



Town of Orleans

Conservation Department

Town Hall • 19 School Road • Orleans, Massachusetts 02653-3699
Tel: (508) 240-3700 Ext. 2425 / Fax: (508) 240-3388

Scope of Services for an Environmental Assessment of Kent's Point Conservation Area

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1 Introduction

The Town of Orleans Conservation Commission is looking to complete an *Environmental Assessment* of the Kents Point Conservation Area. The assessment will be used to determine the conservation value and biodiversity of the site and how it is impacted by public use, sea-level rise, and/or the natural systems. At the completion of the assessment, the Commission seeks to understand the environmental and conservation impacts observed at Kent's Point, the biodiversity, and level of threat to the function of the property as an environmental asset and wildlife habitat. Local flora and fauna shall be identified and shall provide a basis for the conservation values of the site. An evaluation of the erosion of the Coastal Bank shall occur that will include causes and solutions. The assessment will ultimately be used in future land use decision making and will also provide a basis from which actions will be taken.

2 Site Description

The Town of Orleans purchased Kent's Point on 24 October 1988 for \$1,800,000. In so doing the citizens of Orleans secured 27.7 acres of highly desirable salt waterfront land for our community and its valued visitors and protected the property from falling prey to about 23 dwellings.

Specifically, in accordance with Book 6575, Page 248 recording of the Quitclaim Deed, the 24 October 1988 Special Town Meeting Article 21 for the Proposed Land Acquisition states: Voted written ballot, For - 394, Against - 175, motion passes 2/3rd majority that the Board of Selectmen is authorized to acquire by purchase, by eminent domain, or otherwise, for conservation, for recreation, and open space purposes, the land together with the building thereon situated in the Town of Orleans known as Kent's Point (Charlotte A. Kent Property) situated on Keziah's Lane. Specifically, the Deed says in part that the land "...shall be held in the perpetual public trust by the grantee for open space conservation purposes which shall include use of said land for a Town shellfish laboratory and shellfish propagation program..." (see Deed attached).

Further, in August 1989 the Town was awarded a \$50,000 private grant from The Dietrich Foundation in support of the public's use of Kent's Point and its maintenance.

Public access to the Kent's Point Conservation Area from Monument Road is via a combination of Frost Fish Lane and Keziah's Lane into the parking lot. Visitors park in the circular parking area which is intended to include 20 designated parking spaces. Within the conservation land, there are two other parking spaces for physically challenged visitors located at the ramp leading to a platform near the shore.

An informational kiosk at the edge of the parking lot describes three major trails. The main entry leading to the former Kent house site goes up the center of the property. Abutting Frost Fish Cove to the left is the Cove Trail and to the right along the Meetinghouse River and Kescayogansett or Lonnie's River into Lonnie's Pond is the River Trail. The River Trail extends down to the beach where there are stairs up to the Point from the beach. All trails start from or near the parking lot.

The topography of Kent's Point contains a long, transverse, 30' high ridge, gradually descending from southwest to northeast and running into a low place three-quarters of the way out on the Point. The land surface then rises again to create the headland at the east end of the Point. The highest spot on the property is 40' above sea level at the Keziah's Lane entrance of the property.

Coastal banks encircle Kent's Point. These banks are generally short and steep, yet are dramatically 20' tall surrounding the northeastern headland. The Conservation Area is primarily upland derived of glacial deposits, of which only .6 acre is salt marsh or sandy beach. Most of the mile-long shorefront of Kent's Point is fronted by a narrow fringe of salt marsh.

