

## BIC Fair

This summer, the Block Island Conservancy hosted its second BIC Fair, a day of family-fun for the community that informed both island residents and visitors about the efforts of conservation and the Block Island Conservancy. The event was a great success thanks to the help and support of many volunteers and generous individuals and businesses.

This year, the Fair featured games (including a dunk tank!), a live auction, a surf competition and a delicious cookout donated by the Beahead Restaurant. We also were able to compost a great deal of the waste from the Fair. We'd like to thank the committee of volunteers who made the Fair happen – co-chairs Melissa Hempstead & Rosemary Tobin, Meg Vitacco, Mary Cerulli, Seth Draper, Mary MacGill, and Moira O'Neill.



## BIC Annual Meeting

BIC's 2019 Annual Meeting was a well-attended affair that was generously hosted by the Draper family at the 1661 Inn. Members heard from Caitlin Chaffee, Policy Analyst at the RI Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC), who spoke about how the agency's mission to protect, develop and restore resources is impacted by rising seas and intensifying coastal storms. The talk was particularly timely, as it followed a 3-day nor'easter that pounded the island with strong storm surge and high winds, resulting in a great deal of erosion along the coastline.

Chaffee encouraged members of the community to use the tools CRMC makes available to the public, including storm and sea-level rise modeling maps and to participate in CRMC's citizen-science initiatives. One such initiative is an app called MyCoast, which allows citizens to take photos of coastal flooding events and helps CRMC and other groups to determine how to address vulnerable areas. The CRMC is also actively seeking proposals for small-scale projects to address the effects of sea-level rise and coastal storms.

BIC is looking forward to working with the Town to identify potential projects and engaging further with CRMC to help the island become more resilient.



## Important Conservation News

The Town of New Shoreham is considering a change to the town's ordinances that will allow conservation easements to be factored into developable land calculations. This would increase land development density on Block Island quite dramatically.

Last month, BIC members received an email asking for your help to delay the adoption so the conservation organizations could evaluate the effects of the change.

We're working hard to build our case for conservation and we thank you for your support.



# 2019 Fall Newsletter



## Accreditation Renewal Achieved

One thing that unites us as a nation is land: Americans strongly support saving the open spaces they love. Since 1972, the Block Island Conservancy has been doing just that for the people of Block Island. BIC is pleased to announce that we have renewed its land trust accreditation – proving once again that, as part of a network of over 400 accredited land trusts across the nation, we are committed to professional excellence and to maintaining the public's trust in its conservation work.

BIC provided extensive documentation and was subject to a comprehensive third-party evaluation prior to achieving this distinction. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded renewed accreditation, signifying its confidence that BIC's lands will be protected forever. Accredited land trusts now steward almost 20 million acres – the size of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island combined.

BIC is one of 1,363 land trusts across the United States according to the Land Trust Alliance's most recent National Land Trust Census. A complete list of accredited land trusts and more information about the process and benefits can be found at [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org).

## Compost Pilot Project

When you throw away an apple core, eggshells, or a head of lettuce that's just a bit too wilted, do you ever think about where it's going next? More often than not, our sense of responsibility for our waste ends with bringing the trash to the transfer station at the end of the week. But did you know that your apple core, eggshell, or wilted leaves can take months, or even years, to fully decompose in a traditional landfill?

A priority for the Block Island Conservancy is finding ways to reduce the Block Island community's environmental impact both here on the island and beyond, BIC has identified on-island waste management as an area with opportunity for improvement. Many items we regularly bag up and throw away as trash are compostable; according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 24% of the material that ends up in American landfills is could be used for composting. Composting is an aerobic method (requires air) of decomposing solid organic waste. The Block Island Conservancy's Compost Pilot Program is a meaningful step towards addressing waste management on Block Island.

This summer, BIC partnered with McPick and the 1661 Farm & Gardens to launch this pilot project. We collected compostable material from 22 households to divert some of the waste that is shipped off the island every day. Our goal is to demonstrate the feasibility of a larger scale composting program on the island. BIC will be engaging local leadership and stakeholders to develop a plan to move this initiative forward.



**We found that in the average Block Island household trash bag, 30% of the waste can be diverted from the landfill by proper recycling (10%) or composting (20%).**

Scenes from the 2019 Compost Pilot Project. Clockwise from top left: sorting household trash to determine impact of composting; adding to compost pile; compostable material collected from homes; at left: BIC intern maintaining the pile .

## Land Stewardship

### A focus on trail improvements and expansion

In the last year, BIC made several improvements to our trails. At Win Dodge, we dismantled the stonewall walkover that had become unstable and a bit treacherous for walkers, opened up the path and installed a more attractive entrance gate.

With huge help from Rob Martin at The Nature Conservancy and Adrian's Army, BIC expanded the trails at the Carey & Walsh Lots (off West Side Road near Dodge Cemetery) and added new loops for walkers to enjoy. There is a wonderful system of interconnected trails owned by the Block Island Land Trust, TNC and BIC that create a continuous trail system from the airport (Nathan Mott Park) to the West Side.

We are currently working to update trail signs and identify opportunities to expand and interconnect existing trails by working with our partners.



## Land Acquisition

In the past year, the Block Island Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and the Block Island Land Trust together conserved just under 30 acres of land. This strong number was due in part to a number of generous conservation easement donations.

One of our most exciting acquisitions was at Hull Pond off Center Road. This 4.5-acre parcel has great conservation and community value. There is a large stand of shad trees on the edge of the pond that provide good habitat for migrating songbirds and Hull Pond is a popular place to fish, ice skate and swim. A new trail has been cut to lead walkers up to the top of a hill that has a view out over the pond and north to Clay Head. Plans are being developed to create a more formal access point to the pond.

BIC also partnered with The Nature Conservancy to accept the easement enforcement rights over a 3.7-acre property on the edge of the Great Salt Pond. The property contains a tributary to the Pond and a healthy salt marsh.