

THE
WAYPOINT
YEAR 15



FALL/WINTER EDITION



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A Letter from the Editors

As three dedicated members of AmeriCorps Cape Cod, we are proud to present Year 15's Fall/Winter Edition of The Waypoint; our seasonal service newsletter. Thirty-two individuals, each of whom brings their own unique personality, come together to serve this region and form our corps. We are split between three houses here on Cape Cod – one in Bourne and two in Wellfleet. Serving in each of the fifteen Cape towns, AmeriCorps members complete projects that range anywhere from trail maintenance to shell fishing to prescribed burns. In this edition of The Waypoint, the articles focus exclusively on service projects that we've completed in the first half of our year. Keep an eye open for articles about other aspects of our life here on Cape Cod on the AmeriCorps website (www.americorpscapedod.org). We would also like to give a special thanks to Allyson Stein for creating this cover. She hand drew it herself! Now, as the editors, we are excited for everyone to read this issue to learn about the adventures that we have experienced thus far.

- Mary Lynn Scott, Allyson Stein, and Jen Zakrzewski



ACC members come from all over the United States (and even Canada)!

National Service Roundtable

by Sarah McNeill



Left to right: Massachusetts Service Alliance CEO Emily Haber, General Stanley A. McChrystal, ACC Member Leader Sarah McNeill, and ACC Program Director Darlene Johnson-Morris

On October 8th, ACC member Sarah McNeill traveled to City Year headquarters in Boston for a roundtable discussion with national service leaders. The Massachusetts Service Alliance welcomed retired Army General Stanley McChrystal to this special gathering to discuss what it means to engage in national service. In 2012, General McChrystal compiled his visions on future national service into one plan called “The Franklin Project”. The project proposes that “national service can and should become a common expectation and common opportunity for all Americans to strengthen our social fabric and solve our most pressing national challenges.” Sarah and AmeriCorps Cape Cod Program Director Darlene Johnson-Morris joined leaders from all over the state to talk with General McChrystal about the Franklin Project and the importance of national service.

In the coming years General McChrystal would like to make a year of national service an essential component of peoples’ lives between the ages of 18 and 28. He talked about his experiences in the military and how valuable it was for his personal development as well as strengthening his identity as an American citizen. The motivation of American people to fulfill their duty to society peaked during World War II, when the entire country put their personal lives on hold and worked together to solve national issues. General McChrystal would like to revive that mentality of people serving domestically through programs like AmeriCorps. He was interested in hearing from current AmeriCorps members about how they got involved and what service means to them. Time was allocated for each AmeriCorps member to discuss his/her road to national service and the impact of the experience thus far.

During his visit, General McChrystal met with the admissions department of Tufts University to discuss a “one and four year plan.” This plan would be an agreement between a prospective student and the university that the student would fulfill a year of national service before applying to Tufts. Upon successful completion of the year of service, the student would be granted admission to Tufts. Attendees at the roundtable agreed that students build maturity, understand their own needs better, and are humbled by participating in national service.

The afternoon conversation boomed with testimonies of volunteerism and how the challenging but positive impacts of volunteering can last a lifetime. As General McChrystal thanked each and every one of the leaders for attending the roundtable, the air was electric with energy and passion for service. The spirit of the room ignited and filled participants with hope: there is no better time to serve than now.

One Whale of a Day

by Carrie Frazier

It's the morning of October 29th, 2013 and I'm driving to my individual placement (IP for short, which is much like an internship) in the town of Sandwich. While driving, turning sharply in the parking lot of my IP sent my excruciatingly hot tea directly onto my lap. I now not only have close to first degree burns down my legs, but a giant wet spot on my pants as well. This is not how I envisioned starting my day, but little did I know that this day had many more surprises in store for me.

Lately it has been a struggle just to navigate my way around the town. The town of Sandwich (the oldest on the Cape) has six different conservation sites. My first obstacle is finding my way to these sites. On this day I am at Talbot's Point doing a trash check when I get a call from my IP supervisor. He relays to me that a Pygmy Sperm Whale has washed up dead on Town Neck Beach and IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) will be arriving shortly to assess the situation. They need an extra pair of hands to carry some of the equipment down to the site and he wants to know if I am willing; without hesitation I say "yes." My next step is to immediately Google search "Pygmy Sperm Whale." Several images appear and I am suddenly in awe of this strange, beautiful creature. I try to recall a time when I have seen an animal similar to this one, but I can only recall vague memories of manatees during zoo visits from my childhood. I am now beyond excited and slightly nervous.

