

Aquidneck Land Trust

Annual Report | Fiscal Year 2014

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR | 2014



Dear Aquidneck Land Trust friends,

We are on the move. There are 4,500 acres of priority open space on the island that still need protection, from forests to watersheds to farmland. So over the past year and a half, ALT has amped up its efforts to surge into its 25th anniversary year and protect as much of that open space as possible before it's developed. It has secured conservation easements on 2,447 acres, is nearing the finish line on protecting several other key properties, has targeted its strategic planning and has partnered with other local non-profit organizations like Norman Bird Sanctuary and newportFILM to spread awareness of their shared core missions. ALT also just completed the much-anticipated conservation of the St. Mary's Church property in Portsmouth - this pristine farmland off East Main Road could have been a housing development, but now it will forever remain lovely bucolic fields. We are so grateful for that.

It feels like it's just the beginning for an organization that has been protecting our island's natural beauty for 25 years. But as much as ALT has done, and as much momentum as it has, its work is not complete. It might not ever be complete, so it has a big job to do. Can we ever have too much open space? Too many trees and hiking trails? Too many farms? Too many ponds, and streams flowing to our beaches? Too many parks for our kids to play in?

ALT doesn't think so.

It has had an amazing year. As board chair, I'm so proud of all this organization has accomplished, and am thrilled at the new adventures that lie ahead. But we can't do it alone. Won't you come with us?

Thank you.

Annie Sherman Luke, Board of Trustees, Chair

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A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear ALT Friends and Supporters,

The African proverb that "It takes a village" directly relates to the raising of a child by an entire community. In this, our 25th Anniversary year, I think it is appropriate to liken the progress of ALT to the raising of a child. Since its conception with one piece of paper in 1990, it has enjoyed a level of success not one of us could have imagined. Of course this success was in part a product of our great leadership over the years. However, without the gradual deepening and continuing community support of individuals, foundations, and municipalities, those great leaders would have certainly failed. It took a village – the community of Aquidneck Island – to raise this organization to where it is today.

As we enter this milestone year, we naturally look at the past, the present and the future of ALT and our island. ALT has coincidentally just crossed the threshold of 2,500 conserved areas. While this is a fantastic achievement, there is still a lot of conservation work to be done. If we are to clean up our island rivers, brooks and coastal beaches, protect arable farmland and the viability of farming, ensure that kids have sufficient recreational lands in all neighborhoods to play on, 100 acres of conserved land per year is simply not sufficient. The land will already have been bulldozed and paved. As we say metaphorically in our recent skydiving video, "Where do you want to land? It is your choice".

In the present, we look to developing a strategic, comprehensive and accelerated land acquisition program called CONSERVE AQUIDNECK NOW ("CAN"). We look to shift our strategy away from parcel-by-parcel acquisition and start looking at whole landscapes: the farms, the watersheds, the parks. We need to look at funding the protection of whole swaths of farm land and complete riparian buffers down the entire length of the island's rivers and brooks. And we need to do it all over the next 7-10 years. Once again, as in years past, we will need our community to help us. This undertaking will be one that will require energy, hard work, and funding. Any and all financial support you can provide brings us a little closer to achieving our goal. We need help from our village.



Front row: Barbara Odegaard, Alex Chuman, Maggie Kane, Jessica Pohl Back row: Diana Britton, Chuck Allott, David Thalmann

Looking to the future, we will transition away from land conservation efforts and focus on land stewardship, community incubator farming, green infrastructure projects, farm and food education, and solving food equity issues. This will be ALT's new mission, but the heart of this deserving child will continue to beat strong on Aquidneck Island!

Sincerely,

Charles B. Allott, Executive Director

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OCTOBER 2013

- Announced a new annual award program entitled "The Environmental Leadership Award", which provides \$1,000 to one Aquidneck Island high school senior who has demonstrated the most outstanding commitment to land conservation, open space, clean water, or environmentalism.
- As part of our Conservation Speaker Series, ALT presented two programs this month. First, Dick Lynn, a local artist and environmental advocate, displayed and discussed his interactive sculpture pertaining to fracking for natural gas in Oakland Forest & Meadow Preserve. Second, a panel discussion was held at Sweet Berry Farm on "The Importance of Local Food", featuring the viewpoints of a local chef, farmer, grocer, nutritionist, and a Co-Executive Director of Farm Fresh Rhode Island.

