

**TOWN OF HARWICH - COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**  
**2020 CPA PROJECT FUNDING REQUEST APPLICATION**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022**

Submission Date: October 30, 2020

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**Applicant:** Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT)

Town Committee, Board or Organization: Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT)

Legal Mailing Address: P.O. Box 101, South Harwich, MA 02661

Phone: 508-432-3997 Email Address: info@harwichconservationtrust.org

**Project Manager:** Michael Lach, Executive Director, Harwich Conservation Trust

Legal Mailing Address: P.O. Box 101, South Harwich, MA 02661

Phone: 508-432-3997 Email Address: mike@harwichconservationtrust.org

**Second Contact Person:** Tom Evans, President, Harwich Conservation Trust

Legal Mailing Address: P.O. Box 101, South Harwich, MA 02661

Phone: 508-432-5185 Email Address: thomas.m.evans@comcast.net

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

PROJECT TITLE: Harwich Natural Heritage Trail Project: Phase 1, ADA wheelchair accessible trail

PROJECT AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$150,000 from undesignated funds

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Harwich Natural Heritage Trail Project goal is to enhance the recreational and educational experience in Harwich by creating a wheelchair accessible trail loop off Bank Street at HCT's Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve, which is also the site of a HCT/Town ecological restoration partnership. Harwich residents and visitors will be able to enjoy passive recreational opportunities (walking, birdwatching, dog walking, photography, and more) in a scenic and ecologically restored destination between Harwich Center and downtown Harwich Port.

ESTIMATED START DATE: Sept. 2021

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE: June 2022

**Three years from the release of funds (July 2021) funds may be rescinded automatically; waivers may be sought.**

## CPA CATEGORY

### APPLICANTS PLEASE TAKE NOTE \*\*please check boxes for all that apply\*\*

**Open Space:** This application is for the “acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and/or preservation of open space”.

**Historic:** This application is for the “acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and/or restoration of historic resources”. Please provide the date on which the HDHC reviewed and endorsed this application.

**Community Housing:** This application is for the “acquisition, creation, preservation and/or support of community housing”.

**Recreation:** This application is for the “acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation and/or restoration of land for recreational use”.

### **Harwich Natural Heritage Trail Project Summary:**

The nonprofit Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT) asks the Town of Harwich Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting voters to consider this application for \$150,000 toward a wheelchair accessible trail loop as Phase 1 of the Harwich Natural Heritage Trail Project at HCT’s Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve on Bank Street (see Figure 1). HCT would be the project manager and seek trail design input from the Harwich Youth and Recreation Commission which has unanimously endorsed the project. HCT would also seek input from the Harwich Accessibility Rights Committee, which is currently short of enough members to convene. HCT will apply for Phase 2 funding of \$150,000 in October 2021 toward an approx. 300 foot boardwalk connector pedestrian trail to complete a southerly loop at the Preserve. The second phase location as shown in the map below would not be wheelchair accessible at this time owing to distance from the parking area.