I arrive at Town Neck Beach early. The IFAW team arrives shortly after and we start to unload some of the equipment. My first view of the whale is from the top of the boardwalk at the beach. As I begin to get closer I can start to make out features of the animal. Besides the size of the whale the first thing I notice is the bottom row of teeth protruding out of the whales mouth. The second thing I notice are the abrasions on the front part of the whale. IFAW decides the whale (weighing about 1,000 lbs) is too heavy to move from the spot, so they will perform the necropsy right here on the beach. Due to my lack of training there is little I can do to assist in the necropsy, but I am still able to lend a hand.



The first thing I assist with is holding an identification card for photographs of the whale. After the photos are documented I realize from here the next thing to do is make the initial first cut into the whale. I stand back and watch as IFAW skillfully cuts into the thick blubber of the whale. A steady stream of blood turns the sand below the whale a dark red. After this everything seems to move in hyper speed. I begin by helping organize the test tubes in alphabetical order. Next to me one of the IFAW workers is cutting up different parts of the whale. I notice she is being handed chunks of the whale's liver, lungs, and spleen. Before I know it I am assisting this volunteer by holding some of the test tubes. The one I am holding is labeled "intestinal parasite." I look up to see that the whale is completely cut open with parts of its skeletal system exposed; I'm in awe of IFAW's speed and precision.

Before I know it, IFAW is labeling boxes for the different parts of the whale and I notice I can now see the sand that was sitting below the whale. My once pristine clean gloves now have smudges of blood and the knees of my pants have somehow soaked up a mixture of blood and oil from the whale. I feel very lucky to have witnessed the entire process. Not only was it amazing to see and be that close to the whale, but to watch IFAW work and successfully remove the whale in a matter of hours was simply astounding.



ACC Members preparing the students for WetFest!

WET Fest

by Corey Mulvehill

Every couple weeks the Bourne and Le Hac houses join forces for Wetfest: an educational festival designed to educate 4th, 5th and 6th graders about all sorts of topics relating to water. School by school, we take over gymnasiums to set up interactive booths that teach kids everything they need to know to become a “Groundwater Guardian.” Led by our fearless leader Jen Zakrzewski, we start off the day by performing a short skit that includes talking sea creatures, a water wizard and one very “Rude Dude”. The skit ends with our all-powerful water wizard being flushed down a massive toilet by the Rude Dude. This is where we challenge the students to learn as much about water as possible, so they can become Groundwater Guardians and save the water wizard! From there, the students form groups and make their way to one of the twenty booths that are run by individual AmeriCorps Cape Cod members. There is a wide variety of water-related subjects that are covered during Wetfest, including water pollution, water conservation, aquatic biology and even bubbles!

One of the most popular activities for the students is always the “Edible Aquifer.” This is where students get to make a model aquifer (an underground reservoir of water) out of the strange but tasty combination of crushed ice, soda, ice cream, sprinkles and food coloring. I get the responsibility of running the booth called “The Flow Below” with my trusted partner Clare. Here we teach the children about aquifers, wells, groundwater pollution and the water table on Cape Cod by using a top-of-the-line model aquifer. It may not be the most hands-on activity, but we try our best to make it as exciting as possible! After about five minutes, we say goodbye to one group of students and welcome another. The students continue moving from booth to booth, soaking up everything there is to know about water and ways to protect our water resources. We wrap up the day with another short skit featuring the same cast of crazy characters and quiz the students on their newly acquired knowledge so that they can save the water wizard! After the wizard is saved, we all take the sacred Groundwater Guardian Pledge!

At the end of the day, we are all exhausted from teaching the same 5 minute lesson over and over again for multiple hours, but I think it is one of the more important service projects that we do. We accomplish a lot as individuals here on Cape Cod, but if we can teach hundreds of kids the importance of protecting our shared water resources, then I believe our impact is amplified tenfold.