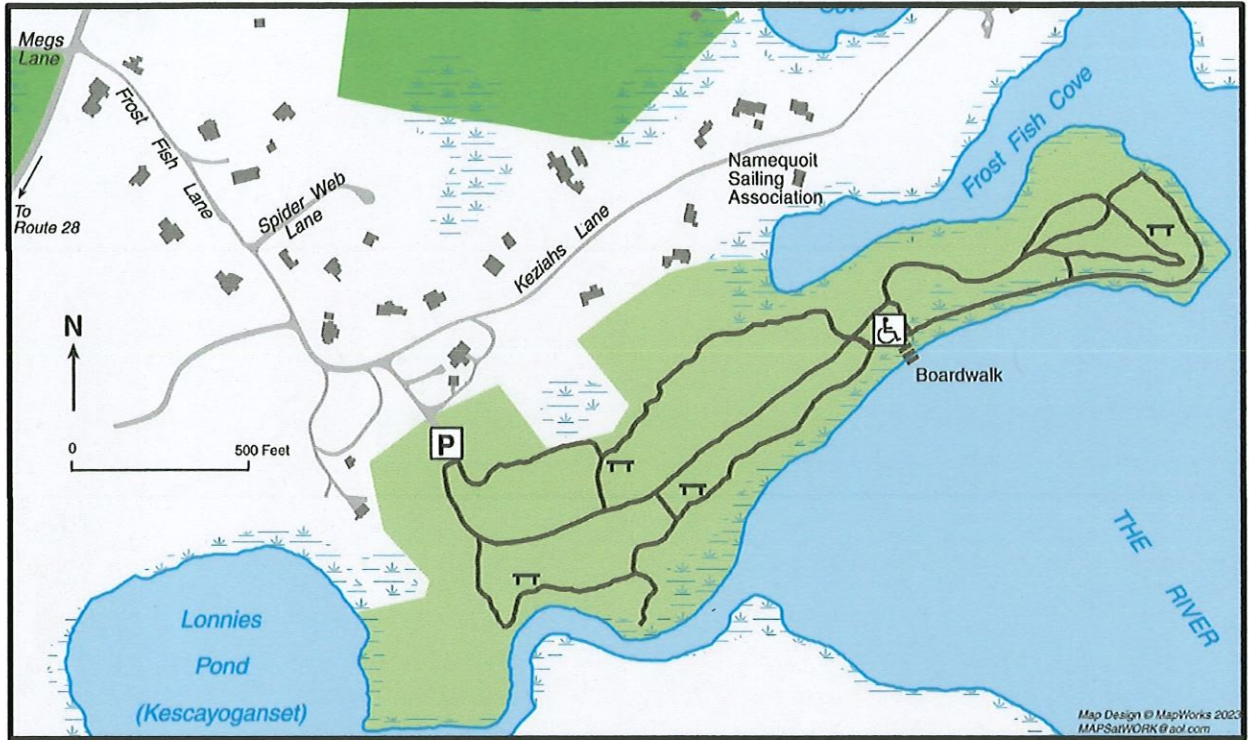
Kent's Point is surrounded by salt-water bodies: Kescayogansett or Lonnie's River and Pond on the south and west; Meetinghouse River, known as The River, on the south and east; and Frost Fish Cove on the north. Lonnie's River is a winding, narrow tidal stream connecting Lonnie's Pond to Pleasant Bay. It also supports the Town's most important anadromous fish run for alewives and blueback herring spawning in Pilgrim Lake. Frost Fish Cove, a small, shallow linear inlet, is a sheltered backwater for shorebirds, especially popular with great blue herons in the winter.

The center of the property is dominated by pitch pine and oak with small pockets of little blue stem grass between red cedars in the more open areas. Large cherry trees grow along the River Trail. To the northeast, the former Kent house site retains an open grassy area as well as ornamentals such as lilac, yew, lily of the valley, day lily, trumpet vine, spruce, Norway maple and, the common tree around old house sites on Cape Cod, black locust. All buildings were removed because of their poor condition and the expense to repair them. A stand of white pine grows on the headland and there are poplars on the coastal bank.

The Kent's Point Conservation Area is developed for public use with a system of walking trails constructed through the property, parking areas, and an informational kiosk. There are also a number of benches installed for scenic viewing. Additionally, two corridors totaling 5 acres are reserved as undisturbed natural habitat for fostering wildlife.

