

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE (CPC)
Chatham Community Preservation Act (CCPA)

Application Number: CPA-2017-20

Application Date: December 28, 2018

Project Title: Restoration Master Plan for Chatham Conservation Foundation, 0 Orleans Rd, 9K-3B-C3, Chatham, Ma.

Organization Name: Chatham Conservation Foundation

Organization Address: 540 Main Street, Chatham, MA 02633

Email: PatternsofNature@outlook.com

Website: <https://ChathamConservationFoundation.org>

Names of Governing Board, Trustees, Directors or Members:

Bob Lear, Carol Odell, Cathy Weston, Dave McNally, Edyth Tuxbury, Gary Toenniessen, Gerry Stahl, Jack Farrell, Jane Harris, Jeanne Branson, Nat Mason, Oonie Burley, Paul Chamberlin, Peter O'Neill, Rachel Barnes, Roy Meservey, Tim Willis, Tony Murphy

Federal Tax ID Number (If non-profit): 04-6047692

Submitter or Project Director: Eunice D. Burley, President

Contact Phone: (508) 801-3348

Relevant Town Committee (if applicable):

Amount Requested from CPA Funds: \$87,000

Project Description:

This CPC project restores what is perhaps the most historic site in Chatham in order to (a) clear invasive species and preserve valuable open space, (b) protect archeological and historical resources of Chatham and (c) protect and enhance the scenic quality of the entrance to Chatham from Pleasant Bay and Ryder's Cove.

As the Town website notes, "The arrival of English colonists began about 1656 when William Nickerson... made the first land purchase from Sachem Mattaquason of the Monomoyicks.... [He] ultimately owned [almost] all of what is now Chatham. In 1664 Nickerson settled his family on the west side of Ryder's Cove." The site of the original William Nickerson homestead is now owned by the Chatham Conservation Foundation (CCF). It adjoins the current site of the Caleb Nickerson House Museum, owned by the Nickerson Family Association (NFA). CCF and NFA are collaborating to discover and preserve the history of Chatham and to make it available to the public on these two adjoining properties. Unrelated to this project, CCF and NFA have recently unveiled public billboards commemorating the history of the Monomoyicks, CCF has restored and opened the historic Mayo House in the heart of the Chatham Village and NFA has relocated and maintained the historic Caleb Nickerson House as an historic museum.

Last summer, NFA applied for and received funding from CPC to undertake an archaeological excavation on the property owned by CCF at 0 Orleans Road, 9K-3B-C3. The excavation work will continue through the early fall of 2019. Several thousand historic artifacts have already been uncovered from the 1664 Nickerson founding colonial house in Chatham. The artifacts will be archived and the most significant will be publically displayed at multiple museums and other sites around Chatham after the dig is completed. This excavation has already proven to be a very significant archaeological site for New England history, far surpassing expectations. For the first time, the actual site of the founding homestead was definitively located and documented on this site. The archeologist is preparing a book on the findings. (See related CPC application from NFA.)

CCF requests funding to restore the area disturbed by this archaeological activity and the adjacent areas on this parcel which have been overrun by invasive vegetation. The project purpose is (A) to remove all invasive vegetation and replant with native vegetation to re-create a native habitat and historical landscape on the entire CCF parcel adjacent to the Caleb Nickerson house and encompassing the William Nickerson homestead archaeological site; (B) to restore the wetland on the southern boundary and its buffer zone to restore the habitat and values the area provides; and (C) to construct a pocket park with a walking path leading through the parcel to the area of the archeological dig which, due to flat topography and short length, will be available to many users (though not currently proposed to be technically ADA compliant). This restoration has the added benefit of creating a more aesthetic entrance to the Town of Chatham from the NE along Route 28.

Specific Objectives

Objective A. *Protect and manage open space and vegetation, including valuable trees, on private lands.* This objective supports Chatham HP37: Maintain as open space town property which was acquired for conservation and passive recreation and acquire additional property to preserve green, undeveloped land.

This CPC project will protect and manage the property owned by CCF at 0 Orleans Rd, 9K-3B-C3, Chatham, which was obtained for conservation, and restore it for passive recreation. The property consists of a northern front area adjacent to Route 28 near the NE entrance to Chatham and a southern back area that is the site of the William Nickerson 1664 homestead. The property is adjacent to the NFA property housing the Caleb Nickerson Museum. The entire front portion of the property is in excess of 95% overtaken with invasive species: porcelain berry, shrub honeysuckle and bittersweet. There is also a stand of Japanese knotweed on the adjoining Nickerson property, which will be restored as part of this project. These invasive plants choke out native vegetation that would normally colonize this area and would provide beneficial wildlife habitat. The back portion is an Adjacent Upland Resource Area (AURA) containing a peaceful cedar woodland extensively disturbed by the archaeological dig site. A wetlands area borders the property from the NFA property.