FireCorps: Like a Boss

by Anja Hogan

Hello, and let me introduce you to the 2nd year of the AmeriCorps Cape Cod FireCorps! Being the 2nd Corps to have served in the ACC FireCorps, we fully expect to not just live up to the standards set by the first year's crew, but raise them a little higher. If you haven't heard about us, it's probably because for the most part we spend the majority of our days quietly (or not so quietly if chainsaws are involved) serving Cape Cod National Seashore.

It is our mission to learn, develop, teach, and assist. For the first couple months of our service year we have mainly been focusing on learning and developing in areas related to fire and natural resource management. We've completed tree thinning projects, begun heathland restorations, participated in prescribed burns at Joint Base Cape Cod, and trained for wildfire preparation and mitigation. While we have made significant progress thus far, there is still much to learn and we're happy to be doing so in such a picturesque place.



While one of AmeriCorps' goals is to allow members to give back to their communities and their country, another priority of AmeriCorps is to develop the leaders and "go-getters" of tomorrow. We've all come from different places in our lives and with different personal and professional aspirations, but in these moments, none of us wish to be anywhere else. The Fire Corps program effectively facilitates personal and professional development through engaging projects and by getting us to think beyond ourselves; the obstacles ahead are too large for any individual, so we must band together to tackle them.

As a crew we are striving for discipline, communication, leadership, and awareness. We learn these skills through various activities like morning briefings & after-action reviews, chances to calculate and review. While at the meetings we are encouraged to actively participate in voicing our concerns, questions, and opinions. Without solid communication as a crew, we would be utterly useless in the field, especially in potentially life-threatening situations like runaway fires or falling trees. By becoming more aware of our surroundings and building a more cohesive crew, we can be further instrumental in situations both on and off the National Seashore.

Like the other two houses in our program, we eat, laugh, live, serve and make memories together. However, unlike our fellow Corps members, we spend every service day together; all day, every day. This arrangement provides its own challenges, but what it provides is the opportunity to create a close-knit team and plenty of fond memories.

Brewster: Shellfish & DNR

by Enam Mensah

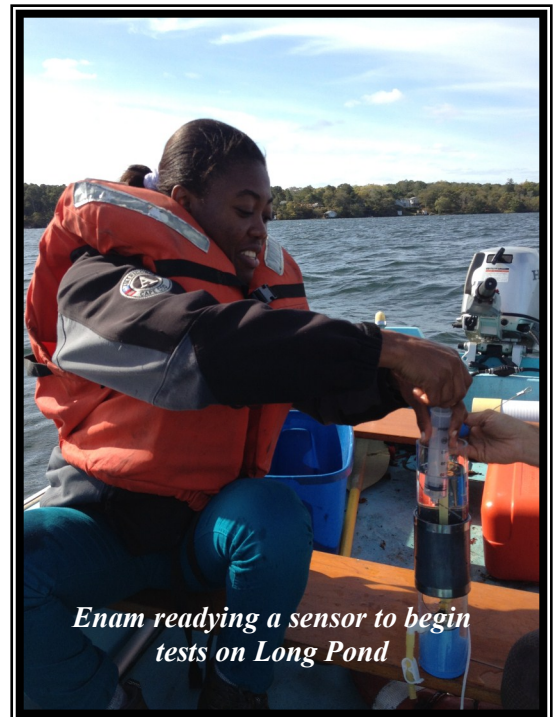
One month of intensive training was an interesting experience: all AmeriCorps Cape Cod (ACC) members must complete a month of training to prepare them for their service year. However, I couldn't wait for some more hands-on experience and field work. Shortly before our service year began, I waited anxiously to hear about what my Individual Placement (IP) would be, hoping that I would get my first choice. Finally the day I was waiting for arrived. It was a beautiful afternoon when I received the notification that I got my first choice for Individual Placements with the Brewster Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

It was an exciting moment; I shouted in excitement actually. But more exciting was my experience on my first day serving with Brewster DNR. I served alongside my IP service partner Ryan Burch and another ACC member to collect water samples from Long Pond in Brewster. I learned to use various instruments to collect and measure water quality. The most interesting part of this activity was steering the DNR's boat. It was a challenging experience as I struggled to balance the boat. I ended up getting slapped in the face by water several times while attempting to steer the boat in the right direction. I prayed hard to avoid tipping the boat and accidentally dumping my service partner and colleague into the pond.

