



Holiday 2011



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CapeWomenOnline serves as your local venue for the women of Cape Cod to share their ideas, experiences and resources while inspiring each other in their life's journey.

Publisher's Note: When I met Kathy Fogle at a recent Green Drinks event I was inspired by her enthusiasm for the Massachusetts Audubon sanctuary in Wellfleet.

I wanted to know more about her work as a volunteer trail naturalist so I emailed her a few questions. Her eloquent responses speak to her passion for Cape Cod's natural environment and her joy of sharing the sanctuary with its visitors.

Discover the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

What is the Massachusetts Audubon?

Massachusetts Audubon is a state wide organization that has 45 staffed sanctuaries. It exists to protect the nature of Massachusetts for people and wildlife.

I volunteer at one of two of their sanctuaries on Cape Cod, the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (WBWS). The other Audubon sanctuary is called Long Pasture, located in Cummaquid.

WBWS is one of Massachusetts' largest and most beautiful of the sanctuaries with 944 acres and 5 miles of hiking trails that traverse woods, salt marsh, heath land, beach, ponds and tidal flats.

There is also a state of the art "green building" nature center (LEED certified), that houses huge aquariums and other nature exhibits and a pretty great shop and bookstore too.

Does WBWS have a local mission?

The local mission of WBWS is to connect people with nature on the Cape. Of course, gazillions of bird watchers come but it is not just about birding. It is a great place to come and learn for kids AND adults.

There are school programs, summer day camps, and MY favorite: The Cape Cod Field School. I have taken "coastal ecology by kayak" field school and "medicinal and edible plants" field school.

The biologists and naturalists who work at WBWS are top notch. If this were your profession wouldn't you want to do it in Wellfleet? There is also field school for nature sketching, painting and photography.



WELLFLEET BAY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

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How did you get involved?

I grew up hiking the natural areas of Massachusetts with my Dad. I am so grateful for this because nature has brought a lot of peace and beauty to my life. I'm not a religious person in the traditional sense, but I find nature profoundly spiritual. I think a lot of people who choose to live on, or visit the Cape can relate to this.

My dad is an avid birder and my special interest is plants, so I was familiar with Audubon and had visited WBWS in the past.

When I moved to Harwich, a few years ago, I volunteered for the Harwich Conservation Trust, (another great organization with beautiful conservation areas to visit). One of the volunteers noticed my enthusiasm and suggested that I may enjoy being a volunteer trail naturalist at WBWS.

I told him that I wasn't knowledgeable enough about plants, birds, marine life etc. to be a trail naturalist. He said "every spring, over a six week period, they teach you and then they pair you with an experienced trail partner."

ARE YOU KIDDING ME? I CAN LEARN ALL THIS FROM SOME OF THE BEST PEOPLE IN THE FIELD AND NOT HAVE



Mass Audubon Volunteer Trail Naturalists Kathy and Joe enjoy the Goose Pond Trail at Wellfleet's Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

What do you love about your work with the Audubon Society?

From June through October, once a week, my trail buddy Joe (who is 90) and I walk the trails and interact with visitors. Joe calls me Flora! We answer questions and we direct them towards places and things of interest. We show them cool birds through the telescope that we carry and otherwise attempt to connect them to the beauty of nature.

It is really important to connect kids to nature, and they REALLY connect quickly. One time we pointed out a painted turtle to a city kid and he didn't believe that it was real! He thought it was a prop. As with everything, kids are our only hope for the future. If they don't learn its value and understand the need to protect it, we are all in big trouble.

Volunteers may also work inside the nature center greeting visitors or as docents in the exhibit hall. Volunteers may work with staff on restoring oyster reefs, taking a census of horseshoe crabs, rescuing sea turtles, protecting diamondback terrapin turtles monitoring coastal water birds and maintaining trails and habitat.

I am happy to hike around the sanctuary and talk to people. It is a sanctuary, a holy place, in the true sense of the word.

How can readers get involved?

Everyone living on, and visiting Cape Cod needs to visit and support this beautiful place!

Go to www.massaudubon.org, click on sanctuaries and pull up Wellfleet. Become a member and have access to this nature wonderland 365 days a year.