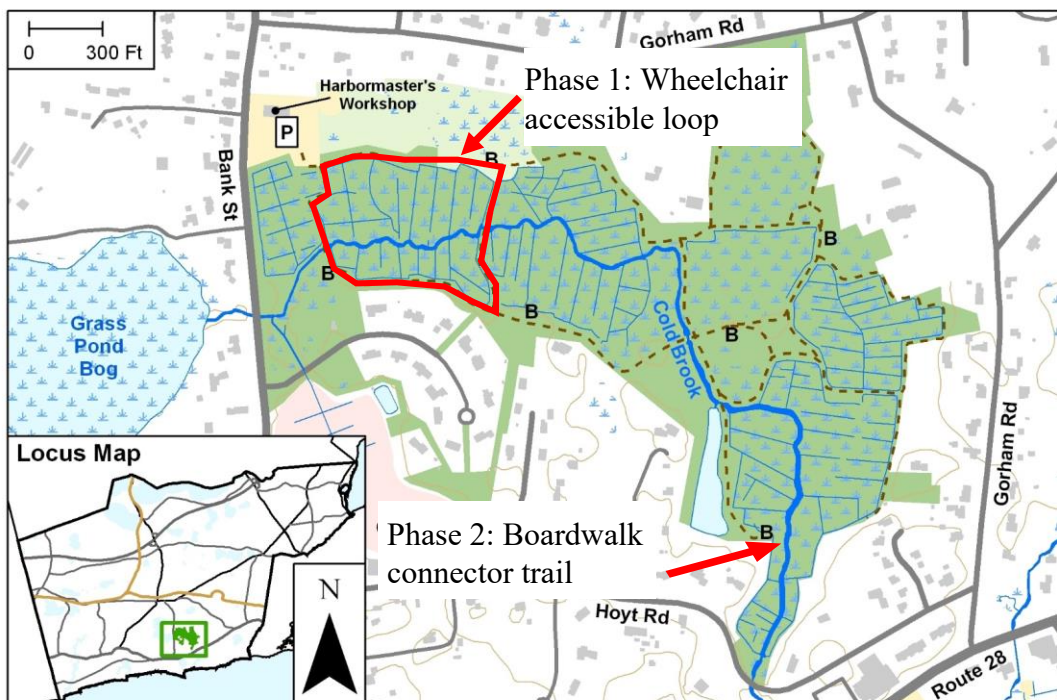


Figure 1: Proposed locations for the Phase 1 wheelchair accessible trail loop and Phase 2 pedestrian boardwalk at the Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve on Bank Street in Harwich Port. B=bench

## **Cold Brook Eco-Restoration Project background:**

The Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT) and its eco-restoration partners (Town of Harwich, Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) are in the design stage of a comprehensive ecological restoration of Cold Brook and adjacent retired cranberry bog (former naturally occurring wetlands) at HCT's Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve in Harwich Port.

Originating from its spring-fed headwaters at Grassy Pond, Cold Brook flows through HCT's 66-acre Preserve, and ultimately into Saquatucket Harbor on Nantucket Sound. The eco-restoration project will enhance nearly a mile of stream and over 44 acres of adjacent wetland habitat, resulting in improved fish passage, habitat diversity, wetland health, water quality, and ecological resiliency amidst climate change. The preliminary eco-restoration design includes naturalizing the flow of Cold Brook, establishing ponds of varying sizes, a salt marsh, and planting native trees and shrubs.

Another community benefit of the eco-restoration project is naturally reducing nitrogen in the water flowing to Saquatucket Harbor, which will reduce sewerage needs in Harwich Port. In 2017, Town Meeting voters approved \$2 million toward design, permitting, and eco-restoration implementation. The Town Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan estimates a savings to taxpayers of up to \$6 million by virtue of reduced sewer costs. The 2017 Town Meeting authorization does not include funding for enhancing recreational access.

The Harwich Natural Heritage Trail Project supported by the Town Community Preservation Fund can create enhanced visitor access to the Preserve's scenic walking trails, thereby providing opportunities for residents and visitors to learn about the natural history of the area, cranberry bog history, understand the area's restored habitats, offer opportunities to view wildlife, and offer educational opportunities for local students. For example, over the past three years, HCT and MassAudubon have been partnering with teachers of local Monomoy Regional Middle School fifth graders to provide learning experiences around the land, water, and wildlife of the Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve. Creating a wheelchair accessible trail loop consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards in Phase 1 and boardwalk trail connection in Phase 2 will support and expand these learning opportunities for local students.

### **About Robert F. Smith (Bob Smith):**

In 2015, the Preserve was named in honor of Robert F. Smith, founding HCT Trustee and HCT's first President for 27 years. Robert, or Bob as most people knew him, was an active Harwich citizen who also happened to have a physical disability known as Facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy (FSHD), a progressive genetic muscle disorder in which the muscles of the face (facio), shoulder blades (scapula), and upper arms (humeral) are affected among other muscle groups. Eventually, Bob had to maintain mobility with a motorized wheelchair. For 27 years as the HCT President and even as he endured FSHD, Bob led HCT with an altruistic vision to benefit the Harwich community and Cape Cod as a whole by preserving natural lands that would protect drinking water quality, ponds, coastal waters, streams, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and walking trails. To create a wheelchair accessible trail loop at the Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve in the heart of Harwich Port is a fitting way to provide access for so many others living with physical disabilities that seek connection to the great outdoors.

