

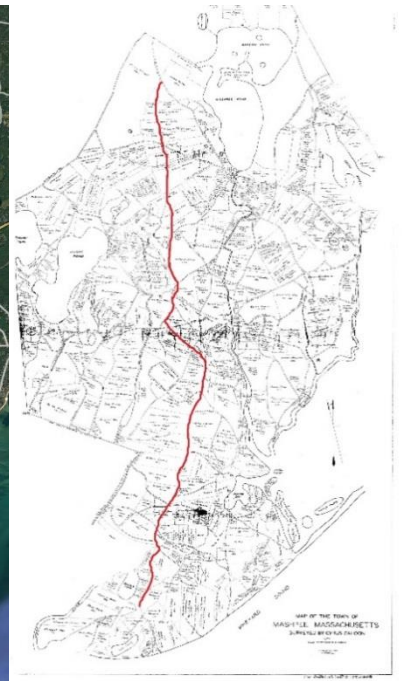
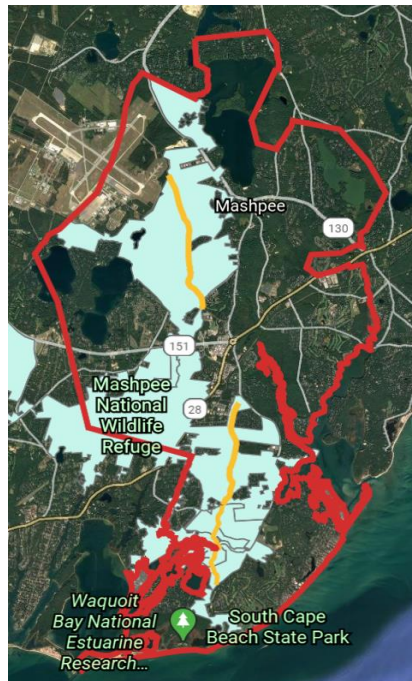


Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge Winter Newsletter 2021

Great Hay Road: A Road Older than America

Great Hay Road was around for many generations before Europeans were even aware of the continent on which it exists. It runs from Mashpee Pond to Jehu Pond and Waquoit Bay, and though fragmented by modern development, follows much the same course it always has. Mashpee Wampanoag member Hartman Deetz recalls his first experience with Great Hay Road (from Re-imagining Land, Food, and the Commons, Chapter 8):

We were driving along a dirt road when my father told me, “This is Great Hay road, an ancient way. This road is older than America.” This dirt road that winds through the woods of Mashpee follows the Mashpee River from the Mashpee Pond out to the Bay at South Cape Beach. For thousands of years my relatives used this road to walk from the central village out to the coast. This old dirt road was literally made by the feet of my ancestors, and I could walk in their footprints. For the ancient Mashpee Wampanoags, the road was a lifeline, a critical connection to the Bay that provided so much more than sustenance. This is the way things were for untold generations before the arrival of European immigrants – and with them, the moniker “Great Haying Road.”



On left: The modern extent of Great Hay Road is displayed in yellow, with boundary of Mashpee in red and the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge in light blue. On right: An 1877 map of Mashpee by Cyrus Cahoon, with Great Hay Road highlighted

According to former Town Planner Tom Fudala, Great Hay Road is "Great" because it was the longest road in Mashpee, stretching from the town of Sandwich in the north to the marshes of south Mashpee. The "Haying" part of the name refers to the usage; the road connected the productive marshes and the salt hay they contained, to the cows and farms of Sandwich that were the primary consumers of that hay.

In fact, according to Deetz, “Monomoscoy” translates to “the grassy place” in the Wampanoag language, and since the road leads from Mashpee Pond in the North to the Monomoscoy area in the South, it is possible that “Great Hay” is a literal translation of the old Wampanoag name for the road.

As it was for the ancient Wampanoags, the path was an important way for the early immigrants – now using it as a cart way – and likely saw heavier traffic than it does today. Indeed, until the latter years of the 20th century, Great Hay Road was one of only a few roads that ran North and South through Mashpee.



Great Hay Road, near Degross Road in Mashpee.

An 1877 map by Cyrus Cahoon shows the full historical extent of the road running without breaks all the way from Great Oak Road in the South to Snake Pond Road in the North.

These days it stops at the corner of Ashumet Road and what is now Joint Base Cape Cod in the North and features a significant gap in the middle between Great Neck Road South and the Coombs School playground. In recognition of the road that once passed through the area, the Mashpee Commons office building on the corner of Market Street and Steeple Street is named the Great Hay Building. Much of this section was already overgrown by 1956, according to a survey plan by Whitney & Basset, and more was eliminated with the construction of the Coombs School.



A road sign near Quashnet Elementary School where Great Hay Road passes through the area.



The Great hay Building on the corner of Market and Steeple Street in Mashpee Commons.

