

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members and friends -

I would like to briefly review the top CGSP priorities for 2015/2016 and ask for your continued support. In order to strengthen the foundation of the organization, we are focused on:

### **Stewardship of the Pond**

The Great Salt Pond is often heralded as the island's greatest asset; and our role is to ensure a balanced approach between commercial, environmental and recreational desires. We take this role very seriously and feel accountable for preserving the character, quality and uniqueness of The Great Salt Pond.

### **Strengthening our science-based approach and water quality testing**

The CGSP has the longest-standing water quality testing program on Block Island and one of the oldest in New England. This testing is critical to maintain a healthy ecosystem for all uses. In addition, we are increasing our scientific-based approach to mapping, measuring and protecting the pond's buffers and watershed.

### **Defending the pond & increasing awareness of its fragility**

- The battle against the Champlins expansion continues, as the judge has still not ruled on the most recent proceedings. We continue to invest heavily in this effort but we are also watching other marina and wharf development plans as they are being discussed.
- The CGSP educational platform will be constructed on the Solviken land this fall, to include educational signage and a place to enjoy the beauty of the Great Salt Pond system.

### **Celebrating the pond**

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual *CGSP Fireworks Picnic* is quickly becoming a mainstay of the Island's July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration and is the perfect opportunity to get people more involved and aware of the pond, its environmental importance and the role of the CGSP.
- The first annual *Swim The Pond* event will be held August 15 to celebrate the pond and highlight the importance of clean water. This fun event includes a swim for all levels and ages.

### **Broadening membership and improving engagement**

We are looking to strengthen the number of CGSP members, especially younger members. As importantly, we want to get more people involved and everyone to sign up to help with water quality testing or one of our "celebrate" events! Please ask all your friends to support the pond and get involved!

The Committee for the Great Salt Pond is an outstanding organization with a very dedicated board and membership. I am honored to be working with all of you and ask for your continued and even increased participation. Volunteers are needed in a broad range of areas, from science-oriented projects to helping with the swim and picnic events.

Please contact any board member and help increase membership. Let's all work together to keep the pond great!

Sincerely,  
Sven Risom

**Spring Annual Appeal**  
Please give generously to fund  
our ongoing programs

### Important Dates

January 1 - July 15

Registration  
The Great Salt Pond  
Swim I

July 3

Fireworks Picnic  
Sullivan House - 6:30 pm

August 15

The Great Salt Pond  
Swim I  
Andy's Way - 11 am

September 13

The Annual Meeting of  
The Committee for the  
Great Salt Pond  
BIMI Maritime Center  
4 pm

**GO GREEN** - Help to  
create an electronic  
newsletter!

In the near future we will be offering the option for you to receive the Committee for the Great Salt Pond newsletter electronically. This will save us printing and mailing costs, and save on the use of paper. Please let us know, by sending an email to [cgspp02807@gmail.com](mailto:cgspp02807@gmail.com), if you prefer a paper version with an envelope as we have done in the past, or if you would like to receive your newsletter sent to your email address. Thank you!

## WHY DOES IT MATTER? WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

The island's Planning Board has asked our organization to write a key section of the town's Comprehensive Plan. Subject: The Great Salt Pond – Its importance to the island; its needs for the future. We welcomed the request and responded with a document focused on two points: The Great Salt Pond is a unique environmental and aesthetic treasure, and it is a mainstay of the island economy. The Comprehensive Plan, redone each decade at the state's request, is meant to identify future as well as present problems, and provide guidelines for action by planners and town officials. The new Comprehensive Plan is due for release sometime in 2015. In sum, this is what CGSP has submitted:

By any measure the Great Salt Pond is a major asset of Block Island. Together with the island's beaches, it is the prime attraction of the tourist economy. A major recreational area, it adds immeasurably to the character and commerce of the island. As a protected, scenic harbor, the Pond is one of the most popular destinations for boaters in New England, drawing up to 1,500 boats on busy summer weekends. The Pond and its watershed make up almost 40 percent of the island's area; if you took the Great Salt Pond out of the picture, through natural or man-made causes, Block Island would no longer be one of the "last great places" to live or visit. It would also be a place with a smaller economy. Dozens of island jobs would no longer exist. Retail sales, tax revenues – the whole of the island's cash flow – would be reduced by millions of dollars.

