The background of the entire page is a photograph of two dolphins leaping from the water. They are captured in mid-air, with their bodies arched and fins visible. The water is a deep blue, and there is a splash of white water around the dolphins' tails. The overall scene is bright and clear.

buzzards  
**BAY**  
COALITION

**2023** ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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## OUR VISION

- A Bay shoreline defined by safe swimming beaches, open shellfish beds, and stretches of scenic natural areas for all to enjoy.
- Healthy waters that support abundant fish, shellfish, and wildlife populations.
- A Bay safe from the threats of oil spills, industrial and sewer discharges, and ocean dumping.
- A watershed where rivers, streams, inland forests, and wetlands that buffer the Bay are protected.

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## OUR PEOPLE

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Tony Williams, *Director of Monitoring Programs*

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**ON THE COVER *Dolphins in Buzzards Bay?*** Yes, and a lot of them in 2023. Throughout last summer, we were excited to receive many photos and videos of large pods of Common Dolphins in the Bay – usually spotted between Quicks Hole and Penikese.

We reached out to renowned cetacean expert and Marion resident Michael Moore for his thoughts on the phenomenon. He responded, “These are the commonest (ha) dolphin species in the area now. Some decades ago it was White-Beaked Dolphins and Pilot Whales. Then it was Atlantic White-Sided Dolphins, now it is Common Dolphins. They are all slowly moving north to try and keep up with their prey. Bottlenose Dolphins are now on the increase. The prey sticks to a water temperature that they have evolved to thrive in. As the warm water temps get higher in latitude - the climate change escalator. The specific reason they were here was probably because they had found their prey here in Buzzards Bay in good abundance.”

## BUZZARDS BAY GUARDIANS CELEBRATED AT BEVERLY YACHT CLUB



The Coalition gathered at the Beverly Yacht Club in Marion in May to hold its 35th Annual Meeting and to celebrate recipients of the organization's highest honor, the Buzzards Bay Guardian Award.

For over 40 years, Mike Labossiere has dedicated his life to conserving thousands of acres across

the Bay watershed. He started his career as a forester until becoming the Coalition's first land protection staff in 1998. For the last 15 years, he has served as Superintendent of Fall River's water supply protection lands. He also founded the Greater Fall River Land Conservancy which merged with the Coalition in 2019.

Noting that it was the 20th anniversary of the B-120 Oil Spill in Buzzards Bay, the next Guardian was awarded to Edward Leblanc. Ed served in the US Coast Guard for 44 years before retiring in 2019. He was central to the cleanup response to the B120 spill, but more importantly, he worked for years following that tragedy to enact new rules to prevent future spills.

Lizanne Campbell of Mattapoisett was also recognized with the Volunteer Appreciation Award.



## GIDWITZ BARN DEDICATED IN WOODS HOLE

In August, Coalition Board and Staff gathered with the family and close friends of Tom Gidwitz to dedicate the organization's newly renovated "Barn" at the Wheeler Forest Reserve in Woods Hole in his memory. The beautiful structure was renovated by The Valle Group of Falmouth and will serve as meeting and offices space, primarily for BBC's science team.

Tom passed away in 2020 and left a huge legacy in his wake. The longest-serving Board Member in BBC history, he helped guide the organization for 23 years. First elected to the Board in 1997, served as clerk from 1998 until 2007, as vice chair from 2009 until 2010, and as chair from 2011 until 2013.

Tom's wife Gail Davidson of Dartmouth (seen above) was joined by his three siblings in remembering Tom's dedication and love for the Bay.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT** Gail Davidson, with Tom's brother Ron, at the dedication; Meeting Room at the Gidwitz Barn; Mark Rasmussen addresses members at the Annual Meeting; Buzzards Bay Guardian Mike Labossiere

# BBC Closes Largest Drinking Water Protection Deal Ever in Mattapoissett River Valley

The Mattapoissett River Valley is home to one of our region's most important drinking water resources. This year, BBC brought together five towns – Mattapoissett, Fairhaven, Marion, Acushnet, and Rochester – to protect the largest, most expensive and most highly-developable property in the valley to secure the quality, quantity, and long-term sustainability of the public drinking water supply.