As detailed in Exhibit A: Detailed Restoration Plan, this CPC project will enhance the ecological integrity of the entire property. It will restore the native vegetation of the entire property, ensuring it provides its functions as defined in the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Chatham Wetland Protection Regulations, by managing invasive species within the AURA and restoring invasive species management areas with a site-appropriate native plant community. It will thereby improve existing wildlife habitat function and value within the property by managing invasive species that compete with species that provide native habitat to increase habitat diversity and restore appropriate native upland species within the area, which will increase cover, forage and breeding habitat for wildlife.

Objective B. *Protect the archeological and historical resources of Chatham.* This objective supports Chatham HP28: Work with owners of historic properties to obtain agreements or voluntary easements to ensure preservation of recognized historic resources.

This CPC project protects the site of the founding homestead of Chatham, the 1664 home of William Nickerson. It restores the surrounding landscape, removing invasive species.

This CPC project promotes passive recreation for a large user group by unifying the NFA and CCF properties and providing a walking path from the historic Caleb Nickerson House (1827) through restored native habitat leading to the historical archaeological excavation area of the William Nickerson House (1664). It provides for public access to the historic site. It establishes 4'-wide footpaths to accommodate future public access to the open space as a pocket park and to the historic site of the William Nickerson homestead. This will provide foot access from the parking area on the NFA property.

CCF and NFA will add historic markers to make visible the historic house site and related features.

Objective C. *Protect and enhance the traditional rural character and scenic qualities of roadways.* This objective supports Chatham HP: Maintain and reopen views on town properties where unmanaged vegetation has or threatens to obscure views; work with private property owners to promote similar efforts.

This CPC project enhances and beautifies the NE entrance to the Town and to this unique historical resource. It promotes a tranquil landscape reminiscent of how it might have appeared historically through:

1. Removal of invasive species that have taken over the area of the property along Route 28. The property will be replanted with a carefully selected landscape of native plants (see Attachment A: Detailed Restoration Plan). CCF will continue to monitor for invasives and to maintain the landscaping indefinitely with its own funds.
2. Restoration of vegetation disturbed by the archeological excavation to provide an inviting setting for the archeological site. It will, as needed, undertake follow-up planting of replanted areas to ensure success of the restoration of historic areas.
3. Restoration of the degraded adjacent wetland along the southern property boundary and its Buffer Zone areas - transitioning from wet to dry meadow to an upland shrub/tree habitat to provide screening to/from adjacent residential areas.

Which of the Following Goals of CPA does this project address?

- XXX The acquisition, creation and preservation of Open Space.
- XXX The acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of Historic Resources.
- The creation, preservation and support of Community Housing for individuals and families at 100% or below area median income.*
- XXX The acquisition, creation, rehabilitation and preservation of Recreational Resources.
- Rehabilitation, or restoration of such open space, historic buildings, or community housing that is acquired or created with CPA funds.*

How does this project impact Chatham's citizens and address a current need?

The citizens of the Town of Chatham, as well as those of the Cape Cod region, have a strong interest in the very rich history of our area. This project will provide public access in perpetuity to the unique historical resources including the NFA museum and its gardens, the archaeological area of excavation of the William Nickerson homestead, and the surrounding restored open space, with easy to navigate walking trails and with historical signage.

What is the estimated or target number of people this project will benefit/affect?

This CPC project will benefit thousands of residents and visitors to Chatham. It will integrate the NFA museum site with the new William Nickerson homestead archaeological area. It will provide a scenic pocket park with paths connecting these sites. It will offer signage and museum displays detailing the founding history of Chatham associated with the William Nickerson homestead. It will enhance the scenic quality of the restored property immediately adjacent to Route 28 at the NE entrance to Chatham between Pleasant Bay and Ryder's Cove. The archaeological site was already a popular tourist site this past summer, with its glimpse into the earliest colonial life in Chatham.

How will you measure the success of this project?

Success of the restoration of excavation area and adjacent open space areas will be measured by the viability of planted vegetation after three years. (The goal is to have 95-98% management of invasives and to have the native plant community successfully established.) CCF will also conduct a wildlife inventory at the end of the project. An additional goal is to have more people visiting the site to learn about its ecological and historical value.

Before-and-after pictures of open space areas will document improvement in the aesthetics of this historic area. Likewise pictures taken from Rt. 28 will show an improvement to the roadside landscape.

NFA will keep records of visitors to indicate the expected increase in the number of visits each year.

