

**View from the Rivers Edge – May 2022**

The official start to spring arrived this past Monday, it seemed. The osprey were busy nesting and the Sturgis High School racing team was practicing boat handling at Bass River Yacht Club. Reality came to me quickly as I reached down to test the water temperature! Not only was the water cold, but a few minutes later it started to rain. Oh well, “spring” on Cape Cod!



*Meteorologist Tim Kelley will be joining our 2022 water testing team.*

I am pleased to announce we are about to begin our third summer of comprehensive water testing on the river. Thanks to our dedicated volunteer Water Testing Team members and wonderful partnership with the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, we again plan to begin in June and test through September. **This season we have added a seventh testing location and need volunteers to staff it. Please let us know if you would like to help!** One notable addition to our team for 2022 is former Boston meteorologist Tim Kelley. Tim grew up on Follins Pond and will lead testing there!

On Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup> I toured Cape Cod Mosquito Control Superintendent and Entomologist Gabrielle Sakolsky and Yarmouth Conservation Commission Chairman Edwin Hoopes through our wetlands restoration project area. I assured “Gabby” our finished project will greatly reduce standing water (mosquito habitat) and reestablish the historic fish habitat. (Herring eat lots of insect eggs). Introducing Edwin to the long-term benefits of our project is critical, as Yarmouth

Conservation Commission will play a key role in the permitting process. It was a pleasure to spend 2 hours with these committed professionals sharing the details of our project.

**I have great news regarding the ongoing wetlands restoration of the upper Bass River headwaters.**

Update: 2 ½ years ago we identified 57.2 acres of retired cranberry bogs at the northern end of Bass River. This property has incredible potential for improving water quality in the Bass River. Working with acclaimed engineering firms that already have experience with our unique Cape Cod eco-system, we are designing a plan to return the bogs to their original wetlands state. Wetlands are natural nitrogen and carbon sinks & nitrogen is the real enemy of our river. Recently our project has been recognized with funding and technical support that continues to secure its future:

- We were awarded a SNEP grant in 2020 (Southern New England Estuaries Program). We used this grant to fund a 60% design document for the wetlands restoration, and 25% schematic design work for replacement of the North Dennis Rd. (Crab Creek) and failed Weir Road culverts. Page 2 →



*Gabby Sakolsky from Cape Cod Mosquito Control*

- This winter the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (MassDER) awarded a Priority Project Designation to Friends of Bass River because of our excellent project progress. Only 13 projects in Massachusetts received this designation, which means we will receive technical assistance and support through the complex permitting and construction processes.
- Yarmouth Community Preservation Commission has approved funding for our State and Federal project permits applications, and for engineering services towards designs at Crab Creek.
- We've submitted applications for funding 100% completion of our project design documentation.
- We are committed to completing our ambitious and critical project!

We look forward to involving you in our efforts. Let us know if you'd like to help with water testing and keep an eye open for community educational projects planned for this summer. We love Bass River and hope you will continue to support our vision for a healthy river!

*Rick*



**Did You Know?** Rick is an avid ice boater! In January he drove to Minnesota for an ice boating regatta.

If you are interested in Volunteering for our Water Quality Testing Program please contact Rick Bishop at:

[rbishop@friendsofbassriver.org](mailto:rbishop@friendsofbassriver.org)



## Meet a Board Member

### Elizabeth Gail Hayden



Gail first came to Cape Cod in 1963, when her family decided to leave the cold waters of Maine for the warmer waters of Cape Cod. A family friend suggested they try a place called Bass River. A realtor showed them a small cottage at the end of Trotting Park Road, by the beach in West Dennis. Gail grew up on Nantucket Sound half-way between Bass River and Swan River. The rivers and the Sound were her playground. Here she developed a passion for the ocean and its estuaries. The rhythms of the sea and winds which play along the Sound and

its estuaries filled her with wonder and pleasure. When the years spun on, life took her to different addresses, but West Dennis remained her constant home. Today, her kitchen table overlooks Weir Creek behind West Dennis Beach.

