Islands Supporters,

Consider us the "little Islands that could," or more accurately, the "little staff that could." It was an undeniably difficult year and challenges continue, but we persevered through the pandemic and can be proud of our accomplishments this year. Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard staff combined forces in 2021 and the connection made Mass Audubon’s work more effective and more impactful.

Josey led our Education Team with strength and commitment and worked to honor Indigenous communities, support Interns with disabilities, and hold us all up with her passion and kindness.

Liz D created school programs that kept students outside, engaged, and creative working on a special Charter School garden project, providing visitors with some needed summer explorations, and throwing a few amazing fun-raisers to celebrate our 50th Sanctuary year.

Ryan, Christina, Robin, and Beth gave preschoolers and summer campers wild adventures, normalcy, and care through some difficult and really fun days.

Liz C and Paul were the friendly faces welcoming visitors and our administrative engine inviting members and community to enjoy time in nature.

Phil and Phoenix cared for our animal ambassadors, staff, and visitors by creating home, hearth, trails, and beauty on every inch of the Sanctuary.

Sam did it all on Nantucket, encouraging students to lead on climate advocacy, eradicating phragmites at Lost Farm, and visioning a plan for our efforts on Nantucket.

Emma and Ben, our go-to caretakers, were always ready to help in times of need.

And, of course, our seasonal staff, volunteers, donors, and friends guide our work, advocate for us, and share nature with everyone every day.

These folks are Nature Heroes, essential workers, educators and committed people that make our community, our students, campers, and visitor’s year so bright. Wishing you and yours a New Year of nature, health and outdoor adventures.

Sincerely,

Suzan Bellincampi
Islands Director
December 2021
Over the course of 2021, Fern & Feather Preschool has been able to grow its program to reach more children and families from the Martha’s Vineyard community and develop a program that is more inclusive and welcoming to all. The 2020 school year supported 18 families, with 12 coming each day. In October, an additional teacher was hired to increase the class size to 18 students per day in January 2022. In addition to the increased capacity of our program, an Anti-Bias Education (ABE) was implemented into our curriculum. Our library was overhauled to include more images and voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Curriculum projects included: conversations about gender and the building of spaces in which everyone is allowed, Identity Posters, that children presented in front of their classmates and are now on display on the classroom walls, and the introduction of land acknowledgements before hikes.

Fern & Feather Preschool Turns Three

This year Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary was able to bring on several new staff. Phoenix joined Phil as our new Property Steward and Paul will help in the office as a Visitor Services Assistant part-time. Robin has joined Fern & Feather Preschool as our third full-time Lead Teacher.

Interested in joining our community? Head to our website for current job listings!

Growing Community

This year as part of Mass Audubon’s Youth Climate Leadership Program Sam Kefferstan, Nantucket Sanctuaries Director, worked with Nantucket High School’s Youth Climate Committee (YCC). Eager to raise awareness about climate change and expected impacts for Nantucket, they led the charge with a walkout during school hours to cap off Nantucket’s Climate Change Awareness month. Over 200 students were in attendance as members of the YCC delivered empowering speeches about the climate crisis encouraging members of the public to advocate for action. In her own words, YCC’s Sarah Swenson stated, ”pull the fire alarm, your house is on fire.”

Youth Led Climate Action
Felix Neck became a Mass Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary in December, 1969. Some 50 years later, the Felix Neck Forever fund was launched with a goal to help secure the future of the Sanctuary for the next 50 years and beyond.

Due to the pandemic, events were put on a brief pause. This summer we were able to begin our celebrations again. "Fifty Years (Take Two)" was launched with Sanctuary Supper: An Evening Eating for the Planet at Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary. It was a beautiful night with love for the planet and people filling the air. The moon rose, the stars twinkled, and joy filled the field as we celebrated the many ways that climate action can be delicious. With wild drinkables, made using foraged ingredients to the local, regeneratively grown meals handcrafted by Kyleen Keenan, it was the perfect reminder that taking action against the climate crisis ensures our health as well as our planet's.

The anniversary celebrations continued with the Sanctuary's first-ever Amity Shark Race. Hand-crafted wooden shark fins raced through Sengekontacket Pond vying for the coveted Amity Shark Trophy. It was an exciting yet quick race, with Shark #7 pulling ahead in the final moments and taking the win for Pyramid Property Management.

To close out the summer we brought back Foot It for Felix, a 5K run/walk through the beautiful expanse of the Sanctuary. With over 100 participants, our trails were filled with people of all ages running and walking as well as the encouraging cheers of volunteers.

Everyone completed the course to erupting applause and earned their well-deserved tree cookie medals. The final event, our 40th annual Fall Festival was themed Living with the Land to highlight the work Indigenous community members have been doing for thousands of years and continue today. Wampanoag Councilwoman, Kristina Hook, led gathering walks, hundreds of wreaths were made while young and old danced to the musical talents of the Flying Elbows. It was the perfect end to a year of celebrating the history of Felix Neck and excite us all for the future.
Every effort was made to accurately reflect each contributor. If you find an error in the list, please accept our sincere apology and contact the Development Office at 781-259-2123.

SUPPORTERS

Mass Audubon gratefully acknowledges the individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies whose generous financial contributions and pledges provided critical support for Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket conservation, education, and advocacy efforts between 2021 and 2022. We are pleased to recognize the leading contributors and express our gratitude to our more than 100,000 members.

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