The day flew by as lesson after lesson came my way. I also remember battling with a huge lawn mower and being rescued by my service partner a couple of times. I went home at the end of the day knowing that Brewster DNR was the perfect IP for me. Each day came with new challenges and skills to learn. Shell fishing with the Brewster FLATS group (volunteer environmental stewards) is always interesting. I went to service my 2nd day equipped with my waders, snips, hammer, plastic totes and of course, a smile and energy for oyster culling and shellfish broadcasting.

Other days when I'm not on the Brewster flats shell fishing, I am in the office working on updating the Punk Horn Trails and kiosk information, scheduling educational puppet shows for Brewster schools, cutting nets to build oyster cages, attending meetings at Brewster Town Hall, demolishing old kiosks (and coming back with a broken hammer) or repairing some equipment. Serving with volunteers and officials from Brewster has been wonderful; my colleague and I were introduced to the Board of Selectmen during a recent Selectmen's meeting which was very exciting. My service partner makes sure the community is aware of how important AmeriCorps is and what we have been doing.

My experience so far has certainly exceeded many of my expectations. I couldn't ask for a better place to serve. This IP provides everything I needed and exactly what I was looking for. The knowledge and daily experiences I'm gaining here are truly invaluable and I am very thankful to both my coordinator and service partner for this experience. I look forward to leaving a positive impact on the town of Brewster. I am hoping to achieve a lot for this community by upgrading the Punk Horn Trial Kiosks information, and increasing volunteer engagement and community outreach by the end of my service year.



Enam readying a sensor to begin tests on Long Pond

Moulage Galore

by Jairus Durdick

At approximately 8:45 a.m. shots were fired, killing the entirety of the infirmary bunker. Within minutes the military enforcement had swept the area, taking down the shooter and securing the area. Shortly after, a bomb exploded, resulting in AmeriCorps members scattered across a field, all crying for help. If anybody had arrived at this moment with no prior knowledge of what was happening, this would be a terrifying scene because of the piece of metal protruding from Andy's leg, or the blown off leg Shawn was attempting to manage. However, for those of us who were briefed, it was nothing more than a normal day as an AmeriCorps volunteer.

On October 27th, 2013, members from all three AmeriCorps Cape Cod houses joined with the Otis Air National Guard Base to help perform a disaster simulation that served as training for emergency response personnel. When we arrived we underwent two hours of moulage (makeup) preparation. The situation began as stated above, and as we were strewn across the field, bloodied and burned, we were tended to by Emergency Medical Technicians and other first responders. Although it was humorous to see what Kayla would look like with a metal bar sticking out of her face, it was a serious situation. We had been tasked with playing the important roles of victims, and were doing that.

Our advisors suggested we take on differing psychological profiles, so while some were hysterical and screamed for help, others acted confused by what was happening. This forced the responders to handle both physical and mental trauma in their patients, which proved to be quite a task. There was massive confusion during the triage portion of the response, and because of that, more than a few volunteers "died" that day. From our standpoint, we could not understand why Victoria, who had a shoulder fracture, had been marked as the same trauma level as Austin, who no longer had a shoulder. It was only after the simulation that we learned what had been going on.

The faux-bombing had been an exercise to teach many workers who lacked experience. In addition to this, the logistics had been planned poorly, mainly the triage. The responders were under the impression that the victims would already be marked with their appropriate trauma level, but that never occurred. Because of this, chaos prevailed and many unnecessary deaths ensued. While this seems to be worrisome for anybody who might find themselves in this situation in the future, the positives aspects were plentiful. Because we served at Otis, these professionals were allowed to refine their skills and correct many of their mistakes. Simple miscues such as not establishing a perimeter will now be avoided by those involved, partially because of our involvement. Instead of scrambling without a purpose in mind, the professionals involved will now have a more secure framework to work with. We were thanked profusely at the hot wash (a post-simulation evaluation) for our participation, heavily because we provided roughly a third of the volunteers. After taking a few pictures (fake injuries and all) we were on our way back to our respective houses for well-deserved naps and the rest of our Sunday afternoon.