The Great Salt Pond is part of a complex ecosystem, and it is vulnerable to damage by man or nature. Waterfowl and more than 30 species of finfish and shellfish find a home in the Pond, and it is an important nursery for juvenile fish. Significant pollution, either in the Pond itself or in its watershed, could make the water unhealthy for fish and unsafe for swimming. Thus, water quality protection has a high priority. Testing by CGSP and by the town shows that most of the time most of the Pond is biologically clean. However, there have been pollution problems in the past, and there are still "hot spots," periodic spikes in bacterial counts at selected locations. Tests show that the pollution that still exists in the Pond comes mostly from land-based sources, not from visiting boats. Whatever the source, there is a clear need for continued monitoring of the Pond and watershed, and for aggressive corrective action when pollution sources are identified. CGSP plays a prominent part in the island's pollution control efforts. We have done much of the water-quality testing in the Pond and its tributaries, for more than a decade. Further, the largest single reason the Pond is safe for swimming and fishing is the "No Discharge" law, which CGSP was instrumental in bringing into being.

A less immediate but overhanging threat to the Pond is storm damage. Major storms are forecast to increase in frequency and intensity along the eastern seaboard, and on Block Island that poses a growing risk of damage to the shores sheltering the Great Salt Pond. A clear possibility is a storm surge powerful enough to drive through the low-lying beaches to the east or west of the Pond, leaving a new path open to the sea. This could reshape the Pond and alter its ecology, perhaps irreversibly. Hoping this will not happen is not a risk-management strategy. What is required, instead, are steps to protect and strengthen dunes, berms, and other shoreline barriers.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER? WHY SHOULD WE CARE? *continued.....*

No one can put an exact figure on the financial importance of the Great Salt Pond to Block Island, but it is clearly large. One single item, revenue from slips rented at marinas in the Pond, represents three to five million dollars a year. The town's mooring rentals and shellfish licenses bring in another half-million. Added to this is the indirect economic effect, the spending of visiting boaters. On a summer weekend, the boats crowded into the Great Salt Pond add an estimated 4,000 people to the island population. That alone makes the Pond an economic engine.

**So you can readily see why our efforts in defense of the Pond matter, and why we must all care!**

## CGSP 3RD ANNUAL FIREWORKS PICNIC

Please join us for the Third Annual Fireworks Picnic at the Sullivan House on July 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6:30 until the grand finale fireworks show. There will be delicious pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs, salads, vegetarian quinoa salad, beverages, and dessert. Games for kids of all ages, the music of Cameron Greenlee, a silent auction, and a raffle drawing will round out the entertainment while we wait for the fireworks to begin.

Tickets are now available to purchase online. The number of tickets is limited **and in prior years have sold out early**, so take this opportunity to order yours now (and, by the way, pay your membership dues if you haven't done so already), either on our website [CGSPBlockIsland.org](http://CGSPBlockIsland.org) or on our Facebook page [facebook.com/cgspblockisland](https://facebook.com/cgspblockisland). Tickets will be on sale – \$35 for adults and \$15 for children under 12 – in front of the BI Grocery, starting on June 16th. They will be available the evening of the event ONLY if not already sold out. A few of the items for the Silent auction and raffle include:

- \*Day Trip to Block Island, to include airfare, bike rentals and lunch
- \*Surfing lessons from *Blue Diamond*
- \*Weekend Get-Away, to include car rental, hotel, and ferry passes
- \*Special kayak tour of the Great Salt Pond by *Ponds and Beyond*
- \*Special paddleboard tour of the Pond by *Ocean Adventures BI*
- \*Sunset cruise on the catamaran *Ruling Passion*
- \*Rainyday kids' packet from *Island Bound*
- \*Family fishing charter aboard *Pale Horse*, captained by John Hunnewell
- \*Fire truck ride
- \*Restaurant tickets, bike rentals
- \*Artwork by Block Island artists: Kate Bird, Susan Coffin, Gerard Closset, Claire Marschak, Jerry Powers, and Leah Robinson. Artwork images will be available to view on our website after May 31. Go to [www.cgspblockisland.org](http://www.cgspblockisland.org), and click on "Fireworks Picnic."

