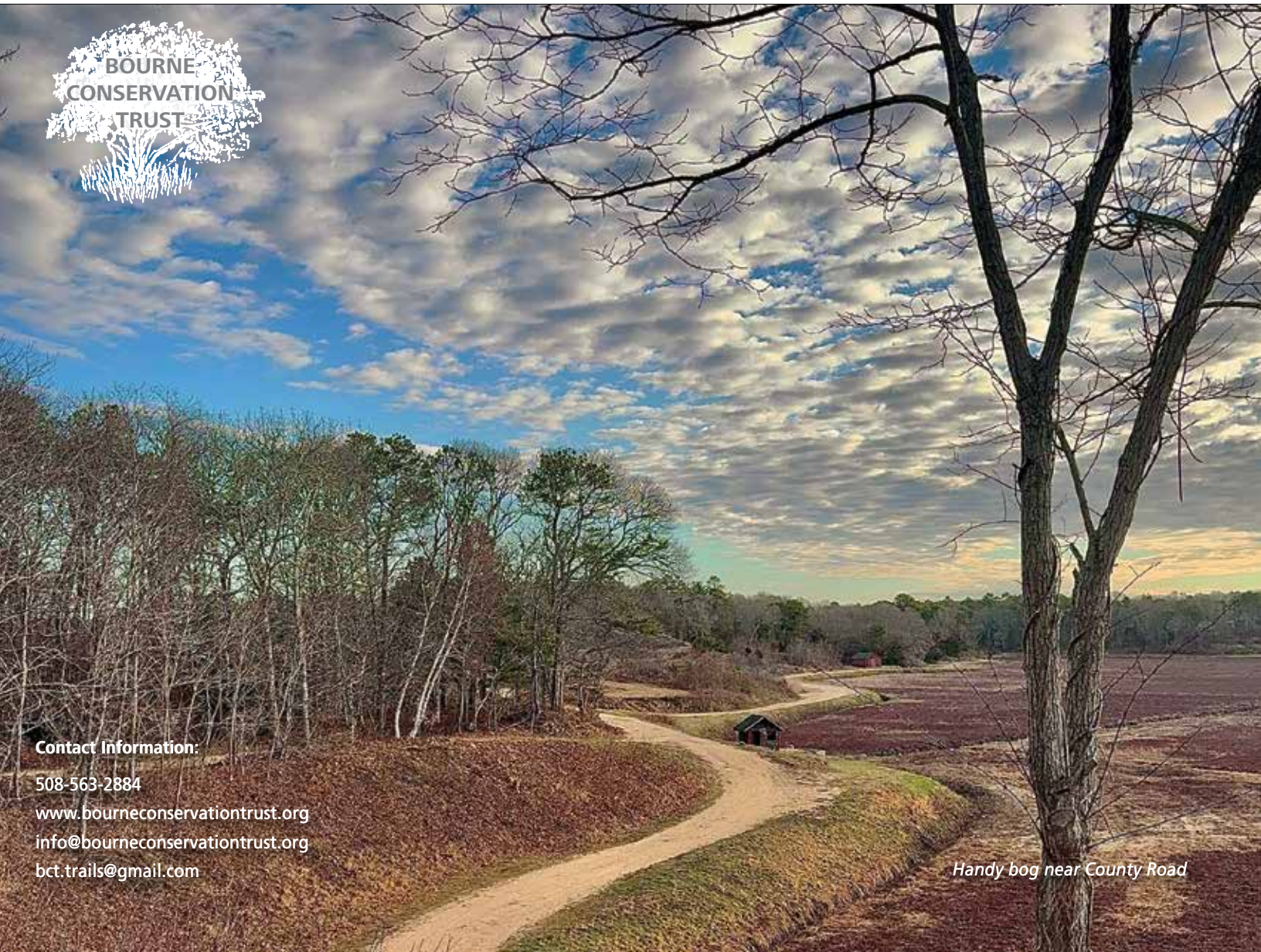
Newsletter design: Susan Quirk, s.quirk@comcast.net

The BCT is a private nonprofit land trust with a primary objective of acquiring land and leaving it in its natural state to: protect habitats, provide groundwater recharge, preserve rural ambiance and make it available for recreational and educational purposes. The BCT owns and maintains more than 300 acres of open space. Miles of walking trails thread their way through these protected woods and waterfront areas. The BCT is always looking for volunteers and donors to help achieve its mission and both maintain and enhance its properties. Learn more at www.bourneconservationtrust.org.

PO Box 203
Cataumet, MA
02534

Address Service
Requested

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 4
Cataumet, MA 02534



Contact Information:

508-563-2884
www.bourneconservationtrust.org
info@bourneconservationtrust.org
bct.trails@gmail.com

Handy bog near County Road