This is not the first time BBC and these communities have protected critical lands in this area to safeguard water, but it was this partnership's most complicated deal to date. The 240-acre Red Brick Farm and Long Plain fields lie at the heart of the river valley. Their mix of forestland, wetlands, streams, farm fields and rare wildlife habitats make these acres a super pollution filter and resource for capturing and storing water.

The \$6 million price tag to acquire these parcels and prevent residential development required an all-hands approach. The project was made possible due to a Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant which provided \$4.5 million in recognition of the land's ability to make these towns more resilient to climate change. Matching that grant, BBC raised \$1 million from private donors and all five towns joined in. Acushnet, Fairhaven, Marion and Mattapoissett Town Meetings each contributed Community Preservation Funds; Rochester received a grant from the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program; and the Mattapoissett River Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee contributed funds collected from water use fees.

Everyone can now explore trails on these lands that connect to BBC's Mattapoissett River Reserve trail system and eventually community programming in the farm buildings at Red Brick Farm. The portions of land that are currently being farmed will continue to be used for agricultural purposes.



**LAND = PROTECTION**

**CLEAN DRINKING WATER** 

[www.tinyurl.com/CleanDrinkingWaterMRV](http://www.tinyurl.com/CleanDrinkingWaterMRV)



# IN THE WATERSHED

**WATERSHED PROTECTION IS ABOUT CONSERVING ALL OF THE PARTS OF THE** Buzzards Bay ecosystem—forests, wetlands, rivers, streams, and groundwater, as well as harbors and coves. These critical areas provide important habitats, protect our drinking water sources, and act as natural pollution filters for the Bay.

Through watershed protection, the Coalition safeguards the region’s forests, streams, and wetlands, and it works to restore damaged areas so the Bay ecosystem can thrive.



## CHALLENGE

Nearly half of the land in the 432-square-mile Buzzards Bay watershed is undeveloped and unprotected. The fate of these lands is fundamental to our efforts to protect clean water. Without saving the most important forests, streams, and wetlands from poorly planned development, the Bay cannot survive.

## STRATEGY

We pursue a Bay-focused land protection strategy to conserve the watershed’s most vulnerable forests and streams—natural areas that the Bay cannot afford to lose. We also restore damaged rivers, wetlands, and streambanks and help towns and land trusts preserve land in every corner of our region.

## RESULTS

The Coalition manages the largest land conservation program in southeastern Massachusetts. Since 1998, we’ve protected more than 10,000 acres throughout the Buzzards Bay watershed. We’re also restoring damaged streams, rebuilding wetlands, and creating better access for people to explore the outdoors in their community.

# Un-Development Projects Underway to Restore Healthy Wetlands at former Cranberry Bogs

**AFTER YEARS OF PLANNING, FUNDRAISING, DESIGN AND ENGINEERING, 2023 SAW BBC BREAK GROUND ON THE FIRST OF MANY LARGE WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECTS ON RETIRED CRANBERRY BOGS**

At the vanguard is 60 acres of bog in Mattapoisett on Acushnet Road. Acquired from the Decas Cranberry Company in 2015, this property sits atop the Mattapoisett River Drinking Water Supply and immediately adjacent to a withdrawal well. As a result, prevention of chemical use at the site and restoration of its former pollution-filtering and water-storing, natural wetlands were a high priority for federal, state and local agencies. The nearly \$3 Million project is funded by the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wetlands Reserve program. The site is currently closed for construction but is expected to reopen in Fall 2024.

Next up, BBC is in the final design phase for restoration of the 80-acre Stuart Bog in northeast Rochester. This expansive site lies at the headwaters of both the Mattapoisett and Sippican Rivers and is adjacent to a large, rare Atlantic White Cedar swamp. And to the east, BBC has been asked by the MA Division of Fish & Game to lead the restoration of the Century Bog in South Plymouth which lies at the head of Red Brook – one of our region's most precious cold water trout streams that empties into Buttermilk Bay in Bourne.