Opening Day

by Lindsey Zemler

During our month of training in September, AmeriCorps Cape Cod members learned about proper tool usage and trail-building techniques. Not only did we learn these essential skills, we also have acquired the ability to present ourselves as AmeriCorps Cape Cod members to the greater public. Since we commonly interact with the people who live in the community we serve, there is often a need for an in-depth explanation of who we are.



Bourne House after serving at Cradles to Crayons

People want to know who we are but also: what is AmeriCorps? On November 8th, we gained further understanding of this ourselves when we traveled to Boston to attend the AmeriCorps Opening Day where over 1000 Members who serve in Massachusetts gathered together. Not only did all AmeriCorps members in Massachusetts convene in one room, so did members in each state all over the nation.

Some AmeriCorps members belong to a cohort, like we do, and others have full-time individual placements with various organizations or agencies similar to the way we each serve at an Individual Placement two days a week. During the ceremony that celebrated the induction of our service year and 20 years of AmeriCorps we learned about the service and community building of all other Corps members throughout the state.

The Keynote Speaker at the ceremony, Wendy Spencer, is the CEO of the federal agency of civic engagement – the Corporation for National and Community Service. To many ACC members, service and community volunteering aren't only values or activities – it becomes a lifestyle choice. Ms. Spencer enthusiastically encouraged all the young people in the room to

remain committed to a life of service, which I predict will be a natural path for many from our group. Other speakers during the ceremony spoke about dedication to bettering our communities as AmeriCorps members, and then invited representatives of each separate AmeriCorps program in the state to speak about their focus areas and goals.

Many of the other programs in Boston and throughout the state have an emphasis on equal opportunity to education, preparing underserved youth to continue on to higher education in addition to other human and environmental services. Hearing about AmeriCorps members' experiences provides perspective on what we do on Cape Cod. ACC has a special opportunity to work with a wide representation of the Cape Cod community – from teaching children in elementary schools about natural resource education to assisting town municipalities dedicated to improving their conservation and trail areas.

The afternoon activity following the ceremony was a service project with a direct impact on the livelihood and quality of life of the citizens' who receive the services. While the Le Hac House and Wells House went to the Greater Boston Food Bank, the Bourne House went to Cradles to Crayons, an organization that fulfills basic needs of children through gathering donations from those who have extra resources. This large-scale operation serves an extensive urban area and relies on countless hours of hundreds of volunteers each week to organize goods to redistribute. Our exposure to this type of organization and service provided important perspective because on Cape Cod we don't encounter this overwhelming scope of basic but urgent needs.

Opening Day Continued...

It's incumbent upon our members, in our year of service, to understand the independent value of each type of service any person can provide whether it's contributing to improving water quality through shell fishing or sorting clothing donations for children in need. Each hour of time we dedicate to any type of service is positively impacting something or someone's ability to thrive.

The Opening Day was hosted by the Massachusetts Service Alliance, the non-profit organization that invests in AmeriCorps Cape Cod and all these other worthwhile programs that promote service and volunteerism. The day was an opportunity to recognize the many ways we are able to serve in our communities, and the number of people in Massachusetts who are doing just that. AmeriCorps was established 20 years ago, and as mentioned certainly becomes a lifestyle for many.

Chatham: Department of Shellfish by Brianna Walsh

As a New Mexican born and raised, I don't have a lot of experience with marine life. In the desert, the only thing you need to know about seafood is that "fresh fish" at the restaurant is probably a lie. So when I found out that my Individual Placement was with the Chatham Department of Shellfish, I was admittedly a little intimidated. I was interested, sure, but I couldn't have told you the difference between a scallop and an oyster. It's been a little more than a month, and I've already learned an incredible amount. I've learned that scallops have forty-two bright blue eyes, that they can regrow if injured and that oysters are amazing filter feeders that can clean upwards of twenty gallons of water a day. I've learned how to shuck an oyster and what they taste like fresh out of the shell. There's a whole new cast of characters in my life- the scallop, the oyster, and the quahog, all trying their best to survive the dangers of the world. There are villains in this story too- the invasive green crab, the native blue crab, and the ancient-looking horseshoe crab, who use their claws to chip away at a quahog's shell until they gain access to the defenseless meat within. There are the whelks too, who will drill a hole through a shell and dissolve their prey from the inside, and the more straight-forward seagulls who prefer dropping shellfish into parking lots from great heights. Every day is an adventure, whether it's scraping slipper snails and barnacles off of oysters in Eastham or broadcasting scallops off of a skiff in Chatham. The marine world of Cape Cod is a rich one, and I'm privileged to be experiencing it to the fullest.