Although mostly forgotten by the general public, Great Hay Road is a prominent landmark for land managers like US Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Project Leader Tom Eagle, who after years of assessment documents and smaller fire mitigation contracts had this to say about land management in the area:

After several years of hearing the former Mashpee Fire Chief George Baker say "over my dead body will you conduct a prescribed burn in my town", we were able to educate the Chief [along with] the town manager and board of selectmen that prescribed burning was necessary to reduce the risk of the wildfires they all feared so much.

While this was happening, conservationists were beginning to focus on the plight of the New England Cottontail, which has been a candidate to be listed under the Endangered Species Act since 2006. To address the issue, the Massachusetts New England Cottontail working group was formed as a management team, comprised of staff from seven federal and state agencies and departments. Eagle is a member of this working group.



The entrance to Great Hay Road at the Jehu Pond Conservation Area off Great Oak Road in the South.



The entrance to an unpaved portion of Great Hay Road through the town pine barrens at Degross Road.

With the addition of this second goal, and a new mascot to boot, Eagle says “the town of Mashpee was in full support of [them] implementing the very first prescribed burn in the town of Mashpee [on April 5th and May 7th, 2012].”

This prescribed burn not only reduced fuels to mitigate the risk of a devastating wildfire, but also created 13.5 acres of new early successional habitat that the New

England Cottontail relies on. The burn took place in the Mashpee Pine barrens, which Great Hay Road cuts through, and the road was even used as a fuel break on the eastern edge of the burn unit.

The following year, 37 acres on the other side of the road were treated, this time on Mashpee Wampanoag tribal land and using heavy masticating equipment in lieu of fire.

Because of these and other active management activities in refuge, Great Hay Road and the refuge as a whole can be experienced much the same way the ancient Mashpee Wampanoags experienced the area – no asphalt, no traffic fumes, surrounded by and part of the natural world.

Written by Andrew Schwitzgebel, 2020 AmeriCorps member, with special thanks to Nancy Soderberg for her help navigating the Mashpee Town Archives, Tom Eagle for his help understanding the land management history of the area, and Hartman Deetz for his insights into the ancient Wampanoag use of the road.

Jehu Pond Trail Upgrades

Red Brook Road and Great Hay Road

Coordinated planning with Refuge Partners and Cape Cod AmeriCorps members helped make possible multiple upgrades for access to the Jehu Pond trail system. Three projects came together over the summer of 2020 and into the fall to bring about the installation of a new parking area, informational kiosk & native pollinator gardens at the intersection of Great Hay Road and Red Brook Road.



Newly established parking & kiosk off of Red Brook Road

It was a team effort. The USFWS purchased the materials for the educational kiosk and delivered them to the AmeriCorps team house in July to be assembled on their schedule and adhering to the CDC COVID protocols. In the meantime, the Town of Mashpee DPW installed gates and cut down trees, and FWS created the parking site to accommodate up to 5 cars. Once the kiosk was ready, Katelyn Cadoret, Mashpee Assistant ConsCom Agent and Friends president, coordinated with AmeriCorps to drop off the kiosk, then USFWS and volunteers helped install it close to the trailhead. Whew, lots of calls, emails and timing went into this process but Katelyn is an expert at coordinating research and volunteers.



Lots of visitation this fall!

Late this fall, after the weather changed and the drought ended, the Friends board members planted native perennials to continue our pollinator garden initiative. The plant list includes Wild Geranium, New England Aster, Solomon Seal, White Wood Asters, Daisy Mums, and Foxglove to attract hummingbirds. Several native Viburnums were planted: Arrowwood (*dentatum*), Nannyberry (*lentago*) and Highbush Cranberry (*trilobum*). We also sowed several species of native and annual seeds we had collected last fall, and several host plants for our butterfly friends.



Wild Geranium plantings near rocks

In May 2021, we plan to do another day of planting. If interested in participating, please send an email to the Friends at friendsofmnwr@gmail.com and we'll keep you updated as the time nears. If you have a green thumb and are interested in starting plants, we have native seeds to share.

Creature Feature Corner

Wintering Ducks on Cape Cod!



During the winter months on Cape Cod, we get the wonderful opportunity to see some seasonally-specific, magnificent wildlife. Among these unique wildlife species are wintering ducks. Some of these ducks spend their summers in the Arctic, others far out to sea. Then, as winter approaches, they move further south or near shore in well-protected bays and rivers. There are two groups of wintering ducks: dabblers and divers.

Dabblers are ducks that go upside down in order to feed. Normally, they spend their time resting and foraging around shallow waters for their favorite food items, plants and insects. Wintering dabblers include the Mallard, American wigeon, and the Surf Scoter. The Surf Scoters are easily recognized from the rest of the wintering ducks. Males have a large, thick bill that is white, red, and orange with black patches on both sides. Dabblers prefer shallow salt water and bottom substrates of pebbles or sand. You can find these ducks in places around the Cape, including within the Refuge, in Waquoit Bay, Hamblin and Jehu Ponds, and the Great and Little River waterways.



