

The Value of Conservation

Nonprofit organizations provided a variety of services and add value to any community. It can be a challenge to place a value on the benefits of these organizations. As a conservation-based land trust NHCP measures our impact on the community by the number of acres we have conserved (222 acres), miles of trail we have built and maintained (7.5) and the number of people who have participated in our education programs (200 + in 2023). We can count the number of trees (250+) we have planted, number of volunteers (58), the number of volunteer hours (150+) and number of individuals who visit our preserves (929 + in 2023). These numbers help quantify the work NHCP does and the benefit it provides the community. However, the intrinsic value of open, conserved land, scenic vistas, the opportunity to connect to nature and this place are in many ways the greater benefit, though hard to measure. Development pressure and changes in land ownership attitudes will continue to reduce and limit open spaces as more houses are built, lots developed, and land posted. The value of conserved land is often most appreciated by future generations as anyone who has visited Marthas Vineyard or Nantucket will attest to.

One value of local nonprofits, including NHCP that is not often considered is the economic contributions these organizations make to a community. In 2022 NHCP paid \$72,518 directly to North Haven businesses, residents, and the Town. These expenses include a donation of \$6,000 to the Town of North Haven, wages to year round residents, office rent and various contractual services.

NHCP and all North Haven's nonprofit organizations add to the fabric of community that make this island such a special place to live and visit. The work we do is made possible only through the generous support of the greater North Haven community, which we are sincerely grateful.

In last month's North Haven News article about the horse chestnut tree, I mistakenly described a tree near the exit of Mullins Head Park as a horse chestnut. I have since learned that this tree is actually a buckeye tree. It is the same genus (*Aesculus*) as the horse chestnut but a different species. The most noticeable difference is that the fruit of the buckeye is smooth where the horse chestnut fruit is spiky. The leaves of the buckeye are also slightly narrower and come to more of a sharp point.

NHCP will once again be hosting a wreath making program with Rachel Alexandroue on December 2nd from 1- 3 pm at the North Haven School projects building. There will be a \$20 charge for this program, all materials will be provided. Please contact nhcp@northhavenconservation.org with any questions.