NOVEMBER 2013

- Hosted ALT's 6th Annual Race for Open Space on the Sakonnet Greenway Trail!
- As part of ALT's Conservation Speaker Series, collaborated with newportFILM and other local organizations to present a free screening and discussion of "Trashed", an environmental documentary with Jeremy Irons exploring the threat our civilization's waste poses to our planet's life support systems.

DECEMBER 2013

- As part of ALT's Outreach Program, Executive Director Charles Allott and Stewardship Director Sophia DeMaio gave presentations at local high schools on local watersheds. Using a URI model, this fun and interactive approach educated students on how ALT protects lands that buffer our drinking water supplies.
- Development Director Jessica Pohl spoke on behalf of ALT at a Green Drinks, a combination fundraising/ awareness event, at Green Envy, a local eco-boutique.

JANUARY 2014

• ALT received a bequest from the late Marcella Clark McCormack of Newport in the amount of \$2.8 million for purposes of conservation stewardship or land acquisition, benefiting Aquidneck Islanders for generations to come.

FEBRUARY 2014

- Conducted ALT's 24th Annual Meeting to a sold-out crowd at the Atlantic Beach Club in Middletown.
- Received the donation of a conservation easement from the Reposa family on 4.25+/- acres of forested wetland, providing a wildlife habitat corridor between Swan Farm to the north and wetlands south of Old Mill Lane.
- Submitted a renewal application for Accreditation to the national Land Trust Alliance. The initial accreditation granted in 2009, the first given to any Rhode Island land trust, was for a period of five years. This accreditation is a seal of distinction, ensuring that the land trust meets national quality standards, upholds the public trust, and guarantees the conservation efforts are permanent.

MARCH 2014

• Acquired a conservation easement from the Faria family on a 10.53+/- acre parcel of prime arable farm land, directly adjacent to the Sisson Pond, within the Sisson Pond watershed and strategically located within ALT's Center Island Greenway.

APRIL 2014

• As part of the ALT Conservation Speaker Series, began a partnership with newportFILM as the presenting sponsor of the "Green Screen Series", a series of films throughout the year focused on our planet and its health.

MAY 2014

- As part of ALT's Land Matters Walk & Talk Series, herbalist Jessyloo Rodrigues and ALT Stewardship Committee member Daryl Gardella led an "Herb Walk" through Miantonomi Park in Newport, identifying the many edible and medicinal herbs that grow there.
- Awarded 15 grants, totaling \$7,000, to local conservation projects through ALT's Merritt Neighborhood Fund. This year's awards included grants to expand community gardens that provide food to local shelters, to create a school community garden, and to plant and maintain trees and flowers across the island.
- Offered a Conservation Circle Trolley Tour of ALT conserved properties.



AQUIDNECK LAND TRUST MILESTONES | FISCAL YEAR 2014

- Partnered with Clean Ocean Access and The Atlantic Cup for a shoreline cleanup and sailing races at Fort Adams State Park.
- Partnered with newportFILM and The Atlantic Cup for a film screening and a "meet and greet" and tour of boats with the Atlantic Cup skippers.

JUNE 2014

- Presented the 2014 Environmental Leadership Award to Riley Greene of the "Met School" for his exceptional commitment to sustainable environmental practices, exhibited by his internship at local farms, creation of composting projects, and his enrollment in URI's Master Gardner Program.
- Hosted the Annual Landowner Appreciation Party for landowners of ALT conserved lands at Newport Vineyards.
- Presented renowned local photographer Chris Hunter's interactive lecture on landscape photography at King Park in Newport as part of ALT's Speaker Series.

JULY 2014

- Hosted our 12th Annual Golf Tournament at Newport National Golf Club.
- Hosted "Fiesta Verde 2014: Hoedown!" at Sweet Berry Farm in Middletown.