Le Hac culling shellfish



Lessons Learned with the FireCorps: How to Safely & Correctly Fell a Tree.

by Lusa Sussky



Lusa and her correctly felled tree

Over the past few weeks, members of the FireCorps (service placed with Cape Cod National Seashore's Fire Management Crew at the Marconi Area in Wellfleet) have been trained in-depth on the proper way to operate a chainsaw as a means to complete natural resource management objectives in the area.

Surrounding the National Seashore's Headquarters building and extending out towards the beach, there are huge swaths of unique habitat overrun by the dominant growth of pitch pine. While pitch pine forests can provide their own unique habitat, they occur here on the National Seashore as somewhat of a monoculture — limiting the survival of other species as they spread, acidify the soil, and take over, while also providing a high risk for fire activity potential and spread.

One of our first missions in the FireCorps is to remove sections of pitch pine using the slash cut method (making cuts at waist level and leaving remains to be burned in a "prescribed slash burn" at a later date). Without veering too far off topic, this "prescribed slash burn" will then enhance the growth and survival of rare and prosperous heathland habitat — a habitat once vigorous and fond of Cape Cod's National Seashore.

To carry out this mission, we first needed to know how to safely operate a chainsaw. This was new to some of us, and was carried out carefully with many hours of hands-on field and classroom training. Eventually, we were trained on how to safely fell a tree. Ahead, I give brief descriptions on some of the lessons and techniques that I have learned [and continue to work on] when felling a tree in the field during service.

Continued on pg. 13

Lessons continued...



There are a number of cuts you can make to safely fell a tree. Here, I discuss the conventional cut, as it is what we have been taught here at the Seashore.

1. Before you begin to handle the chainsaw in any way, you must have the proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

The minimum PPE requirements are a safety helmet, safety glasses, long sleeves, work gloves, long pants accompanied with chaps, and sturdy boots.

2. Size up the tree

Before you make any cuts, you should size up the tree and assess the surrounding area.

Are there any surrounding trees, structures, or power lines that the tree could possibly hit or get hung up on? Where does the tree look like it wants to fall? As you plan your felling direction, you want to keep in mind the bole lean and limb weight. The bole is the trunk of the tree, and its lean can determine where the tree might naturally want to fall. Limb weight can also have a major influence on the direction of the fall, especially if there are many branches on one side of the tree.

3. Have your escape routes clear

As a safety precaution, you should clear two pathways at 45 degrees away from the expected direction of the fall. If cut properly, the tree is least likely to fall in these areas.

4. Horizontal cut

This is the first cut, and it determines the direction of the fall. This cut should be no deeper than 1/3 of the tree. The tree will fall perpendicular to this line.

5. Angle cut

The angle cut is next, and it begins just above the horizontal cut and meets with the end of the horizontal cut to complete the “face cut”. The face cut should be roughly at a 45 degree angle.

6. Back cut

Your final cut occurs on the opposite side of the bole, and 1 to 2 inches above your initial horizontal cut (can vary depending on tree size). This cut should also only go no deeper than 1/3 into the bole

The remaining 1/3 of the bole is known as the hinge wood, or holding wood. A good hinge wood will ensure that the tree will safely fall in the intended direction of your face cut. Do not cut through the hinge wood when making your back cut. Keep your eyes up – as soon as that tree begins to fall release the throttle, pull out your saw, put the chain break on, and back away. Timber!