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED TO HELP WITH WATER QUALITY TESTING

Our 2015 Water Quality Program will soon be underway, and this year we are introducing a new initiative. In the past, a few CGSP Board members have shouldered the testing workload with the final samples and data being sent to the lab at URI Watershed Watch. This year, to raise awareness about the Pond and its watershed, we are inviting our members to help us with the testing which has been growing in geographical size and scope for the last five years. This includes visits to the Pond sites and the tributaries, ideally twice a month from May to September. From start to finish a session takes about 3 to 4 hours to complete.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Kevin Hoyt, our Water Quality Program Coordinator, by visiting [www.cgspblockisland.org/contact](http://www.cgspblockisland.org/contact). Include your name and email address in the fields provided and type *Water Quality 2015* in the Subject line. Please include the dates you would like to participate in the Message box. We will email you back with the details and a link to the Collection schedule.

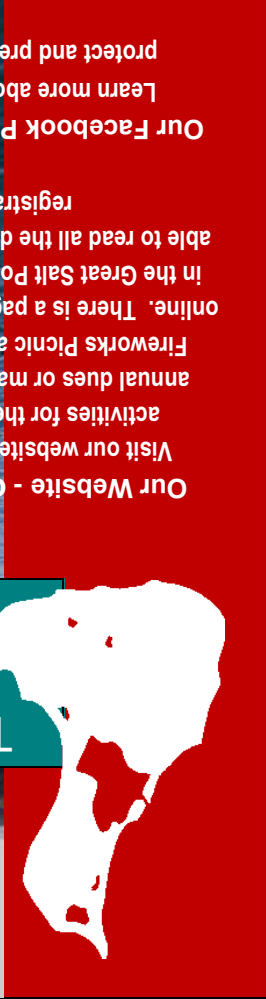
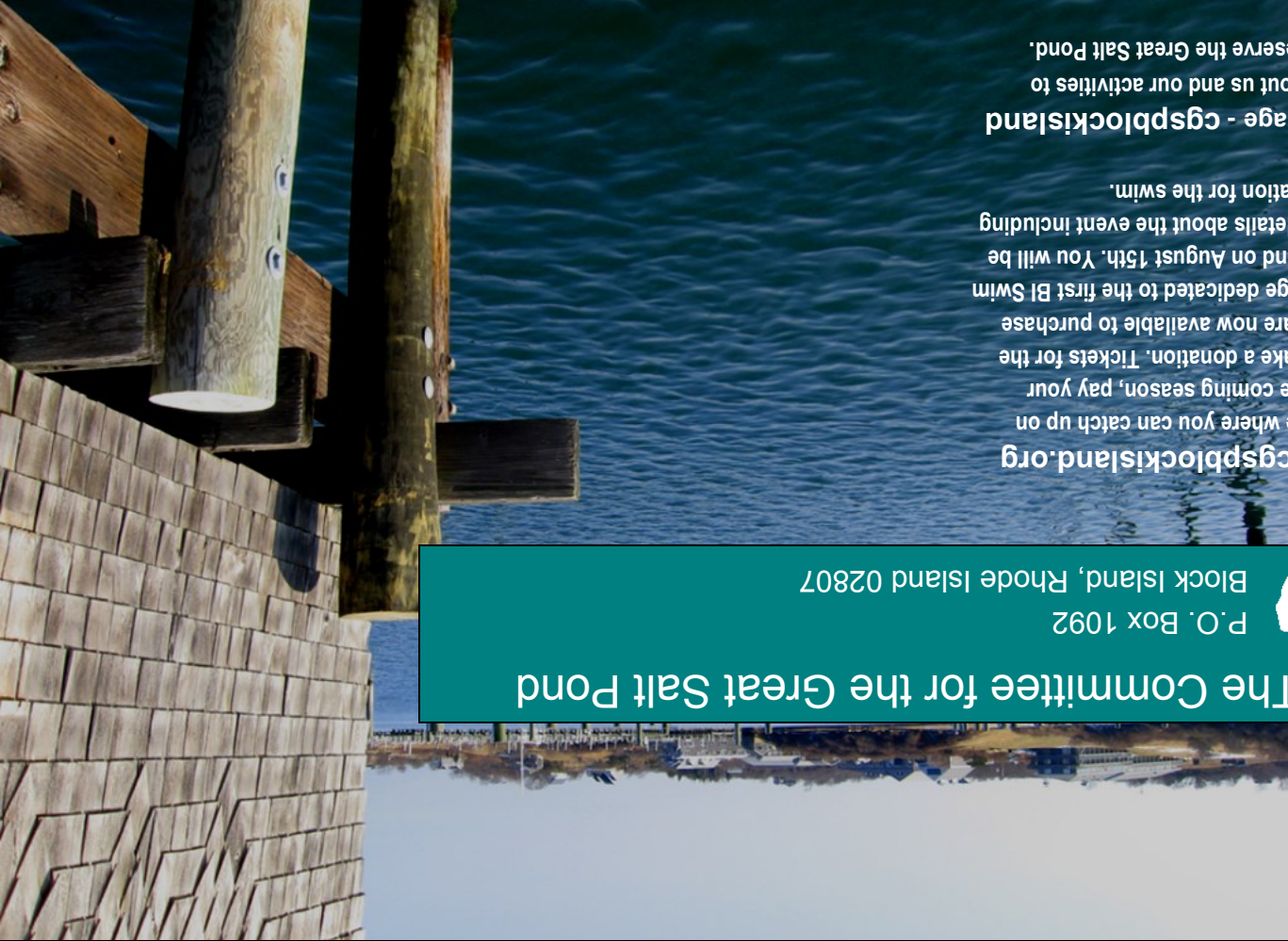
## CGSP 1ST ANNUAL GREAT SALT POND SWIM

