

Good evening and welcome  
My name is Grace Rowe  
And I am a Trustee of The Bourne Conservation Trust (BCT)

I would like to thank the Schoolhouse Preservation Committee for jobs well done and the opportunity to give this talk. And to also mention the Cataumet Civic Association - we are so lucky to have these 3 entities working together in this community.

But - Tonight's Tale is about this most amazing land trust and how the Bourne community helped to get this grass roots organization to where it is today. A few years ago, The Cape Cod Times listed the Bourne Conservation Trust as number 22 out of 50 non-profits in assets.

After 40 years the BCT has acquired 265 acres of Open Space: Comprised of woodlands, wetlands, oceanfront, canal views, pond and bog front, 2 islands, open fields, wooded trails, beaches and community meeting spots - Spring Hill Farm with goats and horses and The Cataumet Depot.

It all started with 2 guys, Philip DeNormandie and Steve Ballentine - who both have a very similar approach to land - namely preserve it. And I am pretty sure it's a genetic thing - as it seems to be fairly prevalent in both families. As a matter of fact it was Philip's mother Martha DeNormandie who brought these two together.

So, in 1980 the BCT was formed, 5 years ahead of the Buzzards Bay Coalition (1987) and the 300 Committee in Falmouth (1985). The BCT mission originally stated:

"The purpose of the Trust was to receive gifts of land in the town of Bourne to be held for the benefit of the citizens in an non-developed state."

DeNormandie Woods was the first gift to the Trust - 12 acres of land that was owned by Enos Phillips on County Road. Like a jigsaw puzzle more pieces were acquired to form what is now called the

Cataumet Greenway and early this summer 4 more acres were added off Depot Road to bring the total to acreage to 90.

A very popular walk with many trails that meander thru pine forests, lady slippers, and beech trees to Post Office Square and The Depot (also a gift from Philip DeNormandie).

Along the way are benches and trail guides marking the way to Shore Rd and the Dimmicks waterfront or one can access the cranberry bogs via County Road by Dimmicks horse field.

A little more off the beaten track, one can explore Lawrence Island (7 acres), The Red Brook Pond Conservation Area (40 acres) and Spring Hill Farm (3.5 acres).

The Trusts first purchase acquisition was Lawrence Island, the price was \$150,000 and it took almost 5 years to raise the funds but finally in 1986 with a mortgage burning ceremony on Scraggy Neck, the BCT had achieved a major accomplishment. Fundraising had worked and the community support was there when needed.

Not only did it require the hard work of beating the bushes for funds which Steve and Philip are quite apt at doing - but also vigilant planning and care in selecting properties that The Trust could afford and that were spread thru out the Town.

As The Cataumet Greenway grew, Little Bay/Monks Cove area in Monument Beach became part of The BCT. Beautiful shoreline and trails again enhanced by abutting town property. This acquisition preserved 20 acres and was a major undertaking that started with the purchase and resale of the Briarwood Property on Shore Road. Fundraising and private donations made it possible to retain the open space that is called Little Bay with town owned Monks Park next door (9 acres BCT maintained)

Now, as the saying goes, behind every man is a good woman and as the parcels were being purchased, Sally Ballentine was at the helm of

the correspondence ship. Sending out newsletters from the first edition in 1985 to number 50 this year. The readers' response is pretty unanimous; the BCT Newsletter is a bestseller, Amazon take note. The letters, the compliments, the thanks and thoughts are forever coming in and I quote.

"You keep our community in tact and safe from large development"

"You must make your goal! I'll knock over a bank! I can't afford this pledge but so what"

"Reading your newsletter makes me homesick"

"The BCT sets the standard for community conservation. And By the way if I had known that my last letter would be quoted, I would have been more profound."

Sally found some great help in some local writers, Dick Shaw and Chuck Mehmel who were steadfast, reliable and excellent writers. Lover of nature Dick would pull out his truly ancient typewriter and look out his window onto Red Brook Pond and he would literally plunk out stories - life on the pond was never dull reading.

But, it wasn't just Newsletters, there were updates and letters that Sally and Steve wrote always keeping in touch with the growing donor list, coming up with fund raising ideas, thinking up new ways to ask for money - and that is no easy feat.

One of my favorite methods of Sally fundraising was what I called the breakdown method.

If 100 people gave \$25 and

50 people gave \$100

25 gave \$500 and so on until the number got down to just 1 person who could give it all - how great would that be and it has happened. There are some very generous BCT donors, but no matter the size of the donation they all count, the strength as always lies in numbers.

Then there is the Steve method to raising funds and I paraphrase, he writes, "Until now our fundraising reminders have often been in a somewhat offhand manner. This letter, however, will be unusually blunt. WE need your financial support. Soon. Now."

Sort of a yin and yang approach to fundraising - which as you all know has worked. And then there was Philip who could always seem to find someone he could convince that they should give money to the BCT or buy some land or like me buy a house.

Philip got me to buy a house and 4 others to buy some land so DeNormandie Woods could be created. I never would have landed here without Philip mentioning to me in Cambridge one day that I should go take a look at this house in Cataumet. I didn't even know where Cataumet was, but I am very happy that I am here and consider myself fortunate to be part of the BCT and this community.