## How does this project fit into Harwich's Local Comprehensive Plan and/or other Plan?

- Goal #3 of the Commonwealth's 2012 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is to "Invest in recreation and conservation areas that are close to home for short visits."
- According to the Town's 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) "Harwich's approach to this goal is to spread improvements throughout all villages in the town. Examples of this approach are found in Goal IV, Enhance Trail Systems Within Open Space Areas..." (page 60)
- Town 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan Objective 3. Construct facilities to provide for reasonable access by disabled persons to recreation facilities and natural areas including: A. Beach access ramps and boardwalks; B. Braille signage in appropriate locations; C. TDD equipment where audio programs are offered; **D. Wheelchair accessible trail facilities**; E. Accessible comfort stations. (page 69)

*Reviewing the goals and objectives above, the Harwich Natural Heritage Trail Project aligns with both the Commonwealth's 2012 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Town's 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan.*



The artistic rendering at left illustrates the ecological restoration of wetland, stream and open water habitats on a retired bog system owned by the Falmouth Rod & Gun Club. Similar eco-restoration would take place at the Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve in Harwich Port. The wheelchair accessible trail would loop around a diversity of habitats offering visitors a varied outdoor experience in the heart of Harwich Port.

*Image courtesy of Nick Nelson, Inter-Fluve*

**How does this project benefit the citizens of Harwich? If appropriate, has the application sought public opinion or input? If not, why?**

Source: Town 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan---"The 2012 SCORP discusses variability of the state population, including the needs of different age groups. In Harwich, according to 2013 US Census statistics, seniors over age 60 constitute 37.1% of the town population as opposed to 20.0% statewide. As noted in the Harwich Council on Aging 2009-2019 Strategic Plan, the Town's senior population may be segmented into three groups – "boomers", age 60 – 70; middle range, age 71 – 85; and elderly, age 85+.

Accessibility must be addressed for handicapped persons." (page 60, Town 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan)

*Reviewing the narrative above, the Harwich Natural Heritage Trail Project will benefit residents and visitors of all ages including seniors in Harwich, which comprise a larger percentage of the town population when compared with the statewide percentage of the senior population.*

*Seeking public opinion about the project was not part of this application. However, the project was reviewed by the Harwich Youth & Recreation Commission and received unanimous support. Please see letter of support attached.*



Figure 2: An example of a rendering of a retired cranberry bog that has been ecologically restored with habitat details including large wood to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, channel bed geometry, micro-topography, recreational opportunities, and natural vegetation. (source: Nick Nelson, Inter-Fluve)

**ESTIMATED START DATE:**  
Sept. 2021

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:**  
June 2022

**PLEASE LIST OTHER COMMISSIONS/BOARDS/COMMITTEES/ORGANIZATIONS that may have involvement, jurisdiction, partnering, etc:**

Commissions/Boards/Committees/Organizations	Please have them initial here after their review
Harwich Youth & Recreation Commission	<i>support letter attached</i>

**Describe their response, or provided written comments/input:**

The Harwich Youth & Recreation Commission is very supportive of the project.

**PROJECT BUDGET:** Attach a dated and detailed line item project budget estimate for your funding request. If the request involves a Town-owned asset, provide the project's projected operating expenses, including maintenance.

**Please see Project Budget attached.**

**COST ESTIMATE(S):** Attach cost estimates or firm quotes (if available) for all projects.

**LAND and/or BUILDING ACQUISITION PROJECTS:**

The following **must** also be submitted, as applicable:

- Surveys and/or plot plans for the property
- Appraisals and agreements, if available.
- Name of present owner and attach copy of deed conveying property unto present owner.
- Property address, Harwich Assessor's property identification (Map#, Parcel #).
- For proposed Open Space land purchases, be prepared to discuss public access with the Committee.

