

# THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

A MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE COMMUNITY  
FROM THE OGUNQUIT RESIDENTS ALLIANCE

## Taxpayers Benefit from Grant Funds

When Patricia Finnigan was hired as Town Manager in August 2017, she recognized that Ogunquit had infrastructure repairs that had gone unattended. She also knew that Federal and State grants were an as-yet untapped resource for the Town.

Since applying for grant funding is a tedious, detail-oriented process that takes persistence, she astutely hired consultant David Riccio as the Special Projects Manager to accomplish this task. This was the start of an inflow of monies to Ogunquit that has afforded the opportunity to perform major repairs to the Marginal Way and offset unanticipated Covid-19 costs, improving community safety.

Since the storms of March 2018, the Town has received over \$1.2 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to repair damages to the path and along River Road. This represents 40% of all grant money to York County. The State Stream Smart program has also provided \$95,000 for the repair of the Captain Thomas Road culverts.

In addition to the storm repair grants, the Town has received over \$250,000 in State funding under the Governor's Keep Maine Healthy program and over \$200,000 in FEMA Covid-19 grants.

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### COVID-19 News

Watch for vaccine updates:

[www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines](http://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines)

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### Pat Finnigan's Contract

No decision yet from the Select Board on our Town Manager's contract – expiring Feb. 13th



These funds went toward the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), signage, increased CSO coverage, etc. Without these grants, we would have had to use the Town's Rainy Day/Emergency funds. The Chamber of Commerce received a further amount of over \$20,000 for signage and other Covid-19 related materials for businesses.

FEMA funds will still be rolling in during 2021 (over \$600,000 has been committed by the Agency), but only if these applications are fully supported with proper documentation and accounting. Ogunquit has to pay for a portion of the repairs (10%), but it is only a small fraction of the monetary benefits we expect to receive. These funds from granting agencies have saved taxpayer money required for necessary repairs, and provided pandemic related equipment and education.

# Meet the Fire Chief

By Bobbi Treen

At five years of age Ed Smith wanted to go to the fire house instead of playing ordinary sports. "I always was a volunteer for the fire service and never in my life did I dream of becoming Chief!" His pride and honor of this attainment (twice!) has him glowing as he talks of his 8 full-timers as "the best crew in Southern Maine."

His appointment in 2006 didn't come out of the blue as his background made him the logical candidate for the job. After growing up on Beach Street, attending the Village School, and serving on The USS Forrestal for four years, he returned to his home in Ogunquit and went into his very successful propane/gas business until the early 1990's. In this guise Ed became an expert in all the propane and fire safety requirements as well as being a member of the York County Fire Company for 15 years and a volunteer with the local Wells/Ogunquit Fire Department since 1983. On a tour of the Fire House there's a recitation of the equipment and its capabilities; the astonishing life saving equipment, the rigorous training, our two valued EMT's and all the shiny objects that Ed has had the foresight to include in his budget for our safety. And beyond all the mechanics of his job is his remarkable ability at team building...he is so proud of his staff.

In talking with the Chief, you can't separate his professionalism from his community connection. He is the 'poster boy' for Ogunquit; his grandfather built The Cliff House! His mother was born at The Cliff House! His father owned Maxwell's butcher shop and grocery store! You find out about his leadership in cub scouts, boy scouts and his 46 years as a Rotarian (President twice). But at the end of his shift at the Fire Station, he goes home to the love of his life...his wife of 38 years whom he credits as his greatest gift.

Once Ed retires, and although he says he's "going to sit back and take it easy," we won't be losing him as he is a Trustee of the fire house building and I suspect that if we need a rescue, Ed Smith will still be the one to call.



*Fire Station Mural painted by John Stand*

## Ogunquit Police Bucket Program

For those who are not physically able to transport heavy buckets of sand to your home, simply call the Police Station (646-9362) and let them know. One of the Community Policing Officers will bring a FREE bucket of sand to your home. Save the bucket for pick up in the spring. Call if you need more.

# Ogunquit's Natural Resources

## What is a Watershed & Why Is It Important?

By Elaine Cooper

A watershed is an area of land that drains or “sheds” water into a specific waterbody. A watershed carries water that is shed from the land into soils, groundwater and streams as it moves to its final destination. It is important to remember that whatever you do on the land not only affects water quality in your watershed but also impacts wildlife, aquatic life, vegetation, as well as people living downstream.

The Ogunquit River Watershed covers approximately 21 square miles draining Ogunquit, Wells, Berwick and York. The Watershed includes the main stem of the Ogunquit River, as well as the Green, Bragdon and Stevens Brooks, and a number of small ponds and wetlands. Originating in South Berwick, the Ogunquit River travels east and southeast eventually forming the long salt marsh estuary between the two barrier beaches, North and Ogunquit, before joining the Atlantic Ocean at Ogunquit Beach. The salt marsh estuary it forms within the Rachael Carson National Wildlife refuge creates important habitat for the endangered Piping Plover and two species of turtles. The smaller Josias River Watershed drains approximately 7.4 square miles in portions of York and Ogunquit and empties into the Gulf of Maine in Perkins Cove. The main stem of the river is 5.75 miles in length and drops 220’ along its length. This watershed also includes numerous small ponds and wetlands which provide valuable habitat for rare plants and endangered and threatened wildlife.

With the continued development of privately owned conservation land, undeveloped forest land and coastal areas, there is increased potential to degrade water quality. [Check out this short video on watersheds.](#)

*Continued →*

[See this video](#) on the recent Great Works land purchase in Ogunquit

## What is the Maine Healthy Beaches (MHB) Program?

A statewide effort to monitor water quality and protect public health at Maine’s participating coastal beaches. In 2003, MHB started monitoring Ogunquit’s five beaches (Footbridge, Little, Main, North and Riverside).