Once you’ve got that tree fully on the¹³ground, it’s time for limbing and bucking! But that topic will be saved for another time

How to Be Red Cross Ready

by Sumi Selvaraj

Get a kit. Make a plan. Be informed. Follow those steps, and you will become Red Cross Ready. Sounds simple, right? But do you actually have an emergency kit at home or a communication plan if a disaster happened tomorrow? Where would you go if you had to evacuate for a shelter? As a community disaster educator for the American Red Cross, my job—with my partner in service, Mary Lynn Scott—is to help everyone understand what those three simple steps mean and how to accomplish them. Mary Lynn coordinates our youth outreach programs while I have been in charge of serving with senior citizens on the Cape. Ultimately, our goal is to make sure that people know how to either shelter at home or what to bring and where to go if they decide to go to a shelter during a disaster. Even though hurricane season ends on November 30th, we still have to be prepared for winter storms on Cape Cod, such as Winter Storm Nemo, which surprised many people who ended up at a shelter but were not prepared to go to one. Through our conversations with others about preparedness, I hope that Mary Lynn and I can help people be safer, more resilient, and Red Cross Ready for the next disaster that will (hopefully not) strike the Cape.

A Sweeping Success!

by Valerie Falconieri

“TWO CIGARETTE BUTTS! FIVE PLASTIC BOTTLES! THREE BALLOONS! ONE FLIP FLOP!” You may have heard something like this had you been on Brewster’s bay-side beaches for CoastSweep on October 4th. Americorps Cape Cod partnered with the Brewster Department of Natural Resources to host CoastSweep in the town of Brewster this year. CoastSweep is a statewide coastal cleanup sponsored by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. At the clean-up, all trash is recorded onto a sheet of paper based on various categories such as “Most Likely to Find Items,” “Fishing Gear,” and “Packaging Materials.” In Brewster, sixty-four volunteers were split among five beaches. In each group, one person was in charge of recording all of the trash while everyone else was responsible for collecting trash and recycling in separate bags. With the help of Americorps volunteers and community members, 320 pounds of debris was removed from five of Brewster’s public beaches! This included 804 cigarette butts, 36 plastic bottles, 67 balloons, 139 plastic bottle caps, and 110 straws! Even some plastic disks from a wastewater facility in New Hampshire that made their way down to some Cape beaches back in 2011 had been recorded on Brewster beaches at CoastSweep. With all of the trash collected and all of the eager participants, it goes to show you the importance of this annual event.



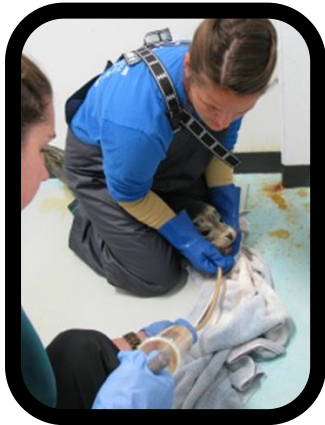
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ACC members and volunteers showing off their hard work!

Seal Release Q&A by Shawn McMahon

On October 27th, 2013 Francis the harbor seal was released by National Marine Life Center volunteers and staff at Scusset Beach.

Where did Francis Come From?

On September 6th, 2013 Francis the harbor seal was rescued from Moody Beach by Marine Mammals of Maine. He was then transferred to University of New England's Marine Animal Rehabilitation and Conservation Program where he was stabilized and received preliminary care until his transfer to the National Marine Life Center on September 9th, 2013.



Francis being fed in the dry holding room



Francis in the rehabilitation pool

What was wrong with Francis?

Francis arrived with several lacerations on his sides and flippers, which we suspect were caused by either a boat strike or a shark bite. His wounds were treated daily; tube fed three times daily, and put on antibiotics. He quickly recovered from his ailments and was able to spend most of his recovery time in the large seal rehabilitation pool.

How did Francis get his name?

Francis was named after the patron saint of animals, St. Francis of Assisi, by Ann Marie and Jim Zagzebski who purchased an ultimate animal adoption package at the NMLC's annual Mermaid Ball.

How was Francis' recovery?

