

Former Mashpee Town Planner Thomas Fudala to receive the 2023 Mark Robinson Award from The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts



THE COMPACT
OF CAPE COD CONSERVATION TRUSTS, INC.



Tom Fudala came to Mashpee in 1984 when it was poised to become the fastest growing town in the state. One of the new town planner's first jobs was to stop a 300-home and golf course development along the Mashpee River. Mr. Fudala updated the town's open space plan and secured 58 percent of the purchase funds from the state, through its Self-Help (now, LAND) grant to the tune of \$3.35 million, still the largest of such grants, to buy the land and stop the development. That conservation area became what is now known as the Mashpee River Woodlands, which has grown to include almost four miles of public walking trails.

Tom Fudala was Town Planner 1984 - 2018

Mr. Fudala was also deeply involved in the Quashnet Coalition, which convinced the state to spend \$10 million to purchase land in the late 1980s from developers now known as part of the Quashnet Woods State Reservation. Instead of a development of nearly 600 condominiums, the developer backed down to about 30, thus securing about 350 acres of conservation, now managed by the Mass. Dept. of Fish and Game. The Quashnet River has been restored as a sea-run brown trout stream.

One of Mr. Fudala's proudest accomplishments as a town planner was the creation of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, a 6,000-acre preserve owned and managed by a collection of landowners. The effort came about in 1995 when state money became harder and harder to get. Fudala proposed connecting a number of open spaces to each other purchased or owned by several entities, including US Fish & Wildlife, the state, tribe, Falmouth Rod & Gun Club, Orenda, as well as Mashpee. To this day, the refuge is joined in places by single, small plots of land. After receiving letters of support from across the state and U.S. Rep Gerry Studds, Congress approved the refuge and start-up funding. The approval may or may not have coincided with a letter passed by Mr. Fudala to President Clinton during a rally for Sen. Kennedy in Boston.

Over his time as town planner, Mr. Fudala said that some of his proudest accomplishments include drafting a number of plans, including the Mashpee Comprehensive Plan, a master plan in the late '80s, an affordable housing plan, a watershed management plan, and a coastal management plan. He was also instrumental in getting the town to adopt a Water District and Sewer Commission, both of which he has served on. *(portions excerpted from the Mashpee Enterprise, Jan. 4, 2018)*