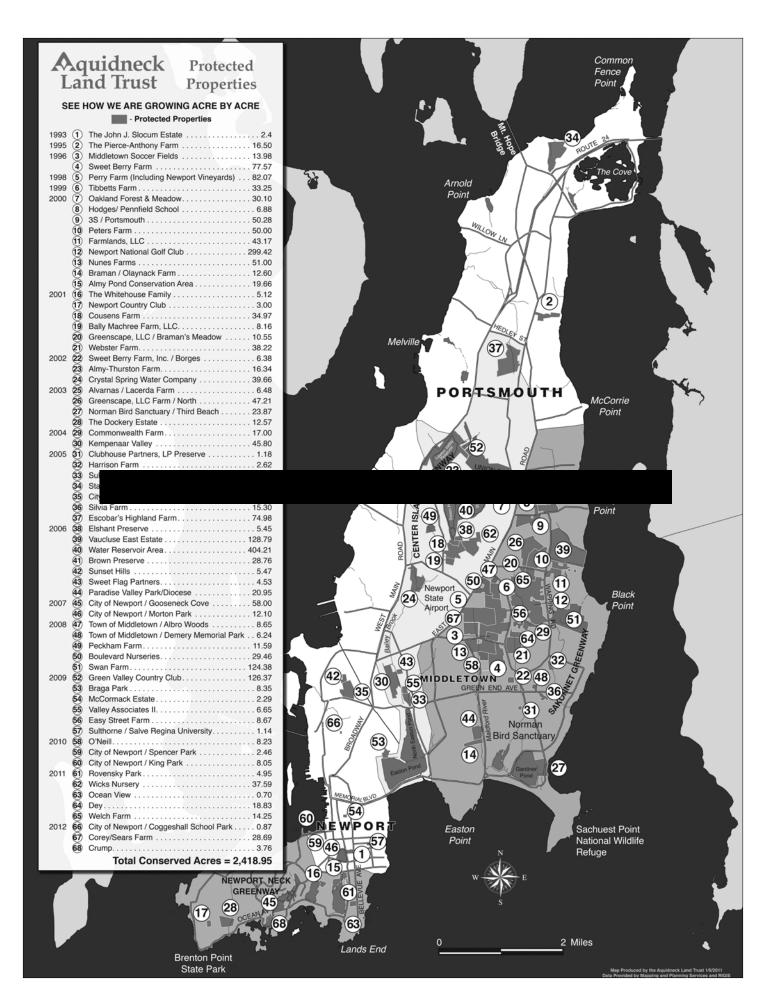
AUGUST 2014

- Collaborated with newportFILM to present "Emptying the Skies", a powerful documentary chronicling the rampant poaching of migratory songbirds in southern Europe and the efforts against this practice.
- Offered a Conservation Circle Trolley Tour of ALT conserved properties.

SEPTEMBER 2014

- Attended the National Land Trust Alliance Rally in Providence, during which ALT hosted a very successful local field trip entitled "The Heart of Aquidneck Island".
- As part of ALT's Walk & Talk Series, Salve Regina University professor and ALT Board member Jim Chace and his students led a demonstration on Bird Banding of migratory bird species on Bailey Brook in Middletown.
- Collaborated with newportFILM to present the documentary "Mission Blue", a wake-up call by legendary oceanographer Sylvia Earle to save the world's seas.
- ALT proudly welcomed Alex Chuman as its new Stewardship Director! Alex holds an undergraduate degree from Brown University in Environmental Science as well as a master's of Environmental Management from Duke University.





LANDOWNER PARTNERS | 2014

ounded in 1990, the Land Trust's first conservation easement was placed on the historic Slocum estate on Bellevue Avenue. Since that time the Land trust has conserved over 2,500 acres with many landowners. We gratefully thank these very special individuals, families, businesses, neighborhood associations, municipalities, and other government agencies who have partnered with us to preserve and steward their land in perpetuity. Their vision for the future, and appreciation of the past, leave a legacy for all to enjoy.

Anonymous

Anonymous

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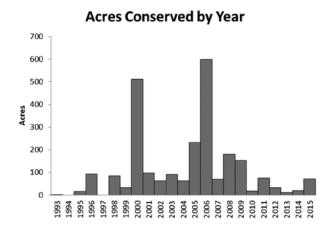
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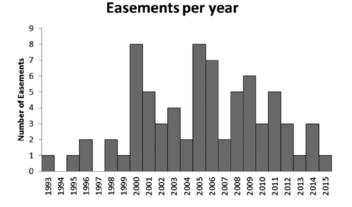