All of these these projects will result in the restoration of wetlands and water quality, enhancement of stream function and fish passage, and improvements to public access, including the addition of new trails, bridges and boardwalks.



*Sara daSilva Quintal, BBC's Restoration Ecologist, discusses earth moving and wetland re-creation with Mattapoisett Bogs restoration contractors at Luciano's Excavating of Taunton.*

## IN THE WATERSHED | *Highlights of 2023*

In 2023, we actively pursued new opportunities to protect and restore the Bay's most important forests, streams, and wetlands – the natural filters that support clean water. You can learn more about these projects and all our work to conserve land and restore damaged natural areas at [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



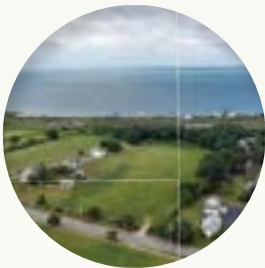
### Restoration of Marsh Island: Phase 1 complete

Viewed from Interstate 195, it looked like a major new port development project was underway in New Bedford Harbor. In actuality, the massive earth moving equipment was removing decades of fill to re-create 11 acres of salt marsh destroyed on this site in the 1930s. More than 40,000 cubic yards of sand was removed and replaced with 60,000 plugs of saltmarsh grasses; the tidal stream that once connected this peninsula to the Harbor was reimagined and rebuilt. The site's new waterfront trail, complete with bridges and overlooks, will open to the public in the fall of 2024.



### West Falmouth demo enhances neighborhood's climate resilience

Nestled near Snug Harbor, a coastal property damaged by 1991's Hurricane Bob long stood abandoned. As time passed, the structure began to pose a threat to the neighborhood, especially with the looming challenges of coastal flooding exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. Local residents joined forces with BBC to address the risks and together we purchased the property, and local contractors donated their services to demolish the house. Ahead, BBC will replant the area with native plants – creating habitat and improving drainage and water infiltration.



### Expanding Public Access to the Coast and Bikeways

Two small farm properties were protected in Fairhaven with exciting public access improvements in store. On Sciticut Neck, BBC partnered with the Town to preserve the 9-acre Salt Winds estate and its stone wall-lined fields, forest and beach. In the coming year, we will open a new trail to the coast for everyone to enjoy. And in the Shaws Cove area, we purchased 10 acres to add to BBC's Carvalho Farm Reserve and physically connect it with a trail and small parking area to the popular Phoenix Bike Trail.



### Coastal Christmas Tree Farm protected on Sciticut Neck

Also in Fairhaven and across the road from Salt Winds, BBC worked closely with the Douglass Family to preserve their cherished coastal Christmas Tree Farm. This 26-acre property, including a house, will become a new BBC Reserve thanks to a generous bargain sale by the family. We plan to reopen the property for christmas tree sales as well as summer nature exploration programs for youth.



### Donated Conservation Restrictions expand protected areas in Dartmouth and Rochester

The end of the year yielded two Conservation Restrictions donated to BBC adjacent to important existing protected areas. In Dartmouth, Jeff Graber and Melissa Haskell protected their 20 acre farm adjacent to DNRT's popular Destruction Brook Woods. And in Rochester, Russ and Wendy Keeler expanded their existing 60-acre protected farm by adding 12 acres – all within the important Mattapoisett River Valley Drinking Water Supply area.



**IN THE WATERSHED** | *Looking Ahead*

## Protecting the Bay by keeping the Farm in Farm Coast

It was the depths of the covid shutdown when South Dartmouth's Wainer Farm, with its beautiful roadside fields of specialty herbs and commercial-grade food prep barn, went on the real estate market for development. It was a highly-visible example of the phenomena playing out across the Bay's western towns: we are losing more-and-more farmland to suburbanization. The losers in this transition are not just farmers and the public who benefit from fresh, local food, but also the Bay.