Projected Action Plan and Timeline, including anticipated completion date. List steps needed to complete the project?

Please see Attachment A: Detailed Restoration Plan.

Beginning in fall of 2019 in the area of the excavation, restoration will begin with management of re-sprouting invasive species using a selective, EPA approved herbicide treatment and hand removal, which will continue over the next three growing seasons. The entire area will then be seeded with a native Grass and Wildflower mix. In fall 2020, this area will be planted with a total of 79 native shrubs.

Restoration of shrubs and vines along the cleared area immediately adjacent to the excavation will also be managed, including in voids created by invasive vegetation removal. These voids will be planted with approximately 27 native shrubs as needed after 80% control of invasive species has been achieved.

Also in 2019, restoration of the adjacent highly invaded, northern portion of the parcel will be restored by removing invasive vegetation by first mowing the area. In late winter 2020, the entire area will be seeded with Grass and Wildflower Mix. A Wetland Mix will be used in the wetland resource area to revegetate the existing footpath. Shrubs and Trees along the northern boundary adjacent to residential areas will be planted in fall 2019 or 2020.

A walking trail with signage will be created throughout the parcel for access to the archaeological excavation area.

Monitoring will occur for three years following restoration to assure 95-98% management of invasives and to ensure natives have survived.

Please provide a full budget including the following information:

Total Amount of Project:

\$102,000. (CPC request: \$87,000.00). See attached Exhibit B: Cost Breakdown of Restoration, based on Exhibit A: Detailed Restoration Plan.

Other revenue sources including private/public/in-kind:

The CCF Board has authorized matching funds of **\$10,000** for this project. The NFA Board has authorized matching funds of **\$5,000** for this project.

As a core part of its mission, CCF will maintain and preserve the property and its vegetation after the CPC project is completed. Similarly, NFA will maintain access to its historical resources and will manage the display of artifacts from the William Nickerson homestead site.

Financial sustainability to secure project after the grant:

CCF maintains a budget for land management and trail maintenance, which will be adequate to cover annual costs of on-going maintenance after the grant. Also, prior to the grant, in 2019, restoration of the adjacent highly invaded, northern portion of the parcel will be restored by removing invasive vegetation by first mowing the area. In late winter 2020, the entire area will be seeded with Grass and Wildflower Mix. A Wetland Mix will be used in the wetland resource area to revegetate the existing footpath. This will prepare the property for the restoration efforts under this CPC project.

Annual cost/expenditures once the project is operational, if any?

On-going costs after this initial plan will be incurred by CCF. Mostly, CCF will be mowing the area every year for the first several years after this grant (which includes three years of maintenance) and then every other year, at a cost of approximately \$800 per year. Also, CCF would cover any necessary re-seeding or invasive treatment.

Annual cost to the Town once the project is operational, if any:

None.

Potential revenue from project on an annual basis, if any:

None. Access to the property and the archaeological site will be free and open to the public.

What entity will collect and control future revenue? N/A.

What is the basis for your budget? What are the sources of information you used?

Blue Flax Restoration Plan and Estimate of Costs (see Attachment A: Detailed Restoration Plan).

Are there any legal ramifications/impediments to this project? No. We are filing a Notice of Intent with the Chatham Conservation Commission.

Is the project compatible with the Town's Comprehensive Plan? Yes.

Cite specific sections if applicable:

This CPC project is particularly in support of Chatham's Comprehensive Plan for 3. Natural Resources. Specifically, it is compatible with Goals 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4, including NR 35, 36, 37, 38, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47. Also. see Specific Objectives section above, related to Chatham Historic Preservation goals HP 37, HP28, HP9.

Do you have the authorization of the property owner?

XXX Yes

No

Do you have a supporting letter from a Town Board, Commission, Committee?

XXX Yes

No

What is your assessment of the nature and level of community support for the project?

The history of Chatham is of extremely high interest to both residents and visitors. The archaeological site was already a popular tourist site this past summer, with its glimpse into the earliest colonial life in Chatham. Upon completion of this CPC project, both CCF and NFA will promote interest in the site through press coverage and museum displays. The site is likely to become one of the major tourist sites of Chatham, given its unique ties to early colonial life on Cape Cod.

Upload CPA Documents:

Exhibit A: Detailed Restoration Plan.pdf

Exhibit B: Cost Breakdown of Restoration.pdf

Exhibit C: NFA Letter of Support.pdf

Exhibit D: Historical Commission Letter of Support.pdf

I have mailed the 12 copies to the address listed below. *

Yes

XXX No

Attach supporting files using the Browse Button, or mail 12 paper copies to Alix Heilala, Finance Director, Town of Chatham, 549 Main Street, Chatham MA 02633.