



ENVIRONMENTAL LOOKOUT: HONORING A LOCAL ENVIRONMENTALIST

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Former Mashpee Assistant Conservation Agent Katelyn Cadoret with Conservation Agent Andrew McManus

Many Mashpee residents have come to know Katelyn Cadoret – if not in person, then at least in name. At times, Katelyn has been the voice and face of Mashpee’s Conservation Department – whether through her springtime training program on how to count herring, presentations at the library or senior center on pollinator gardens or the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, litter cleanup initiatives, or her tireless championing of the land stewardship program designed to monitor and safeguard our conservation lands. In the 6 and a half years she has worked side-by-side with Mashpee’s Conservation Agent, Andrew McManus, what a difference Katelyn has made – for our residents, waterways, open spaces, and wildlife.

When Katelyn was hired on a part-time basis in the Conservation Department in October 2015, she was not new to Mashpee. After growing up in Florida where her passion for animals first began (manatees were among her favorite), Katelyn’s family moved to Mashpee in 1999 where she attended Mashpee Middle-High School for six years and graduated in 2005. Her interest in nature and wildlife was rekindled at Cape Cod Community College where she took ecology and biology courses taught by exceptional faculty as part of a Liberal Arts program. She then enrolled in and graduated from Bridgewater State University where she earned a B.S. degree in Biology with a concentration in Environmental Biology in 2012.

Katelyn soon put her studies and love of nature to good use. Before reconnecting with Mashpee in 2015 as an employee, Katelyn interned with the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR) and later joined Mass Audubon where she participated in the coastal waterbird program, served as a shorebird monitor and supervised trainees. Katelyn’s educational background and work experience both fit well with her role at Mashpee’s Conservation Department – plus she took full advantage of opportunities to expand her skill set with responsibilities that included conducting

educational and training programs, coordinating land stewards, supervising AmeriCorps volunteers, committee work involving the Environmental Oversight Committee and Conservation Commission, enforcing the Mashpee Wetlands Protection Bylaw, and serving as board member and Past President of the Friends of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge (FMNWR).

The timing of this tribute is bittersweet – as it is not only our attempt to say “thank you” to Katelyn for her many contributions to our town, but also farewell. On May 13th, Katelyn left her position as Mashpee’s Assistant Conservation Agent and she has already moved to Alaska – a perfect location for a young environmentalist with a deep love of nature and who is ready for new professional opportunities and challenges.

We had the great pleasure of sitting down with Katelyn at Town Hall a few days before her departure. During our interview, she shared with us a glimpse of her new life in Alaska, where she and her partner, Matt, will be settling down in the city of Seward – located on Resurrection Bay with a population of just over 2700, 120 miles by road south of Anchorage. Katelyn’s new job will begin May 23rd, where she will be working at the Alaska Sea Life Center in Seward, which is Alaska’s only permanent marine mammal rehabilitation facility. As her main responsibilities will be in their aviary center, Katelyn’s past experience with Mass Audubon, WBNERR, and her more recent work with ospreys will all serve her well.

When asked what she will miss most about Mashpee, Katelyn mentioned the diversity of her job, the incredible natural resources on Cape Cod, the partnerships she has formed, and the opportunities for collaboration – all for the good of the environment. Though Mashpee still has its challenges, she is heartened by how much land and wildlife have been preserved – and to have witnessed the return to Mashpee of the osprey, otters, and New England cottontails has been extremely rewarding.

In speaking about Katelyn’s departure with Tom Fudala, a colleague on the FMNWR board, he summed her up perfectly. “Katelyn is an awesome, kind, focused force of (and for) nature! She brought energy and smarts to the Mashpee Conservation Department and to the Friends of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge. She will be greatly missed.”

Mashpee Environmental Coalition board members have worked closely with Katelyn these many years, witnessing firsthand her work through the various programs, committees, and boards with which she has been involved – and we applaud her accomplishments and dedication to protecting Mashpee’s incredible conservation lands and natural resources. It is safe to say that Alaska’s gain is Mashpee’s loss, but we all wish Katelyn well as she begins this new chapter in her life and career.

Irene Checkovich and Virginia Scharfenberg are board members of the Mashpee Environmental Coalition. Additional information about our organization may be found at www.mashpeemec.us.