Farms in Little Compton, Tiverton, Westport and Dartmouth – collectively referred to as the 'Farm Coast' – represent a still intact farming ecosystem of growers, suppliers, labor and skills. But there are also still smaller, but important, farms in Fairhaven, Acushnet, Mattapoisett and Rochester still working to produce local food. Collectively, all of these farms control and steward a lot of land, and not just agricultural fields but also vital forests, wetlands, streams and coastline. All lands critical to the Bay's health.

BBC has waded into the farmland preservation challenge big time in the past few years. We stepped in to purchase the Wainer Farm, preserve its fields with permanent Conservation Restrictions and in

2024 will resell the property to a farmer to keep it in agriculture. It's a model that we've employed now in Rochester and also on Sconticut Neck in Fairhaven. And its appeal is growing. With funding support from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, we are providing an alternative to development for farmers to get paid to preserve their land.

On deck are more farm preservation deals in Dartmouth – where BBC currently has five more farms under agreement for conservation – and in Fairhaven and Acushnet.



**PHOTOS** *The former Wainer Farm and the Slocum River on Barneys Joy Road.*

# ON THE WATER

## WE ALL SHARE THE SAME VISION FOR BUZZARDS BAY: A SCENIC SHORELINE WITH

safe swimming beaches, clean shellfish beds filled with quahogs, and healthy waters where fish and wildlife thrive. Our Bay is resilient; with sound science, the right laws, and proper enforcement, it can bounce back from the harmful effects of pollution.

Through science and advocacy, the Coalition is leading the way to protect and restore our local waterways for fish, shellfish, wildlife, and most importantly, people like you.



### CHALLENGE

The most serious and difficult challenge facing the Bay is nitrogen pollution: the vast majority of which leaches from our home septic systems into sensitive harbors and coves. The Bay is also threatened by bacterial contamination, oil spills, toxic pollution, and increasingly by climate change.

### STRATEGY

For 32 years, the Coalition has kept a watchful eye on the Bay's health through our nationally recognized Baywatchers monitoring program. But we don't just study the Bay; we put this science to work. Sound science forms the foundation of all of our advocacy efforts to restore and protect clean water.

### RESULTS

We pursue Bay restoration and protection at all levels of government—local, state, and federal—and in court when necessary. Through strong advocacy, we're securing limits on nitrogen pollution, working with towns to update wastewater treatment, and always defending laws to make the Bay safer from oil spills.

# State of the Bay: Water Quality Improved, despite...

**IMPROVED 2022 STATE OF BUZZARDS BAY SCORE REFLECTS SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN NITROGEN AND TOXIC POLLUTION, AS WELL AS NEW CHALLENGES DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

The 2022 State of Buzzards Bay report – released by the Coalition in March 2023 – documented an exciting uptick in the overall Bay Health Score, the first increase since BBC began tracking Bay health in this way in 2003. The report’s findings also caution that changes attributed to climate change, including warmer weather and rising sea levels, may soon outpace these gains. Its results are used to guide BBC advocacy, science and watershed protection.

Based on a rubric with nine criteria, a “perfect score” of 100 is based on the state of the bay as documented by European explorers at the time of colonization in 1602. Given the significant human activity that has occurred in the centuries since, BBC estimates that a restored, healthy Buzzards Bay would likely score a 75. Today’s Bay scores at 46.

At the report’s release, President Mark Rasmussen noted, “This is the first time since we began these assessments in 2003 that we’ve seen the Bay Score improved. It’s a win for the bay’s restoration, but the score would have increased even more were it not for the damage that climate change is already having on our Bay.”

The good news in the report was linked directly to reductions in both nitrogen and toxic pollution, pointing to actions at the federal and local levels. Ongoing attention and amendments to the Clean

**46**  
OUT OF 100

Air Act have helped to reduce environmental pollutants falling on the Bay from fossil fuel burning power plants and automobiles. And town-based initiatives – including an increase

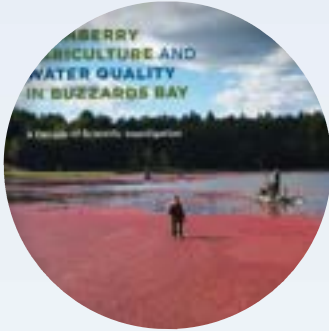
in sewerage and requirements for nitrogen-reducing septic systems – are also helping to move the needle.