Common Eiders
(male in front, female in rear).

Diving ducks are expert swimmers, diving deep to feed on fish, clams, insects and aquatic plants. Because they are designed to spend nearly all of their time in water, they are not equipped to walk on land and rarely do so. In order to fly, these large and heavy birds gain speed by running on the water's surface to take off; sometimes it may take them 30ft of "dancing on the water" to get liftoff for flight. Diving duck species are here year-round, spending summers out in the open ocean, then moving close to shore in winter.



Bufflehead in flight

Four popular diving ducks include the Common Eider, Bufflehead, Northern Loon, and White-winged Scoter. Eiders are large, strong ducks, Males are nearly all white and hens are a drab brown, nearly blending into the dark winter water colors. They prefer to be in areas near shellfish beds where they feed primarily on clams and mussels.

Buffleheads are one of the smaller wintering ducks that frequent the area and have a striking appearance; males have a large white patch on the back of their heads and females have a white smudge on their cheek. They nest in holes in tree trunks created by woodpeckers. They are often seen in large flocks hugging the icy shoreline, diving and splashing enthusiastically as they forage.

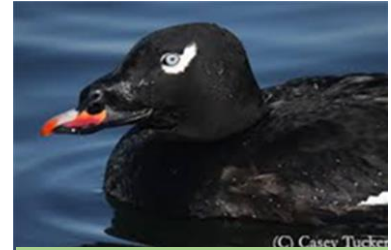


Common Loon with Chick

There are five species of loons in North America: The Pacific Loon, the Arctic Loon, the Yellow-billed Loon, the Red-throated Loon, and the Common Loon. They are large, heavy diving birds; weighing from six to fourteen pounds, diving up to 250 feet deep and holding their breath for 5 minutes. They eat lots and lots of fish, about two pounds a day, but also seek out invertebrates like crayfish, crabs, and aquatic insects like dragonflies. They are versatile where they hunt, in fresh, brackish, or saltwater bays,

wherever fish or invertebrates can be found!

The White-winged Scoter can be distinguished by the white patch on its wings exposed when they fly. Male plumage is predominately black, with a bill which is black, white, red, and orange; the female's plumage is a dull brown. They prefer to be in areas near shellfish beds where they can feed off of clams and mussels. You can find these magnificent ducks throughout the cape and especially in quiet, shallow bays along the south shore such as Waquoit, Hamblin and Jehu Pond, near Gooseberry Island, West Island and Woods Hole.



White-winged Scoter



A flock of Buffleheads on Jehu Pond in winter

Ever wonder how ducks can withstand the cold winter temperatures of the Cape's waters? They utilize two strategies: As they carry out daily feather maintenance, they continuously apply a waxy coating squeezed from a gland near their tail that is spread throughout their body of feathers. Even the feathers right next to their skin stay dry! Their second method is having lots of downy feathers that trap air; a fluffy texture amongst many layers of

these specialized feathers.

How exciting to go seek these local wintering ducks within the plethora of back-bay and riverine refuge waters and other great birding locations on the Cape. It gives you something to enjoy, get some needed exercise and fresh air, and providing a great excuse for cup of hot chocolate (with marshmallows of course!) as you relive your wintering duck adventure.

Written by Allysa McNeil, WBNERR/Mashpee ConsCom/Friends AmeriCorps IP member.

**2021 Friends of Mashpee NWR
Board of Directors**

Katelyn Cadoret, President, Mashpee ConsCom Liaison
Glenn Davis, Vice President, Web Page Coordinator
MaryKay Fox, Treasurer
Thomas Fudala, Clerk, Historian
Nancy Church, WBNERR Liaison



Membership Form

YES! I want to support the *Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge* - enclosed are my dues as checked below

Name: _____

Phone: _____ (H) _____ (C)

Street: _____ Town: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email: _____ Date: _____

Enclose payment for the membership – please make checks payable to F.M.N.W.R.

- Junior (18 and under) - \$10
- Individual - \$25
- Family - \$50
- Conservation Friend - \$100
- Wildlife Sponsor - \$200
- Refuge Sponsor - \$500
- Lifetime Gift - \$1000
- Corporate Gift - \$ _____
- Other - \$ _____



Volunteer Form

I would be interested in the following opportunities listed below:

- Stewardship Projects
- Newsletter Editor
- Native Pollinator Gardens
- Educational talks/walks, Events at Schools
- Volunteer & Membership Coordinator

The Friends meet monthly on the first Tuesday, 5pm on Zoom. Please come join us and get involved!