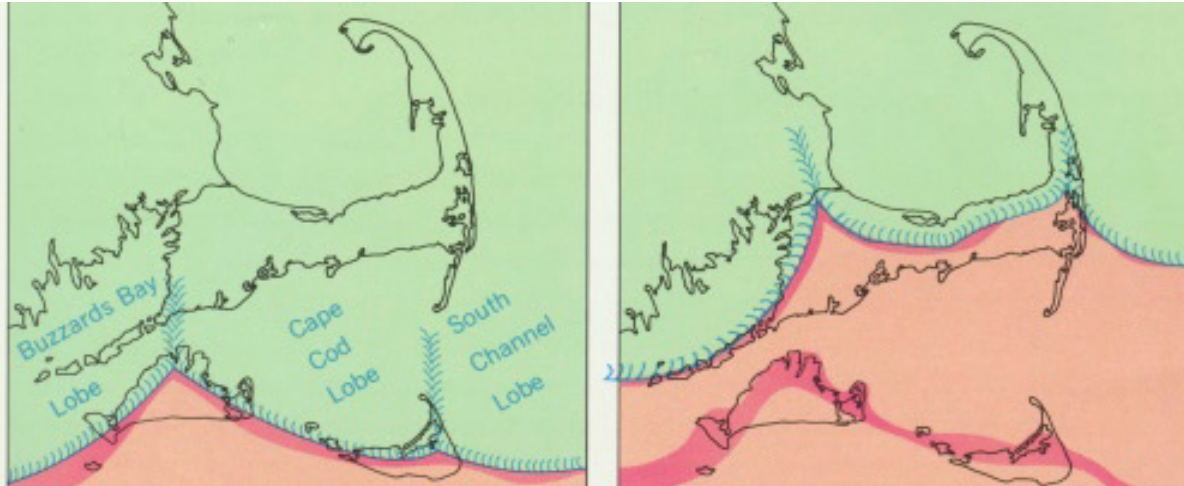
Gail is grateful for the gift of living in this extraordinary place. She wants people of all ages to find pleasure and peace in the beauty of the Bass River Estuary. As a retired educator she is committed to educate the public about the treasure in their midst. She wants everyone to understand the fragility of this complex ecosystem. Through Friends of Bass River, Gail has been working with the dynamic FOBR Team to restore and preserve the longest estuary on Cape Cod.

Gail's focus has been in developing curriculum with the Dennis Yarmouth School District to give local students an understanding the science at work in the estuary; to recognize the impact of nature and man upon the estuary; and how to problem solve solutions, beneficial to people and the environment. Her dream is to grow Friends of Bass River to provide field experiences for young people through all of their senses, not merely through a textbook.

# The settlement of Great Bass Pond (Follins Pond)

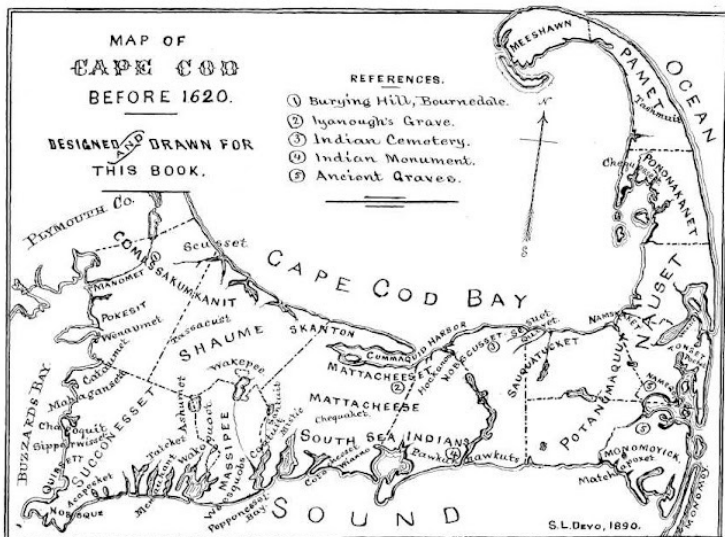
Todd Morgan Kelley

Since Cape Cod's glacial beginnings, our precious groundwater has been draining out from the uplands to the sea shaping the landscape. During glaciation sea level was over 300 feet lower than today with ecosystems evolving out across the exposed continental shelf. The lowlands being wetlands in present day Nantucket Sound and Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard being the high ground of another moraine. Through the millennia, from continued ice melt in the north, the Atlantic breached the breakwater of Georges Bank at the continental slope. The Islands became cut off as separate highlands and the southern shore of Cape Cod from Falmouth to Chatham would have its watershed streams pushed back by the advance of intermingling tidal flow.