2.1 Maps

Figure 1: Kents Point



3 Scope of Work

3.1 Background Information

The Conservation Department will be responsible for providing past and current documents to review before beginning the assessment. The consultant shall set up time to complete the history and literature review prior to completing the field assessment of the property. Past and current documents include but are not limited to: the 1988 Environmental Assessment; the 1995 Kents Point Management Plan; the report of the 2015 Kents Point Task Force; and the 2015 (current) Kents Point Management Plan. Other correspondence and documents include: the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program information; topographic maps; aerial drone photographs and video; and soil surveys and shall also be consulted before the field assessment.

3.2 Field Assessment

The Conservation Commission is looking for a traditional and reliable means of field data collection. Examples of such means and methods may include fixed transect lines across the property and either fixed or variable radius inventory plots along the transect lines. The field assessment is expected to include photographs, maps, sketches and other related documents to tie data to the property via location. The list below details the tasks the Commission expects from a field assessment, and should serve as a guide for the work effort.

1. Habitat Evaluation
 - 1.1. General Types of Habitats
 - 1.2. Values and Services of Habitats present
 - 1.3. Impacts to Habitats present, if any
2. Wildlife Assessment
 - 2.1. Taxonomy/List: Based on observation of individuals, sign, tracks, or scat. (noting season)
3. Vegetation Communities Inventory
 - 3.1. Taxonomy/List: Based on observation
4. Elements of Biodiversity present including status of Biodiversity
5. Conservation Status of Elements (common/priority/rare/endangered)
6. Classification or Description of Communities and Ecological Systems if present
7. Description of Site observations etc.

3.3 Property Recommendations

After the completion of the field assessment, the Conservation Commission is looking for analysis of the data collected in order to formulate recommendations for the property. This shall include concepts to foster long term protection while allowing the continued public use and enjoyment. The Commission is not looking for specific policy recommendations to be made by the consultant, rather, the Commission wishes to understand outcomes of the assessment and how to use the assessment to preserve the natural assets of the property. While the Commission recognizes that policy change may be a means to achieve protection, those changes may come, if necessary, after a more public process with the community. Examples of recommendations to include in the report to the Commission include but are

not limited to:

1. Description of current use patterns and impacts from public use
2. How to protect the property for future generations of users including specific asset protection recommendations
3. Areas in need of further preservation (unique areas) or restoration (high impact areas)
 - 3.1. A description of preservation and restoration techniques.

4 Agency Consultation

If needed, appropriate agencies will be contacted including the Cape Cod Commission and MassWildlife to discuss the site and its critical habitat(s).

The Cape Cod Commission, in a separate effort, is conducting a weeklong traffic study in July with results expected shortly thereafter. This traffic data should be available to the consultant to understand levels of use and parking lot turnover of the site during the busy summer season.

The Town will be engaging the Public in a campaign before, during, and after the assessment. Information gathered during this campaign will flow from the Conservation Commission through the department to the consultant. To the extent the public information is helpful in the assessment, it shall be included in the final report and findings.

5 Educational Transparency

From the start of the assessment, the public needs to be made aware of all progress. It will be the responsibility of The Commission to engage the public and keep them informed of all progress and work being undertaken. In order to execute this seamlessly, the consultant shall communicate weekly with a designated point of contact for the Town. It will be the Town's responsibility to communicate with the public.

6 Deliverables

Final Report: The Commission's goal is have the completed assessment, as detailed above in Scope of Work, within 3 months of award of the project. The final report will be a key instrument of an updated Kent's Point (2015-2025) management plan. The final report will allow The Town to have a basis for future land use decisions going forward, all with the goal of preserving the conservation values of the site while allowing the continued public use and enjoyment. The final report and assessment will be consulted when future policy decisions on land use are being considered.