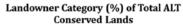
AQUIDNECK LAND TRUST BY THE NUMBERS

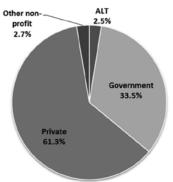
ALT Conservation Breakdown		
Total Easements	73	
Total Conserved Acreage	2520.6	
Total Acres Owned in Fee	63.1	
Parks Protected	13	
Golf Courses Protected	2	
Public Access Properties (Full, Limited),	33	
including SGT		
Number of Projects with Farmland	31	
Acres of Farmland Parcels Protected	1,245	
Acres of USDA Prime Farm Soils Protected	1407	
Acres of Recreational Land Protected	433	
Number of Newport Estates	6	
Properties with Coastal Frontage	6	
Miles of Public Trail Maintained	11	

Aquidneck Island (AI) Conservation Information		
Total Area (Acres)	24,465	
Total Land Conserved (Acres)	~5,100	
Open Space (OS) on Island (Acres)	~13,600	
Population	~60,000	
Total Acreage of Recreational OS Parcels	1,854	
Total Acreage of Parcels with Farmland	4,354	
Drinking Water Supply Reservoirs on Al	7	

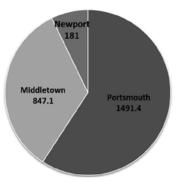


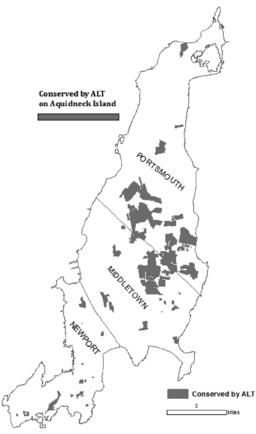




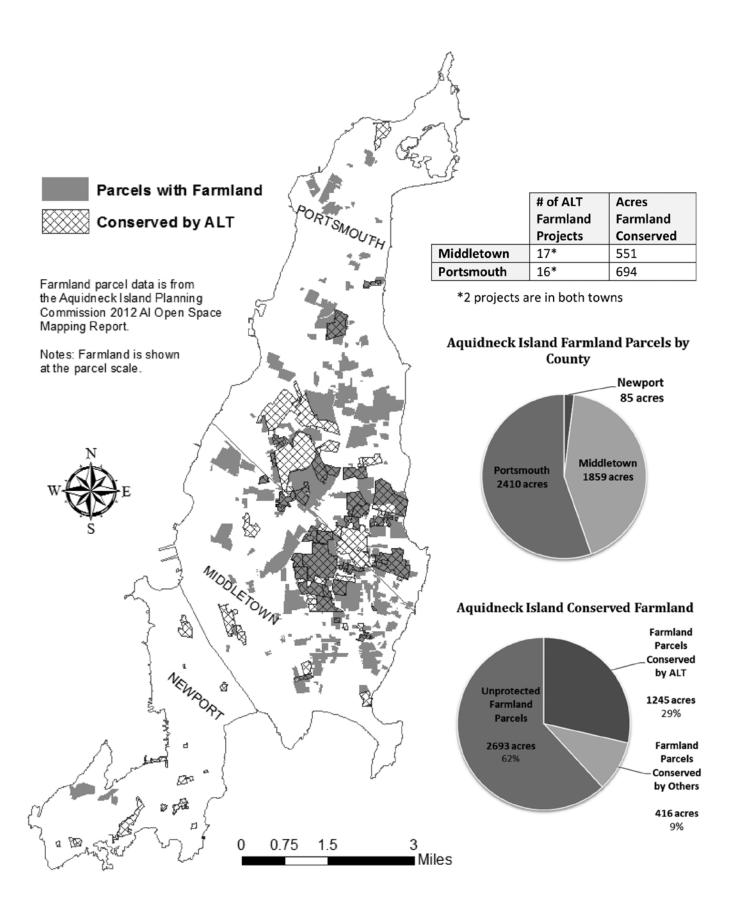


Easement Acres by County

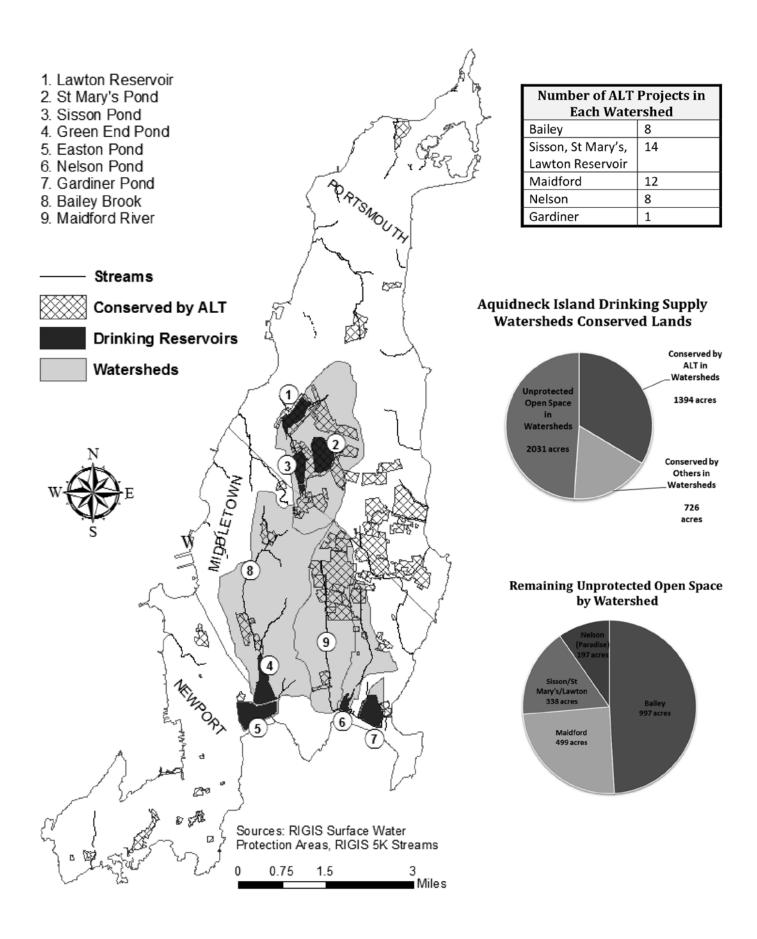




AQUIDNECK LAND TRUST FARMLAND CONSERVATION



AQUIDNECK LAND TRUST WATERSHED CONSERVATION





























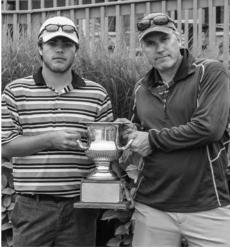














































AQUIDNECK LAND TRUST FINANCIAL SUMMARY (UNAUDITED)

For the Twelve Months Ended September 30,2014

CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS:

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PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE	¢ 170,000
Grant	\$ 170,000 139,686
Donations and Appeals Marsharchin Duca	71,510
Membership Dues	93,551
Special Events, net of direct benefit costs Investment income	270,248
Subtotal	\$ 744,995
Subtotal	\$ 744,553
