



**IMPORTANT DATES**

**July 3, 2017**

**Family Fireworks Picnic**  
Bimi Center  
6:30 pm



**July 29, 2017**

**The Great Salt Pond Swim-3**  
Andy's Way  
11:00 am



The Great Salt Pond Swim

**3**

**September 10, 2017**

**Annual CGSP Meeting**  
4:00 pm

**LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear Block Island Friends,

2016 has been a busy and productive year and I would like to thank all our members, friends, donors, board members and volunteers for making the CGSP a thriving and dynamic organization. While many of our activities have been very public, much of our time is spent working behind the scenes to ensure the pond remains Great.

The major public activities are reviewed in this newsletter. Here are examples of the many “behind-the-scenes” activities that we are involved in:

**Water Quality testing:** We continue to invest some \$7,000 annually in testing the waters in the Great Salt Pond. Led by a core of volunteers, the testing program is ~20 years old, resulting in one of the longest-running water quality databases on the east coast. This information has been vital in stopping marina expansions into the pond and balancing the uses of the pond.

**Beach Ave. repaving:** The CGSP was asked by the town to help with the repaving efforts to minimize wastewater run-off into the pond.

**Comprehensive plan:** The CGSP was asked to write a section of the Town of New Shoreham comprehensive plan regarding the Great Salt Pond. While the chapter provides a history and ecological perspective, it also highlights the economic, ecological and recreational importance of the Great Salt Pond.

**Advisory to adjacent development:** The CGSP was invited by the landowners, Conservation Commission and the Town to provide insights on Champlins Farm as well as other lands under development.

We appreciate all of your participation and thank you for your support to Keep the Great Salt Pond Great. We look forward to seeing you on the pond!

Regards,

Sven Risom, President CGSP

**Little Dunes Mean A Lot**

Suddenly this summer there appeared on Corn Neck Road three walkovers, wooden stairs capping a low sand dune, with a platform on top and a flight of stairs dropping to the beach. Clearly designed for foot traffic, they are meant to keep people from tromping through the sand and uprooting the dune grass. The walkovers were put there by the town, at the suggestion of the Committee for the Great Salt Pond (CGSP). They were built with money provided entirely by private donors and by the CGSP.

But why? Why build a walkover over such a little dune? Why walkovers anywhere, or three spaced just a few hundred feet apart along the road in front of the Beahead restaurant? Why did CGSP initiate this project and rally support and funds from other organizations: Block Island Residents Association, Ocean View Foundation, Scenic Block Island, Block Island Conservancy?

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## Celebrate the Pond 2016

The first-ever Celebrate the Pond Day was a tremendous success! Eleven different organizations conducted 11 different events around the pond, all celebrating Block Island's #1 Asset: The Great Salt Pond. Next year promises to be even better as we build on the well-attended BIMI crab race event, the US Fish & Wild Life Service open house, the CGSP Swim and the Block Island Conservancy's education session at Solviken. We hope to see even more people paddling and kayaking in celebration of the pond.

Celebrate the Pond Day was born from a strong desire by the CGSP to work together with other Pond-based environmental organizations, including the Town's harbors and shellfish commission, as well as restaurants and recreational businesses. Next year we hope to have more groups involved throughout the day and attract even more participants. Whether walking with The Ocean View Foundation or seining the pond with The Nature Conservancy, we look forward to more fun and educational programs to learn about this fragile ecosystem.

So mark your calendars now for July 29, 2017, for the 2nd annual Celebrate the Pond Day, and then come to participate in at least one activity. The more we can work together, the greater The Great Salt Pond will remain!



Celebrate the Pond

Saturday, July 29, 2017

*Little Dunes Mean A Lot continued...*



The answer is that little dunes mean a lot, depending on where they are and what they do. In this case, the walkovers are part of the effort to protect one of the most storm-vulnerable spots on the island. Not a solution – no one claims that – but let's say a step in the right direction. This sector of the east side of the Island is low-lying, a narrow strip of land that is mostly sand and dirt, not rock. In other words, land that is easily carved away by high winds and storm surges. A key step to mitigating disaster is to enlarge and strengthen the protective barrier, to absorb as much as possible of the energy of a storm surge. Here, dunes and rock revetments serve that purpose, and walkovers can help. Depending on how well these three work out, we may want to recommend that more be built. Time will tell.

Doomsayers love worst-case scenarios, but in this instance they are not fanciful. A big storm surge, one only a little larger than recent ones along the Atlantic coast, could have disastrous consequences for Block Island. The threat is not just lost pavement on Corn Neck Road – it has been lost and replaced more than once. Far worse, the topography of the island could be altered permanently (if there is such a word in geology?). The ocean could cut through the narrow strip of land, break into Harbor Pond and create a passage into the Great Salt Pond. Effectively, at least until we build some bridges, we would be living on two islands. The ecology of the Great Salt Pond, a major concern of this community nonprofit, would be altered drastically, and probably to the detriment of fish, fowl, and people. This would have broad implications for the whole island, with an attendant downsizing of the island economy that depends on boating and the Great Salt Pond.

Alarmist talk? Not to those who remember Hurricane Sandy. Not to those few of us witness to the Hurricane of 1938. And not to climate scientists and those who monitor sea level rise. The data say it is likely that future Atlantic storms will generate larger walls of water battering our shores, not smaller ones. Sandy, they caution, could be the new normal.