There were declines in the Watershed Health scores however, which the report tied to an increase in development leading to the loss of forestland and climate change-driven salt marsh loss. Warming water caused by climate change is also creating a more welcoming environment for bacteria and will – over time – make it more difficult for living resources like eelgrass, bay scallops and river herring to thrive. Eelgrass serves as a vital habitat for a broad range of marine life, including bay scallops, while river herring are a “foundation fish,” an important part of the Bay’s ecosystem on which striped bass, bluefish, and other sportfish feed.

**BELOW** Most troubling, the Bay lost approximately 7% of its vital salt marshes between 2001-2019. A rate that is accelerating due primarily to climate-change driven sea level rise.



In 2023, we continued our ongoing fight against nitrogen pollution in Buzzards Bay, defended the Bay against threats and worked to prevent new sources of pollution from fouling our waters. You can learn more about these projects and all our work to protect clean water through science and advocacy at [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



### Cranberry Bogs and Water Quality Report released

Cranberry bogs dot the landscape, and BBC has been actively engaged in understanding the role that bogs play in managing nitrogen and phosphorous pollution in our region. The “Cranberry Agriculture and Water Quality in Buzzards Bay” report summarizes a decade of research by BBC and partners (Woodwell Climate Research Center, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association, UMass Cranberry Station, Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District, and Marine Biological Laboratory). The report describes how bog management and restoration measures can contribute to the improvement of coastal water quality.



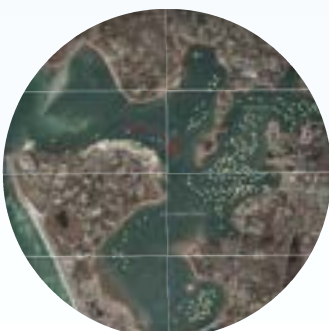
### Gooseberry Study: Year Two Completed

As part of the 3-year, BBC-led “Gooseberry Causeway Impact Study,” scientists from Boston University, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and the Woods Hole Group collected data on water and sediment and began developing computer models. The models depict water and sediment movement along the coast near the Gooseberry Causeway and the mouths of Allens Pond and the Slocums and Westport Rivers. The field data verifies that the computer models recreate real-world conditions. In year three, the models will be used to predict water and sediment movement under different scenarios to better guide management of this complicated stretch of Bay coast.



### NSF investing in new sensors to more closely track water quality

The National Science Foundation has awarded funding to BBC and partners the Woodwell Climate Research Center, UMass Amherst, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and Onset Computer Corporation to test relatively low-cost sensors that can measure dissolved oxygen and salinity every few minutes. The project will study where to locate them either at fixed locations or on a mobile platform, how to manage their abundant data, and their usability by local officials and state regulators.



### Conservation Mooring pilot a success in West Falmouth Harbor

Traditional block and chain boat moorings can do a lot of damage to the Bay bottom – destroying eelgrass beds, suppressing shellfish growth, and resuspending nitrogen-rich sediments. Last year, BBC completed a pilot project in partnership with the Town of Falmouth and MA Division of Marine Fisheries to install a new type of floating mooring in Outer West Falmouth Harbor (red dots in photo). 51 moorings were upgraded to the new system which uses a helical screw and a floating rope to avoid damaging the bottom. Eelgrass is already recovering and we plan to share our learning on the project as a model for other harbors.



**ON THE WATER** | *Looking Ahead*

## Buttonwood-to-Bay

### **BBC HELPS CITY OF NEW BEDFORD SECURE FUNDS FOR KEMPTON STREET CORRIDOR**

From a bird's eye view, New Bedford's Kempton Street in the center of the city is a vast sea of impervious cover where over 90% of the land area is paved. When it rains, untreated urban stormwater rapidly accumulates and flows directly into Buttonwood Brook carrying with it bacteria, toxins and fine sediments that degrade ecosystems in the brook and impact downstream waters like Apponagansett Bay. Over the last several years, the Buzzards Bay Coalition has partnered with the City of New Bedford to conduct water quality assessments, advocate for change, and develop sustainable solutions that improve water quality and build climate resilience in underserved neighborhoods like this one.