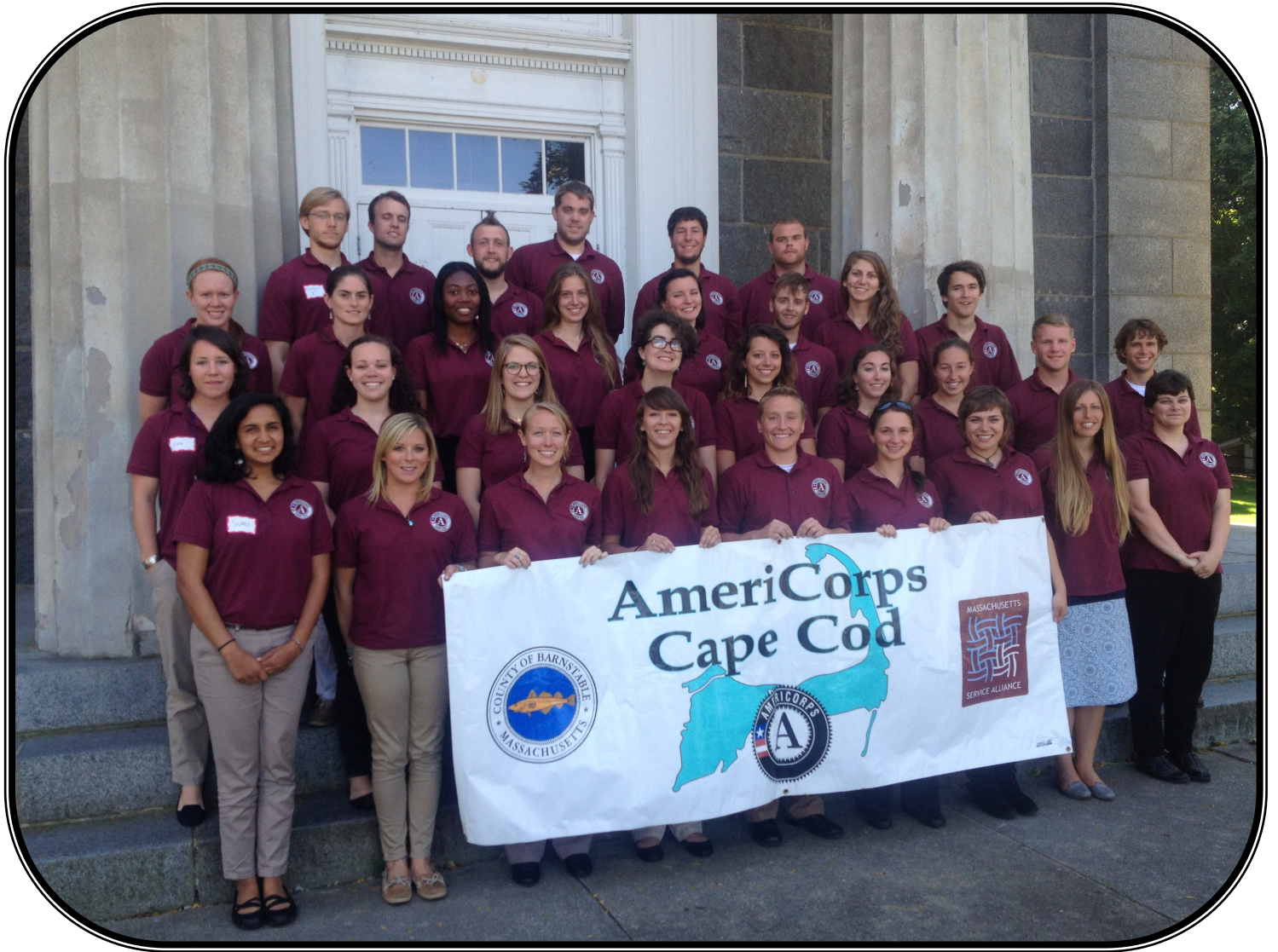
For Francis, the recovery process was speedy. By the beginning of October 2013, all of his wounds had healed. Now all Francis had to do was gain weight: the goal was to have him at 25 kg for release (he came in at a weight of 16.7 kg). On October 15th, Dr. Williams, our veterinarian, gave Francis a clean bill of health and approved his release! We filed the appropriate paperwork with NOAA and Francis was scheduled for his trip home.

When was Francis released?

Around 5 pm on Sunday October 27th 2013, NMLC staff and volunteers brought Francis down to Scusset Beach in Sandwich where he returned to his ocean home.



Go Francis!



Pledge Ceremony: Officially became AmeriCorps Cape Cod members!

AmeriCorps is a federally funded national service movement overseen by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Often referred to as the “Domestic Peace Corps,” AmeriCorps engages Americans of different ages and backgrounds in service to address the most critical needs in our nation’s communities. Examples of program focus areas are education, literacy, public safety, the environment and disaster response.