

SANDY NECK TRACKS

The Sandy Neck Beach Newsletter Spring 2011

New Bathhouse Up and Running

After over 5 years of planning, obtaining permits, overcoming obstacles, and actual construction, the new Sandy Neck bathhouse is officially open. On June 8th, a ceremony was held to celebrate its completion and acknowledge the hard work of the many individuals who made it possible. Following speeches by Assistant Town Manager, Tom Lynch, Park Manager, Nina Coleman, and Sandy Neck Board Chairman, Rich French, the ribbon was cut and spectators toured the grounds while enjoying ice cream courtesy of Polar Cave and free hot dogs from Porky's.



Nina Coleman and Rich French cut the ribbon officially opening the Bathhouse

New and improved amenities include a heated outdoor shower, a picnic and play area, and a new walkway from the Bathhouse to the Marsh Trail. The parking lot has also been re-



Bathhouse Opening Day

paved and additional parking added. Sandy Neck is very proud of the new building and confident it will be enjoyed for years to come.

MBBA and Boy Scouts Team Up to Rebuild Dune and Save Parking Lot

This spring, Mass. Beach Buggy Association and Boy Scout Troops 52, 54 and 80 worked with Sandy Neck Staff and Barnstable Division of Public Works to rebuild the dune in front of the public parking lot. Winter storms eroded a significant amount of the dune in front of the parking lot and threatened to wash the lot away. Bathhouse construction offered a unique opportunity to relocate excavated sand to the front of the parking lot increasing the lot's protection from eroding Nor'easters. MBBA and the Scouts worked for several hours installing dune fencing to contain the material. Once in place, a front end loader dumped sand into the areas and dune grass was planted. Sandy Neck staff finished the projects by installing additional dune fencing that will naturally capture sand during the summer months. Thank you Troops 52, 54, and 80 and MBBA!



Nearly completed dune restoration in front of parking lot. The restored dune will act to buffer the parking lot from winter storms.

Volunteers and Visitors Thank You!

Moving into the summer season Sandy Neck would like to thank all of the volunteers and visitors that go out of their way to help keep Sandy Neck safe, clean and preserved for future generations. By reporting concerns, volunteering time, or picking up trash, you have contributed immensely to preserving the integrity of this wonderful resource. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Piping Plovers Return to the Neck Right on Schedule

On March 19th Sandy Neck staff confirmed reports that piping plovers had returned. Plovers were spotted feeding on Bodfish Beach just west of the Barnstable/Sandwich line and at the Point. By April the majority of our piping plovers had arrived and were beginning to nest. By the end of June we had located over 40 nesting pairs, and chicks were beginning to fledge (fly).



Piping plover on the point March 19th



Every Spring and Summer Season: Terns Terns Terns

Every year, soon after plovers began to nest, state protected terns

arrive and began to stake out territory along the Point and the ORV corridor. If you are near their colony of nests or chicks, you will hear them collectively squawk as they fly into the air and begin to dive-bomb you, brushing your head with their feathers and depositing white stains on your shirt. This defense strategy is very effective against predators. Extreme high tide and storms are often their worst enemies washing away nests before they hatch.

Release the Turtles!

The Barnstable Diamondback Terrapin Headstart Program was undoubtedly successful this year and culminated in June with the release of 44 young diamondbacks over a 10 day period. After hatching in the fall each turtle was cared for over the winter by schools, libraries, and community based organizations throughout Barnstable and Sandwich. The goal of the program was simple - to increase the size of each hatchling and in doing so increase their chances of survival. Providing this "headstart" is significant because diamondback terrapin turtles are listed by the State of Massachusetts as threatened and therefore in need of aid to increase their population.

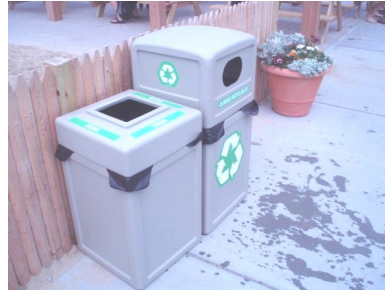


Kate Heaslip, Sandy Neck Turtle Biologist, prompts students to wave goodbye to a headstarted terrapin.

Releasing the turtles was bittersweet as hundreds of young people said goodbye to their reptile classmates. Students shared their experiences, read poems, and waved as the terrapins were placed one by one back in their natural environment, Sandy Neck's Great Marsh. Thank you, headstarters, for a job well done! Your turtle friends are on a grand adventure.

Recycling Catches On

Sandy Neck brought recycling to Sandy Neck in 2010 with the introduction of a large dumpster-sized mixed recycling container. While a great idea, the container was often filled with non-recyclable materials. This year, we are happy to say, garbage in the recycling container has been kept to a minimum.



In addition, several new smaller recycling containers have been added to further

reduce the amount of material entering the trash stream.

THE BATHHOUSE IN HOT WATER THANKS TO THE SUN

Sandy Neck is harnessing the power of the sun to heat water at the new bathhouse.

Three solar panels on the east side of the bathhouse effectively heat water in the



bathrooms, snack shack, and the popular outdoor shower reducing our carbon footprint and saving energy costs. Hurray – no more freezing cold showers.

Park Manager
Nina Coleman

Natural Resource Officer
Matt Gough

Town of Barnstable
Marine and Environmental
Affairs Division

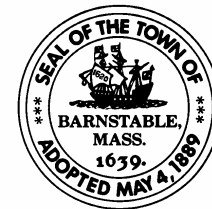
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For the latest Sandy Neck information
visit the Sandy Neck website at:

www.town.barnstable.ma.us

(Click on Sandy Neck Beach Park)



Sandy Neck TRACKS is written and compiled at the end of each season by Matt Gough unless otherwise noted.

All questions and comments are welcome.
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