As I prepared for this talk - I am totally amazed how far the Trust has come. From 2 guys to now a board of 8, Trail Meisters, a dedicated newsletter writer, photographers and a rotating staff of goat people,

Volunteers when called upon will plant daffodils and help with spring and fall cleanups or whatever is needed. And it just so happens that tomorrow at 4:30 there is a cleanup at the Spring Hill Farm goat house, volunteers invited.

And then there are the volunteers who early on helped with major fund raising events. A donor base that was growing was key to early land purchases as well as events run by volunteers such as.

The famous or infamous auction put on by the Cataumet Beautification Committee held at Parkers Boatyard. Raz Parker himself as the auctioneer. The money raised was used to beautify the village. A very fun event that took place every other year and always donated some of the proceeds to the BCT one year (its best and final) gave almost \$10,000 to the Trust.

Then there was an Armchair Auction where you could stay at home and send in bids on items such as a basket of tomatoes and veggies, a hand carved bird, Restaurant Gift certificates, a flowering tree and more. Easy to fit into ones schedule and a successful fund raiser.

There was the No Dinner Dinner invite – A very formal engraved invitation was sent out cordially inviting you to stay at home. No need to get dressed up, no boring speeches, no entertainment, no open bar, no music, no valet parking, just send back the RSVP card

\$100 a plate for no dinner

\$50 for no and drinks

\$25 for not having to pay the babysitter

\$15,000 raised – everyone generously stayed at home.

A House tour consisting of 5 houses and 1 garden. Each house offered refreshments, as well as passing on a favorite secret recipe. The houses ranged in age from 1887 to recent times and each had its own story.

. And more.. Dimmicks Christmas Tree Sale, Yard Sales, Special Dinners, Road Races, Doll House Raffle, and Bake sales. The local artists have always contributed so much and so often, their donations were always a hit at any event. There was even a small art show at a property that was on the market on 28A.

And even the children are involved – our future donors have already started – their efforts noted in the Newsletter page that is called Kahlins Korner.

A class from Bourne raised \$50 worth of dimes and they named the project Dimes for Dirt

A Bake Sale in memory of Minnie Me the hamster was put on by 10 year olds and raised \$75

Fundraising never ends. But it can be fun especially if it's a group effort.

The BCT land is used and enjoyed by so many, birders, geo-cashers, bikers, kayakers, runners, mushroom hunters, cross country skiing, excellent for exercising kids, learning about nature, finding stuff, and of course the number one users are the dogs – helping us humans to get our exercise and see our friends – they even have their own column in the newsletter to write to, Waglers Woofs of Wisdom.

The BCT grew like its logo, a tree with many branches, some growing slowly and others fast. Many of the acquisitions have helped to stem the tide of overdevelopment and have taken years to reach fruition.

There are 40 acres now on McArthur Blvd that will hopefully control expansion by the bridge.

The horse field and its drive by enjoyment and popular photo op spot could have been 5 house lots.

The Garden Center now know as Cataumet Crossing with its preserved land to the rear had room for 6 lots which is now preserved and the businesses that were developed in the front had a restriction to be in keeping with the village architecture.

Route 28A across from The Fish Market was slated for a small strip type mall.

Little Bay/Briarwood had room for 10 lots, on Red Brook Harbor Road there was space for 25 lots +/- before the town and the BCT acquired them.

A student in Bourne once wrote:

“From my great grandparents all the way down to me, we are Cape Codders. Dirt paths are now paved roads, woods are now developments so it is nice to try to keep a piece of the Cape the way it used to be.”

Maybe someday she'll be running the BCT.

So we all have this great public land to use and enjoy and thanks to the Trail Meisters - who I once called the bench boys, as they started putting benches everywhere which I suspect they did - so they could sit and admire their labors after making new paths and maintaining old ones. They took us high tech with the new and improved trail guide with maps that show elevations and scale and wetlands.

I consider this trail guide to be the Bible of the BCT - we have plenty please take some - always good to have one handy for guests.

On the wall is a brief history of the BCT maps from hand drawn to artist rendering to the really official GPS mapped guide. Plus an open space town map that is a work in progress.. Don Mears a Trustee said he would be happy to be on the board but he would not be attending any meetings, if needed we could find him outdoors on the trails - being a Trail Meister.

A community is a place where people share and meet - and what better place is there to meet than outdoors in the beauty that is around us. A middle school student wrote

“Out in the swamp or woods - you sit down and just listen. You hear the woods crack and the wind blow”

At last count, our mailing list was almost 2000 with 500 donors and 60 volunteers and maybe 2 paid part time people. -

And at Spring Hill Farm the goats have a staff of 12 and they deserve it - they entertain young and old alike. This farm was a gift from Joan Mayhew and all she asked is that her goats be taken care of - they were and they lived a good life and were so popular that once they were gone new ones arrived, the farm could not be goat-less.

Spring Hill Farm is a beautiful piece of property and the goats and horses give it life - a fun place to drop by and visit. Plus it is a perfect location for community events - every year the CCA holds its Easter Egg Hunt and like the Depot it is there to be used by the community.

In preparing for this talk – I did so enjoy rereading news clippings, newsletters, and remembering. We definitely need an archivist it is truly a valuable piece of history.

I have copied a few articles that are available for you to take –

And finally - the “take away” for me was that we here in Bourne are pretty lucky and that the BCT is very fortunate for your support.

Keep using and enjoying and keep those donations coming, in memory, in honor, in appreciation, in celebration, in frustration – however and when ever.

Thank you.

Grace Rowe

August 2017  
Cataumet School House