



NEWS FROM

**ORLEANS
CONSERVATION
TRUST**

Protecting Nature for Our Community

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**ORLEANS CONSERVATION TRUST AIMS TO PROTECT 4.5 ACRES
FOR WOODLAND AND WATERSHED PROTECTION
South Orleans Property Will Safeguard Critical Habitat**

Orleans, MA /September 12, 2023 – Orleans Conservation Trust was in a highly competitive real estate market when it learned that over 5 acres at 37 Eli Rogers Road had recently been listed for sale. The Trust acted carefully and expeditiously in partnership with The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, which took out a loan and purchased the property for \$1M on June 30, 2023, giving OCT an opportunity to raise the funds to protect the property. “It was clear the property wasn’t going to sit for long,” said OCT President Kevin Galligan, “so we did our homework and got it under contract just nine days after it was listed.”

37 Eli Rogers serves as an important link between preserved land in Brewster and the 500-acre protected Orleans Watershed. It’s recognized by the state for being especially important for the protection of drinking water (Mass DEP Zone II Groundwater Protection District).

Says Alan McClennen, Chair of the town’s Board of Water & Sewer Commissioners, “Orleans is blessed with much public land which many use and cherish. The largest and perhaps most important is our 500-acre publicly owned Watershed. We turn on our faucets each day and are thankful we have clean fresh water. The Orleans Conservation Trust’s proactive efforts to purchase an additional 4.5 acres of land on Eli Rogers Road will offer further protection. We thank them for their work to ensure our water supply is protected.”

The land includes beautiful woodland and wetland habitat for rare species, as well as vernal pool wildlife breeding habitat. Because of its proximity to the Watershed, it also provides an opportunity for enhanced public access to that large tract of forest.

“This project provides a chance to preserve a significant habitat connection in the area between Nickerson State Park and the Orleans Watershed. It’s so important that we think beyond our own town lines and appreciate the context of these larger ecosystems,” says OCT Executive Director Steve O’Grady.

Sitting on the property is a 4-bedroom home as well as two neglected, aging cottages – a prime opportunity to undevelop land, restoring it to its natural state to enhance habitat value and protect water quality. The 4-bedroom home is slated for resale, which will allow for the protection of 4.5 acres at a reasonable price, while still reducing the number of houses and septic systems on

the property. In an effort to assist with the local housing shortage, OCT has engaged several local groups who are involved in providing workforce housing to determine whether they would be interested in purchasing the home.

Mark Robinson, long-time executive director of The Compact, said, “We need to work creatively in the 21st Century to reshape the Cape’s open space to protect critical resource areas like public wellfields. Less is certainly more when it comes to reducing impacts of development here in this corner of Orleans across from the 500-acre Watershed. Removing houses and septic systems here is a net plus for habitat restoration and aquifer protection.”

37 Eli Rogers Road has sufficient upland to be carved up into as many as four residential lots; a similarly sized four-lot subdivision right next-door serves as proof of what could be. OCT hopes to prevent that significant environmental strain in this highly sensitive area.

OCT has applied for a Massachusetts Conservation Partnership Grant of \$175,000 to help pay for the purchase (results expected this fall) and will apply for an Orleans Community Preservation Act Grant in November. Private fundraising is anticipated this coming spring for the remaining funds.

Learn more about Orleans Conservation Trust here:
<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/847083186>.

***Orleans Conservation Trust** is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 1970. Over its 50-year history, the Trust has preserved more than 660 acres in Orleans. Among the most active land trusts on Cape Cod, OCT stewards a range of ecosystems, from freshwater ponds and wetlands to saltmarshes, wooded upland, and coastal grasslands, managing its lands to protect and enhance wildlife habitat, restore native ecosystems, and provide public recreation and education through a network of trails and informational signage. OCT also educates residents and visitors about important natural values and environmental issues in Orleans and around Cape Cod via grants to Orleans schools, guided walks, free lectures, its website, newsletter, and other communications.*

[All photos cleared for use.]



Two cottages slated for demolition. Photo by Stephen O'Grady.



37 Eli Rogers Road, looking north toward the Orleans Watershed. Photo by Stephen O'Grady.

Land Protection Opportunity: 37 Eli Rogers Road



Preservation of the 4.5 acres on 37 Eli Rogers Road (outlined in red) will provide critical woodlands and watershed protection. Parcel layer and imagery provided by the Town of Orleans.