Cultural Heritage and Sustainability on Cape Cod

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People and Places on the Outer Cape:
A Landscape Character Study

University of Massachusetts Amherst
Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning
Department of History

National Park Service
Cape Cod National Seashore
Olossed Center for Landscape Preservation
Northeast Regional Ethnography Program
Figure 12: Cape Cod population change, 1950-1990. (Source: Thomas A. Stone, *Losing Cape Cod: Landscape Change over 40 Years*, Woods Hole Research Center, 1991.)
PART IV
Conclusions and Challenges, Retaining the Landscape Character of the Seashore

Figure 166: House, Truro, MA, 2003. (Photo: UMass)
Conservation Scenario

What if a broad coalition of groups worked together to conserve more land in an effort to protect significant water, habitat, and cultural resources for future growth and management?

Key Assumptions:

• Conservation Criteria
  • Well Sites
  • Wetlands
  • Habitat for Flora and Fauna
  • Connectivity
• Encourage Environmental Awareness through Interpretive Education
• Improve Trail Corridor Network

Statistics:

• 148 Parcels
• 32% of Developable Land
• 33% of the Outer Cape
• 9,130 Acres

Existing

Interpretive Center
Coastal Buffer
Wetlands
Wetlands
Developments
Developable

Scenario

Interpretive Center
Coastal Buffer
Wetlands
Wetlands
Conservation

University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Department of Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning
Cape Conversations
an on-going dialogue about the special places on Cape Cod

A collaborative effort of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Departments of History and Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, the National Park Service Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, the Northeast Regional Ethnography Program, and Cape Cod National Seashore.
“Thousands of towns in our country are so alike that someone set down from the air, blindfolded, would not know his whereabouts, not one town from another. A person so set down in the back lands of Provincetown can at once exclaim, ‘This must be Cape Cod.’ ”

Mrs. Hazel Hawthorne Werner
Provincetown, 1960
“Harvesting Cranberries on Cape Cod,” postcard
Cranberry Workers. Courtesy University of Massachusetts Experimental Station
Clam Diggers, Provincetown. Postcard, Courtesy Cape Cod National Seashore
Trap Fishermen, from left to right Joaquine “Joe King” Noons, Antone “Caruso” Silva and Frank “Alley” Rose, c. 1940. Courtesy Truro Historical Society
Spreading Fish, Hilliard’s Wharf, Provincetown.
Courtesy Cape Cod National Seashore
“We believe that it is not only the seashore and the dunes and the waves that contribute to something that Cape Cod means to the American people. We believe that an unspoiled little cape town, its little old white Cape Cod cottages, its neatness, its order, its white churches, meeting house, we believe that the charm of a cape town as a unit contributes a great deal to the heritages that we are trying to preserve for future generations.”

Robert McNeece
Chatham, 1959
Wellfleet and Uncle Tim’s Bridge by Carey E. Melville, May 1954
Courtesy Wellfleet Times 2, Wellfleet Historical Society
Main Street Crowds by Carey E. Melville, July 4, 1956
Courtesy Wellfleet Times 2, Wellfleet Historical Society
Wellfleet Post Office, 2003
Houses near Mayo Beach, Wellfleet, 2003
“We cannot advocate ‘preservation’ in a vacuum. We hope to keep the Cape largely the way it is in order that the people who live there now can continue to enjoy it and so that other Americans, in dire need of the natural grandeur of the clean, open spaces, will find an outlet for their crowded, grimy, urban lives. ‘Recreation’ merely enables people to share the park’s refreshing beauty. This dedication to the spiritual replenishment of modern man is the essence of the whole concept of a park on the Cape.”

U.S. Senator Leverett Saltonstall, 1960
Artists on the pier, Provincetown, c. 1950.
Courtesy Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum
Bicyclists in Wellfleet, June 2003
Camping at Race Point, Provincetown, June 2003
“Did you ever stop to think just what Cape Cod was? Old Cape Cod was the product of our fine Cape Cod people – it was their work, their architecture, their farms, that created the Cape Cod we really wanted to preserve.

Now what is the National Park Service actually going to do to the best of what remains of the old Cape Cod? It promises that no more houses will be built…it in effect guarantees that all these remaining open spaces will soon be overgrown by scrubby woods.

Nature will take over. Within 20 years the area of the Cape Cod National Seashore, except for the beaches, dunes and marshes will be a second-growth wilderness of oak and scrub pine, or poison ivy and briars.”

Quincy A. Shaw, Eastham, 1959
House markers, Eastham, 2003
“You can turn the lower cape into a summer recreation and amusement area for a million people, but you cannot, at the same time, conserve its natural charm. This can be conserved, however, if emphasis is put upon the conserving of the way of life of the people living in this area, and also on the conserving of the flora and fauna which have been put there by nature.

For 300 years the flora and fauna and the people have gotten along with mutual understanding; so successfully that it is an outstanding characteristic which accounts, to a marked degree, for the charm of the area. This mutuality of understanding between man and nature can best be preserved by preserving both man’s way and nature’s way.”

Joshua Nickerson, Orleans, 1960
Nature In Balance
The Cape Cod National Seashore’s First Fifty Years

A collaboration of the Cape Cod Times and WCAI, the Cape and Islands NPR Station
TEMPERATURES AT CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE

The average temperature on Cape Cod was 1.7 degrees warmer this decade than it was for 1961 through 1990.

SOURCE: Rocky Mountain Climate Organization and National Resources Defense Council report using data from National Climatic Data Center
Hurricane Irene, 2011
Beach erosion, Truro
Cape Cod
Flooding Potential
from rising ocean waters

- below 1.5 meters
- 1.5 - 3.5 meters
- above 3.5 meters
Areas Vulnerable to Climate Change Impacts

On July 21, 2010, a consensus-based expert elicitation was conducted to identify locations on Cape Cod that are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise (SLR) and other climate change impacts. "Vulnerability" is based on elevation, erosion, and exposure to storm surge and SLR. In most cases, these areas (indicated in green) overlap the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map risk areas (indicated in blue). The numbers correspond to the numbers in the accompanying index. Please refer to the index for descriptions of each numbered location. Carson Poe (carson.poe@dot.gov or 617-464-2795) or Gina Flosa (gina.flosa@dot.gov or 617-464-3455) can be contacted with any questions.

- **Vulnerable Areas Identified at Expert Elicitation**
- **FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map risk areas**
- Cape Cod Town Boundaries
SUSTAINABLE CAPE COD