*The Laurentide Ice Sheet approximately 23,000 years ago. The terminal moraine formed the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. (Dark Pink, left) The moraine left by the Cape Cod Bay Lobe, spanning from Sagamore to Dennis, also shown, was formed by the glaciers retreat. Courtesy of USGS*

Primary watersheds like Bass River attracted First People following wildlife migrations through riparian corridors and for the abundant stones available locally to shape their implements and tools. As sea level rise slowed salt marsh estuaries developed and southeastern Massachusetts including Cape Cod and the Islands became well settled with Indigenous populations. The People lived lightly moving about according to the seasons, utilizing the gifts of nature's resources and never imagining living beyond their means. Culture evolved and expressed itself through pottery, clothing, dialect and social decorum. By the time of the historic period 150 generations of customs and insights were being exchanged directly through great Sagamores like Mashantampaine of NobsCUSset (East Dennis) to early settler families in the upper Bass River area.



The firstcomers to Yarmouth (Dennis) in the early seventeenth century were allotted grants to the best land along Cape Cod Bay for farming. However, for William Nickerson and Francis Baker, they were left with land along Great Bass Pond (Follins Pond) that was not so desirable to farm. William Nickerson settled in 1640 at Weir (Crab) Creek and Great Bass Pond along present-day North Dennis Road to Satucket Road. Francis Baker purchased the upland of the north shore of Great Bass Pond in 1641 but likely did not initially settle on the land and stayed with his wife Isabel Twining's parents in Yarmouth. Nickerson brought his whole family with him from England as a nonconformist with a determination to practice religion of his own understanding. He stirred some turmoil in Yarmouth, as well as his own dissatisfaction, so by 1656 he made inroads into the frontier land of Monomoyick Country (Chatham)

but retained ownership of his Yarmouth property until 1677. Eldest son Nicholas decided to stay in Yarmouth and settled on land in present day South Dennis (Nickerson Cove). By this time David O’Gillior (the Irishman) and Jane Powell (Wales) were married on Cape Cod and settled along the north shore of Kelley’s Bay. Shortly after their settlement Francis Baker established his permanent homestead along Great Bass Pond.



Site of the first Quaker Meeting House

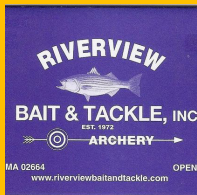
So it is that the north shore of Follins Pond from Crab Creek through the narrows into Kelley’s Bay was settled by William Nickerson, a nonconformist of his own making; Francis Baker, who was not in full accord with the Puritan notions of the time; and David O’Kelia the Irishman who became a freeman to



Quaker Beach – Follins Pond

raise his family. Isabel Twining Baker and Jane Powell O’Killia (as the name progressed) were the nursing mothers of Yarmouth Quaker Meeting. The first meeting house was built along Queen Anne Road (Mayfair Road, Dennis) in 1714 posthumous to its founding mothers and fathers. Quaker Beach north of the narrows in Follins Pond gets its name from such.

**Thank you to our Recent Corporate Donors**



Historian, storyteller & 12<sup>th</sup> Generation Cape Codder, Todd Kelley tours the Upper Bass River Restoration area with Rick Bishop & Bob Churchill.

**If you own a business on Cape Cod  
your success depends on the health of the river  
Please consider a tax-deductible donation to  
Friends of Bass River  
All funds donated go directly to education,  
conservation & water testing.**

FOBR Board of Directors

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Educate, Collaborate, Preserve

**FOBR is adding a new location in Weir Creek, West Dennis to our 2022 Water Testing Program. This will allow us to compare historical data from Site BR-12 of the MEP Report**



Figure B-1 Town of Yarmouth / Dennis Water Quality Monitoring Program. Estuarine water quality monitoring stations operated by the Town of Yarmouth Natural Resources Department/staff from the Dennis Water District (SMAST staff)

**Each testing site costs between \$1200-1500 per year. Please consider becoming a test site sponsor.  
THANK YOU!**