So this is the message: Take the Stairs. Help Save the Pond.

From the beginning, the Committee for the Great Salt Pond agreed to pay for the three dune walkovers. We came close to covering the total cost with donations, some quite large and some small. To close the gap and provide for the possibility of a fourth walkover in the future, please consider adding your donation to the fund. The enclosed envelope provides a space to indicate your contribution. In advance, we thank you for your generosity.



## Great Salt Pond Swim-2

What a great day for a swim – August 13th – when 97 swimmers entered the Great Salt Pond for a one-mile swim! The weather was perfect and the water temperature very comfortable. Check-in for the swim started at 8:00 am, and there was a steady stream of swimmers ready to register and pick up their packets consisting of a shirt, swim cap (generously donated by The Block Island Sports Shop), and burgee sticker supplied by The Beachcomber.

As this was happening, The Block Island Club and Ocean Adventures were busy getting safety boats and paddleboards in place. Upon reaching the finishing chute, swimmers were greeted with medals and beach towels along with delicious pizza generously provided by Aldo’s Italian Restaurant.

To measure this event’s success, one only had to look at the smiling faces of swimmers clamoring out of the water. And hear the cheers of those on the beach, or the happy phrase, “I didn’t think I could do this, but I did it.”

The best swim time, 20 minutes, was posted by 17-year-old Spencer Moran. In addition, he and his younger brother Quincy, both Boy Scouts and both swimmers, tirelessly helped us get set up for the event at 7:00 am that morning.

To all who participated in GSP Swim-2, you were totally awesome – congratulations! We hope to see you next year on July 29th for The Great Salt Pond Swim-3. And for those who considered but didn’t do the swim this year, give it a try next year. You can do it! To our sponsors: Valenti Motors, Deepwater Wind, The Block Island Sports Shop, Aldo’s Italian Restaurant, The Block Island Club, and Ocean Adventures – thank you!

Go to [www.CGSPBlockIsland.org](http://www.CGSPBlockIsland.org), click on “2017 Swim” where you will see the “Register” link and “Participant Packet” link. 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 2017 Swim.



## 2016 Annual Meeting

*Great Salt Pond’s Underwater Soil Landscape – Mapping & Protecting the Pond from the Bottom Up! What It Means to Us.*

Jim Turenne from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) was the guest speaker at this year’s Committee for the Great Salt Pond’s annual meeting on Sunday, September 11 at the BIMi Center. Turenne discussed the work underway to study and map the bottom of the Great Salt Pond – going back thousands of years! He talked about what other Rhode Island communities are doing, and how this relates to the management of our pond’s buffers to help improve its recreational and commercial uses.

Turenne and his team have taken core samples and have begun mapping Harbor Pond and Trims Pond as well as Cormorant Cove. The two core soil samples he brought, to show first-hand what is happening under the water, were a highlight of the meeting.

Three new directors were also elected to the CGSP Board of Directors: Bob Greenlee, Cindy Pappas, and Lara Andrea Taber. The Board wishes to thank all in attendance for their continued support.

## Annual Family Fireworks Picnic

The fourth annual family fireworks picnic on July 3rd at the BIMi Center on Ocean Avenue featured great picnic fare, a good turnout, and a spectacular view of the fireworks afterwards. In addition to the terrific food catered by Kimberly’s, there was a raffle and a very popular silent auction, with over a dozen bid items including a fishing boat charter, a scenic airplane flight, artwork donated by Island artists, and other items donated from Island businesses.



Young and old alike feasted on cheese and vegetable dip platters, fresh grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, and bratwurst, salads, and of course strawberry shortcake and ice cream for dessert! Kimberly provided a cash bar and a cash oyster bar with fresh shucked oysters from the Block Island Oyster Company.

The newly refurbished BIMi Center was a perfect location for the Committee to showcase how we are working to protect the Pond; the BIMi Marine Education Center, including the touch tanks, were a great learning experience for the kids! Lastly, for fireworks watchers, Harbor Pond provided a spectacular reflection of each bomb burst.

The picnic was not only a fun family event but also the Committee’s most important fundraiser. Special thanks go to the event’s many raffle and silent auction donors who gave art, goods, and services to make it possible for the Committee to raise the funds we need to keep the Great Salt Pond great. And of course Kimberly’s and BIMi, without whose support the event would not be possible. Please join us again on July 3rd, 2017, for this fun family event!

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[www.CGSPBlockIsland.org](http://www.CGSPBlockIsland.org)

The Committee for the Great Salt Pond  
PO Box 1092 • Block Island, RI 02807



## 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.

## OUR WEBSITE

[www.cgspliblockisland.org](http://www.cgspliblockisland.org)

Visit our website where you can catch up on activities for the coming season, pay your annual dues or make a donation. There is a page dedicated to the 3rd Swim the Pond event on July 29, 2017. You will be able to read all the details about the event, including registration for the swim.

## 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.

## ABOUT US

### Directors

Sven Risom, President  
Cheryl Moore, Vice President  
Jean Taber, Treasurer  
Betsy Pyne, Secretary  
Henry duPont  
Tricia Foley  
Bob Greenlee  
Bruce Johnson  
Carl Kaufmann  
Cindy Pappas  
Diane Robina  
Lara Andrea Taber

### Members

Approximately 450

### Governance

Up to 16 Directors

### Committee for the Great Salt Pond

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