### MHB Program includes:

- Routine monitoring of fecal bacteria levels at all beaches
- Assessment and risk from bacteria contamination and rainfall advisories (excess rainfall increases stormwater runoff)
- Evaluation of existing impairments
- Providing public education and outreach
- Establishing collaborative partnerships with municipalities, the EPA, Universities in order to find, fix and prevent pollution sources

## Who is FB Environmental?

A consulting firm specializing in environmental planning, assessment, monitoring, mapping, modeling and restoration projects in the watersheds of New England’s lakes, streams, rivers and estuaries.

In 2013, FB Environmental started working with the Conservation Commission to track the source of fecal indicator bacteria in the impaired Ogunquit River. In 2014, The Ogunquit Watershed Restoration Project was established including annual testing.

### Program Phases:

1. Installation of Best Management Practices (BMP’s) on commercial, residential and municipal properties that included technical assistance, smoke testing and updating of the septic/sewer database.
2. BMP’s at the Main Beach parking lot and targeted public outreach including door-to-door education and flyer distribution, mailings, catch basin stenciling, and pet waste signage.
3. Further implementation of BMP program for 2020 and beyond has been delayed due to the pandemic.

## Coming in February

More on the recommendations by the Town Conservation Commission regarding river and beach water testing, septic system monitoring and land use ordinances protecting our resources.

# Breezes of Yore

Our *Breeze* is the 3rd iteration of The Ogunquit Breeze. The 1st edition was printed weekly, for a nickel a copy, in 1912!...and again in 1951. It was said to be “devoted to the interests of Ogunquit,” as are we. Stay tuned for all you need to know, then and now.

In the mid-winter of 1951, the Civic Club Committee coupled with the Publicity Bureau Committee, leader among them Roby Littlefield, divined and produced “The Ogunquit Breeze”. It began: “Dear Summer Guests: From the interest that you folks show about what goes on here in Ogunquit during your winter absence, we thought that an Ogunquit midwinter bulletin would be welcomed.”

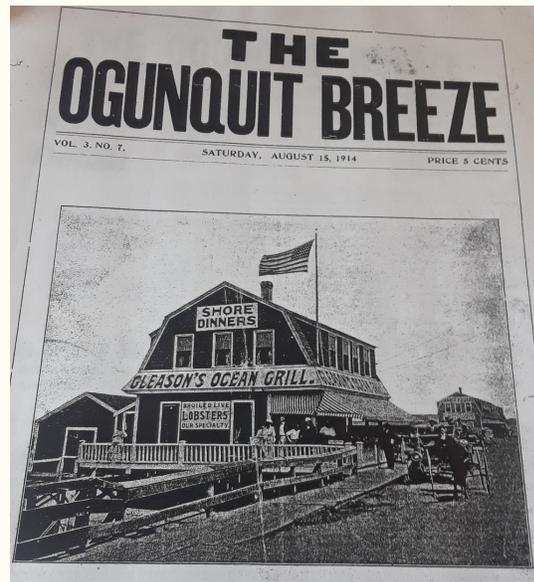
And then the *Breeze* told us of the storms, the foliage, the new constructions, the Cove dredging, the resident’s whereabouts, the hospitalizations, the births, and the town characters who enriched the images of our town. It advised us of arrivals and departures of all types: “*The Grayline Sight Seeing Tours north from Boston have announced that they will stop in Ogunquit for visits to scenic spots and have lunch at Valeries.*”

Over the years we were treated to the original of ‘all the news that was fit to print’, such as in 1971, “*The Aspinquid has been torn down and will be replaced by a motel... 12 motel units have been added to the Sparhawk motel, and Mr. & Mrs. Russel Ireland have bought the Barbara Dean Restaurant and plan to run it as the high class eating place it always has been –no liquor, no carousing.*”

And the *Breeze* carried an ‘Anecdote’ column telling us this story: “*As proprietor of an Inn (The Old Maxwell House at the corner of Main St and Berwick St.) Mr. Barak sold liquors. One day a woman from “up back” came to him and said “Mr. Maxwell, I wish you would refuse to sell my husband any more liquor. When sober he is as good a husband anyone could ask for, but when he has been drinking he is ugly, beats me and the children and spends money we need for food and clothing.*”

*Mr. Barack was so moved by her plea he could not sleep that night. In the morning he announced he was selling no more liquor, pulled the barrel spilas, spilling the liquor he had on hand, and the Old Maxwell House became the first temperance tavern in Maine.*”

As our new *Breeze* blows monthly, we’ll remind you of Breezes of Yore.



Cover from August 1914

## Free Computer Classes

As part of the Maine Digital Inclusion Initiative (MDII), The National Digital Equity Center has online learning in the form of interactive instructional webinars. You can enroll in their free classes and tutoring at [digitalequitycenter.org](http://digitalequitycenter.org)

The classes are organized under three curricula:

- For Work & Business
- For Home & Education
- Aging Well with Technology

Classes are between one and four sessions. All sessions are one hour in length. Multi-session classes are held on consecutive days of the week or on the same day and time across a number of weeks. For more information, go to their website and click on each class to see what is currently on the schedule.

In January the Wells-Ogunquit Historical Society is offering [\*\*Identifying Old House Styles \(Part II\)\*\*](#) by Bryce Waldrop

With more than \$25,000 raised the [\*\*Ogunquit Spirit of Giving\*\*](#) has almost reached their goal of \$30,000!