### Great Swimming Opportunity for First-time Open Water Swimmers

This is a great opportunity for first-time open water swimmers. The swim course is in a protected area with not much chop. In addition, the swim will take place along a straight line, marked by buoys. This annual fundraiser will support our efforts to protect The Great Salt Pond, and provide funds for additional water testing in the recreational swim areas. The swimmer registration fee is \$50.

Go to: [www.CGSPBlockIsland.org](http://www.CGSPBlockIsland.org), click on "2015 Swim", where you will see the "Register" tag and "Participant Packet" tag.

**We need volunteers and sponsors.** If you would like to be a volunteer, know of a sponsor for this event, or just have questions about the swim, contact Cheryl Moore at [CGSPBlockIsland.org](http://CGSPBlockIsland.org), click on the "contact" link and mention 2015 Swim.



**The Committee for the Great Salt Pond**  
 P.O. Box 1092  
 Block Island, Rhode Island 02807

**Our Website - cgsblockisland.org**  
 Visit our website where you can catch up on activities for the coming season, pay your annual dues or make a donation. Tickets for the Fireworks Picnic are now available to purchase online. There is a page dedicated to the first BI Swim in the Great Salt Pond on August 15th. You will be able to read all the details about the event including registration for the swim.

**Our Facebook Page - cgsblockisland**  
 Learn more about us and our activities to protect and preserve the Great Salt Pond.



## OUR MISSION

To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Great Salt Pond, including its shorelines and wetlands, and to promote appropriate and productive uses of the Pond's resources by residents, visitors and local businesses.

## ABOUT US

**Directors:**  
 Sven Risom, President  
 Carl Kaufmann, Vice President  
 Jean Taber, Treasurer  
 Cheryl Moore, Secretary  
 Peter Baute  
 Henry duPont  
 Kevin Hoyt  
 Bruce Johnson  
 Jane Musky  
 Betsy Pyne  
 Governance: Up to 16 Directors

**Funding:**  
 Individual contributions, membership dues, special events, program grants. IRS 501(c)3 non-profit. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

**Members:** Approximately 450

Like us at  
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