\*\*\*\*\*

By signing below, the Applicant represents and warrants that all the information included is true and correct to the best of the signer's knowledge and belief. Further, the Applicant acknowledges in the event that the Community Preservation Committee agrees to grant funds to Applicant (and subject to Town Meeting approval), this application together with any Terms and Conditions shall constitute a binding agreement, between the Applicant and the Community Preservation Committee. Further, Applicant acknowledges and agrees to execute any additional grant agreements should the Community Preservation Committee so request.

ATTESTATION: I HEREBY ATTEST THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS APPLICATION IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

Michael W. Lach Executive Director, Harwich Conservation Trust  
Signature - Chief Executive Officer or Chief Administrative Officer Title  
or Board Chair

Printed Name Michael W. Lach Date October 30, 2020

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 30, 2020 NO LATER THAN 4 PM**  
**Must submit eight (8) paper copies and if possible, a thumb drive (USB memory stick)**  
**containing a digital copy of the Application in a PDF file format.**

**Budget for Harwich Natural Heritage Trail CPA funding request (30.Oct.2020):**

The request for this Oct. 30, 2020 CPA funding application is \$150,000 toward a two-year total of \$300,000 as follows:

- **Phase 1: Wheelchair Accessible Trail Loop \$150,000 Community Preservation Fund application**

**Submitted October 30, 2020 (FY21) for funding available in FY22**

Planning, permitting, and construction of an ADA wheelchair accessible trail loop to offer visitors a range of scenic views along what will become restored natural wetland and stream habitats. Interpretive educational sign posts linked to web-based educational resources will be installed along the route, and provide additional information about the Preserve, the completed restoration, and various natural elements of the site. Parking access from Bank Street is nearby and elevation contours are gradual so the westerly portion of the Preserve can accommodate a wheelchair accessible trail loop and observation deck.

- \$30,000      Handicapped accessible parking, ADA accessible trail design, and site survey.
- \$20,000      Permitting costs (engineered site plan including wetland delineations and filing as Notice of Intent with Town Conservation Commission and State Dept. of Environmental Protection). Savings on permitting would be occurring by combining this ADA accessible trail permitting with boardwalk permitting.
- \$100,000      Wheelchair accessible trail loop and observation deck materials and construction.

Subtotal:      \$150,000

- **Phase 2: Boardwalk Connector Pedestrian Trail \$150,000 Community Preservation Fund application**

**To be submitted in October 2021 (FY22) for funding available in FY23**

Planning, permitting, and construction of an approximately 300-foot pedestrian footbridge/wetland walkway to facilitate pedestrian access and complete a walking trail loop in the southerly portion of the Preserve. This area will not be wheelchair accessible because of the distance from the parking access on Bank Street.

- \$0              Boardwalk design costs included with ADA accessible trail design and survey.
- \$0              Permitting costs included with ADA accessible trail permitting.
- \$150,000      Boardwalk materials and construction.

Subtotal:      \$150,000

Total:          \$300,000



# Harwich Recreation & Youth Department Park, Beach & Commission



100 Oak Street, Harwich MA 02645

To: Community Preservation Committee  
Date: 10/28/20  
From: Recreation and Youth Commission  
Re: Harwich Conservation CPC Funding Request

At a meeting of the Recreation and Youth Commission on October 27, 2020 the Commission unanimously voted to support a project submission from the Harwich Conservation Trust for a boardwalk trail connection and an ADA accessible trail loop off Bank Street in Harwich Port at Harwich Conservation Trust's Robert F. Smith Cold Brook Preserve.

This project would include a 300 foot boardwalk and wheelchair accessible loop at the proposed site and all related costs to the project.

The Recreation and Youth Commission views this as a very beneficial project to the Town of Harwich and its preservation, as well as, recreational access to a valuable area in the heart of Harwich Port.

The Recreation and Youth Commission fully supports this article submission from the Harwich Conservation Trust and requests your consideration in the matter.

Sincerely,

John Mahan

Recreation and Youth Commission Chairman