Net Assets released from restrictions:	
Satisfaction of program restrictions	<u>\$ 953,891</u>
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE	<u>\$ 1,698,886</u>
EXPENSES	
Program Services:	
Land Acquisition	\$ 93,591
Stewardship	\$ 95,181
Conservation Easements	756,600
Membership and Education	123,873
Total Program Services	\$ 1,069,245
-	
Support Services:	
Management and General Operations	\$ 261,925
Fundraising	115,235
Total Support Services	<u>\$ 377,160</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$ 1,446,406</u>
TOTAL CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	<u>\$ 252,481</u>
CHANGES IN TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS:	
Investment income	\$ 260.650
Unappropriated earnings on permanently restricted net assets	68,716
Contributions of conservation easements	123,000
Grants	290,750
Donations and appeals	7,874
Net assets released from restrictions	(953,891)
Total changes in temporarily restricted net assets	\$ (202,901)
TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$ 49,580
NET ASSETS, beginning of the fiscal year	<u>\$ 10,280,110</u>
NET ASSETS, end of the fiscal year	\$ 10,329,690
Land Preservation Fund	\$ 3,541,565
Merritt Neighborhood Endowment Fund	88,899
Legal Defense Fund	421,648
Stewardship Endowment Fund	5,626,764
General Operating Fund	650,814
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 10,329,690

If you would like a copy of the Aquidneck Land Trust's Audited Financial Statements for the twelve months ended September 30, 2013, prepared by Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co., Ltd. or information about the ways you can support the Aquidneck Land Trust, please contact David A. Thalmann, Director of Finance & Administration at (401) 849-2799 x 17 or email dthalmann@ailt.org.



PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT | FISCAL YEAR 2014

he Board of Trustees is deeply grateful to the hundreds of individuals, families, businesses, organizations, foundations, government entities, and landowners who generously support our work each year. The Aquidneck Land Trust strives to offer creative, flexible, respectful and convenient methods to enlist lasting philanthropic support. Membership dues, targeted appeals and campaigns, specials events, planned gifts and bequests, in-kind goods and services, and donations of land and conservation easements all enable those who treasure Aquidneck Island to participate in the work of ALT. Our heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to the Aquidneck Land Trust during this fiscal year, which concluded on **September 30, 2014**.

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By remembering ALT in their wills or other planned gift vehicles, members of the Green Island Society create living legacies that demonstrate their love of and concern for the future of Aquidneck Island.

If you are interested in a planned gift benefiting ALT, we would be honored to work with you and your advisors to carry out your wishes. For more information, contact ALT's Development Director, Jessica Pohl, at 401-849-2799 ext. 18.

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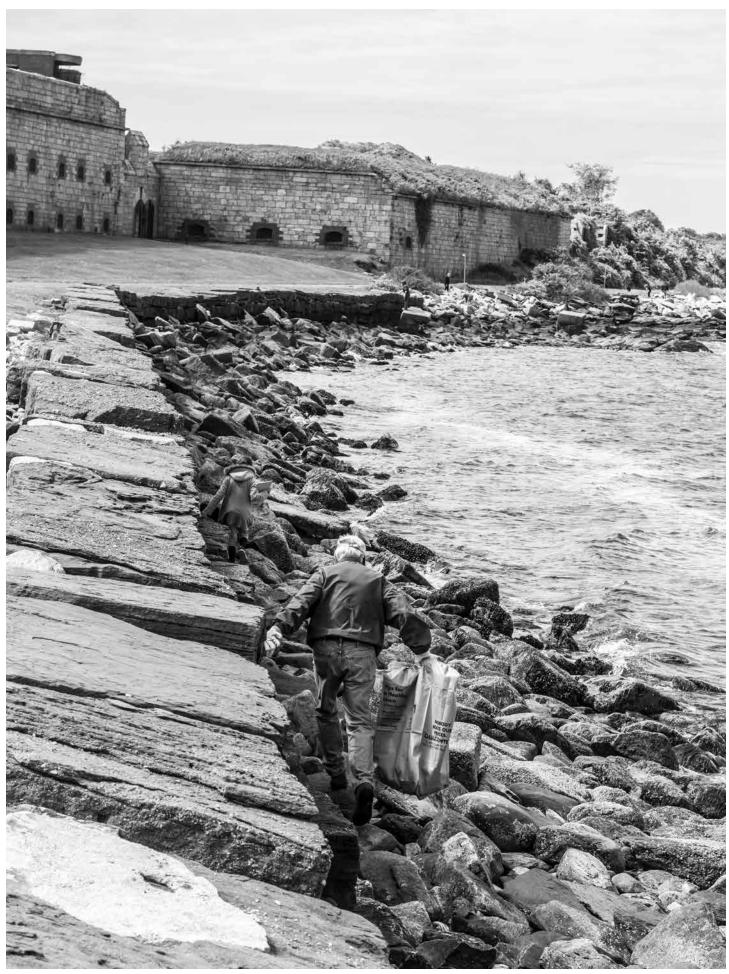
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Aquidneck Land Trust

OUR MISSION

"Preserving the Island's open spaces and natural character for the lasting benefit of our community."

OUR VALUES

The Aquidneck Land Trust believes that we must take a holistic approach to land conservation if we are to help our island community achieve a sustainable future. Therefore, ALT works to protect a number of natural resource types that we depend upon as a species (wildlife habitat, agricultural land, water resource areas, outdoor recreational space, scenic vistas, etc.). In this work, ALT is guided by its values: Integrity; Environmental Consciousness;

Embracing Community as a Partner; Respect and Stewardship of the Land; and Volunteerism.

ALT was founded as a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization in 1990.

The Aquidneck Land Trust preserves the Island's open spaces and natural character for the lasting benefit of our community.