After several years of project planning and public engagement, the City of New Bedford received a \$350,000 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant (MVP) to implement green infrastructure in the area. The MVP funding was a great start, but it only covered a small portion of the work needed to produce measurable impacts in this highly urbanized watershed. The Coalition quickly recognized the funding shortfall and

partnered with the City on another round of grant funding, which resulted in an additional \$500,000 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As the project gained momentum, the City received another \$375,000 from the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program, pushing the project's total grant funding to over \$1.2 Million.

Recognizing the once-in-a-generation opportunity to resolve longstanding issues like stormwater pollution and localized flooding, City leadership mobilized additional resources through its Community Preservation Act, federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and State Revolving Fund loans, bringing the total community investment to over \$3.7M. This transformational project will enable sweeping change that includes a reduction of impervious surfaces, construction of 24 green infrastructure sites to absorb polluted runoff, street tree planting and a new trail network in Buttonwood Park. Once complete, the project will bring meaningful water quality, climate resilience, and community health benefits both locally and in downstream Dartmouth where coastal ecosystems and local fisheries are heavily impacted by urban runoff.

## WITH PEOPLE

### THE KEY TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY BUZZARDS BAY IS AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY THAT

understands the threats the Bay faces and their role in protecting it. The long-term health of our local environment depends upon people knowing, loving and valuing the Bay as important to their lives.

Through community engagement, the Coalition is creating a new generation of Bay stewards: people who understand their place in the Bay ecosystem and will support its protection for decades to come.



### CHALLENGE

Buzzards Bay faces a crisis of disengagement. Fewer people today know the Bay and our local environment; most children grow up in front of screens rather than on sandy beaches. Without connections to the natural world, people have turned a blind eye to the Bay's decline. If we don't address this disengagement, we will ultimately fail to protect the Bay.

### STRATEGY

Connecting people to the Bay is a fundamental part of our work. We tackle disengagement head-on through outdoor programming, engaging events and workshops, and vibrant print and digital communications. These efforts build stronger connections to our local environment to support long-term stewardship.

### RESULTS

Every year, thousands develop new appreciation for the Bay through our outdoor exploration programs. We're expanding a network of Bay discovery sites where all people can get outside, giving local decision makers solutions to pressing pollution problems, and rebuilding connections to the Bay through annual events like the Swim and the Watershed Ride.

## Free Bay Adventures connecting thousands with their local environment

With the goal of inspiring a commitment to protecting Buzzards Bay now and for generations to come, the slate of our no-cost Bay Adventure programs continued to expand in 2023 to ensure greater access to our local environment for all. BBC outdoor programs actively aim to remove barriers to entry for participants by providing all equipment – from kayaks to fishing poles – and locating a wide range of experience types at convenient locations spread all around the watershed.

In 2023, 1,656 people participated in Bay Adventure programs from Westport to Bourne, a 35% increase in participation over the prior year. And these programs are built for all ages and abilities. Full moon hikes, trail runs, Seal & Seabird winter cruises, learn to fish and quahog, and kayak excursions all helped get people off their couch and into nature, fostering fun connections that build affinity and a sense of stewardship.



**LEFT PAGE** BBC's Bay Adventure Manager Vernon Baptista leads a Saturdays at the Sawmill walk at our Acushnet Sawmill Reserve in New Bedford.

## WITH PEOPLE | *Highlights of 2023*

Throughout 2023, people like you took action to get outside and support the Coalition's work in communities throughout our region. You can learn more about all our opportunities to swim, ride, volunteer, or attend an event at [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).



### Onset Bay Center continues to Grow

From after school clubs to summer camp; from community events to family milestone occasions, BBC's Onset Bay Center continues to engage more and more people in fun, outdoor exploration and environmental stewardship programs. 2023 saw more than 2,100 participants in on-the-water camp and programs, 750 kayak rentals, and a staggering 8,200 people attending community and family events in the center's McFadden Hall. Registration is already open for summer 2024 camps and programs.



### Wareham Public School youth benefit from expansion of NOAA funding

After three years of offering enhanced outdoor bay exploration programs for hundreds of New Bedford fourth and fifth grade students through the city's SeaLab program, BBC has expanded this model to Wareham Public Schools. Funding is provided by the NOAA Bay-Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program. Under the program, Wareham Middle and High School students will spend multiple days at BBC's Onset Bay Center exploring the marine ecosystem and learning about the role that shellfish play in maintaining water quality and biodiversity in the Bay.



### Gnome Surf at Horseneck Point Life Saving Station

BBC has partnered with Gnome Surf to expand their programming at BBC's Horseneck Point Life-Saving Station (LSS) in Westport. Gnome is a non-profit organization that provides life-changing surf therapy for kids of all abilities regardless of socioeconomic status. Gnome will store equipment and operate youth programs out of the LSS and help BBC bring surfing and paddleboarding to deepen connections to the ocean for new populations of kids in all Bay towns.



### Swim & Ride Reach New Heights

The Coalition's signature sporting events – the Buzzards Bay SWIM and Watershed RIDE – are one of the most visible annual symbols of the importance of the Bay to all of our lives. They are also critical fundraisers supporting all aspects of BBC's work to protect and restore the Bay. In 2023, the SWIM and RIDE grew on all fronts with 204 swimmers and 390 cyclists taking part and raising \$406,400 through thousands of individual donations from participants' friends and family members.





**WITH PEOPLE** | *Looking Ahead*

## Messing about in Boats!

For the majority of people who live around Buzzards Bay, one of the greatest barriers to connecting to their local waters, is simply getting on them. We can hold beach walks and hikes in the woods and attract people to the outdoors that way, but it's hard to replicate the experience of being on the water. 2024 will find the Buzzards Bay Coalition tackling that challenge from multiple angles – and in a wide variety of historic and new boats.

We are currently building a replica surf rescue boat in partnership with the International Yacht Restoration School (IYRS) in Newport to replace the boat that has been housed in our Horseneck Point Life Saving Station for the past 15 years. That boat has been on loan from the Town of Gosnold. It is the original Cuttyhunk life-saving station surf boat and will be returned to the island for display. With the new boat, we will be able to offer actual rowing programs.

At the Onset Bay Center, we are in the midst of fundraising to buy a 26' Oldport Launch to service our youth camps and school programs. Capable of carrying 24 people, the launch will greatly improve

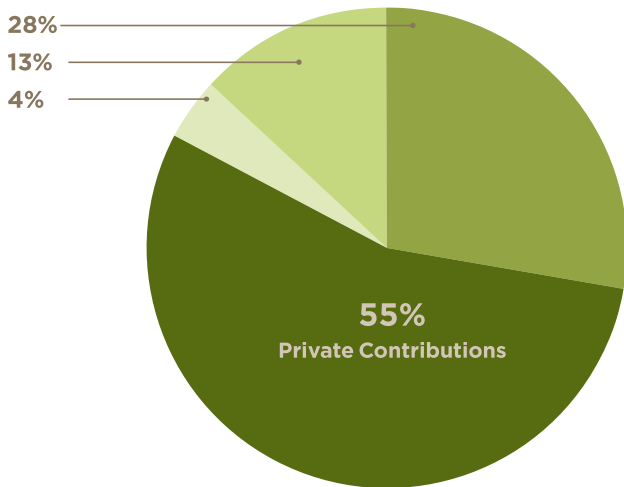


our ability to deliver participants efficiently to Wickets Island and Burgess Point and expand the number of programs we can offer.

Lastly, we are partnering with Mass Maritime Academy to pilot a series of day sailing experiences aboard the legendary *S/V Schooner Ernestina-Morrissey* for New Bedford Public School students.

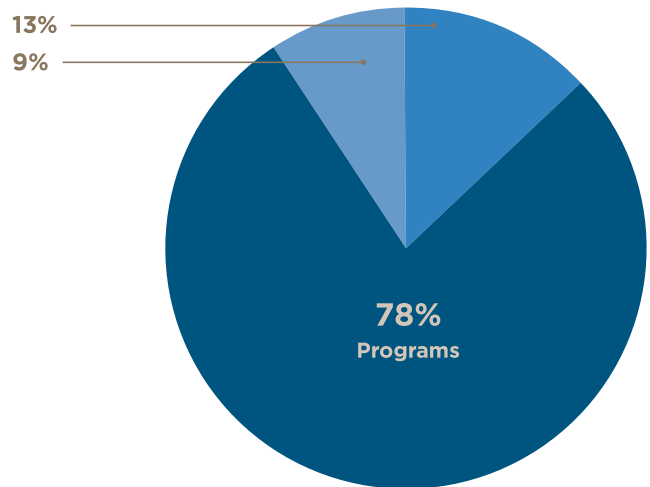
**FISCAL YEAR 2023**

October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023



**REVENUE**

Private Contributions	7,896,572
Government Grants	4,004,214
Investment and Other Income	1,810,005
Fundraising Events	575,610
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>14,286,401</b>



**OPERATING EXPENSES**

Programs	7,260,240
Administration	1,180,556
Fundraising	883,577
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>9,324,373</b>

**NET ASSETS**

Beginning	35,269,546
Increase in Net Assets	4,962,028
<b>ENDING NET ASSETS</b>	<b>40,231,574</b>

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**  
**CHRIS SCHADE**



*The Coalition's FY23 Financial Statements are being audited by the firm of AAFCPAs of Westborough, MA.*

The Buzzards Bay Coalition continues to see improvement in our financial position, ending the year with more than \$40 Million in net assets.

This annual report encompasses the unaudited financials for the period October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. The Coalition has chosen to change the start of our fiscal year to better align with our operating calendar. Fiscal year 2024 will commence on January 1, 2024. The current financial audit comprises the period October 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023 to align the 2024 audit with the new fiscal year.

The nearly \$5 million increase in contributions and government grants this year is due primarily to restricted federal and state grants that are being spent on our large wetland restoration projects at Marsh Island and the Mattapoisett Bogs.

The commitment of our supporters is evident in our continued financial strength. As I read through this year's full annual report, I am reminded of the tremendous operational success in this past year. All areas of our work; conservation, science, restoration, advocacy, and outreach are heavily dependent on the private contributions of you, our supporters! I am encouraged that you all stand with the Coalition in the protection of the Buzzards Bay watershed for the generations to come.

**WHERE WE WORK** The Buzzards Bay Coalition works throughout the Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound watersheds to protect and restore the region’s coastal, river, and drinking water quality and the upland forests, wetlands, and streams that support a healthy coastal ecosystem.



*Beginning at Sakonnet Point in Rhode Island in the west, our service area runs along the watershed boundaries for Little Compton’s coastal saltponds, then northeast along the Buzzards Bay watershed boundary until it reaches Nobska Point in Falmouth in the east. From Nobska, our work crosses to West Chop on Martha’s Vineyard along the edge of Vineyard and Nantucket Sounds, then runs up island along the Vineyard Sound coastal watershed boundary to Squibnocket Point and Gay Head. Our western seaward edge is defined by the municipal boundary of the town of Gosnold until it meets the jurisdictional boundary for “MGL 21M, Chapter 251 of the Acts of 2004,” which establishes the edge of compliance with oil spill prevention rules for tank barges entering Buzzards Bay.*

*The Buzzards Bay Coalition also monitors land use and supports water quality protection efforts in the Assawompset Ponds watershed in Lakeville and Middleboro due to the pond’s historical physical connections to Buzzards Bay through the Acushnet and Mattapoisett Rivers and their role as the public drinking water supply for the city of New Bedford.*

Buzzards Bay Coalition  
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buzzards  
**BAY**  
COALITION

BLUE WATERS  
GREEN SPACES  
FOR EVERYONE

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



#savebuzzardsbay