

WE CAN CONTRIBUTE to a RESILIENT FUTURE

Vanessa Hobbs + Terrence Attridge

Being able to call Cape Ann “home” is a daily practice of appreciation and gratitude. After many years of traveling and living across the country, I’ve convinced my Manchester-by-the-sea native partner, Terrence, to settle into my childhood neighborhood in the north woods of Lanesville. Truthfully, it was an easy sell; wild blueberries and huckleberries in the summer, walking distance to the ocean, adventuring on miles of trails through the Greenbelt, and the chance to build the fanciest chicken coop we could dream up.

Reflecting on my childhood in Lanesville, I spent most of my youngest years surrounded by artists, activists, builders, crafters, creators, historians, lobstermen and musicians. Each one was deeply rooted in their environment. Each one involved in preservation and community in their own way. Like many generations before us, Terrence and I are defining stewardship in a way that is closely tied to how our way of life influences climate change, and we are focused on identifying actionable and attainable steps to make a positive impact for our family and broader community. It very much feels as though Cape Ann is at a historic crossroads and learning more about organizations doing critical work like the Cape Ann Climate Coalition and TownGreen is an inspiring testament to the passion of so many people asking similar questions of: How can we raise awareness and incentivize sustainable practices? What resources are available to us and our neighbors? How is Cape Ann assessing climate impact?

From just our small sphere of influence, we have direct line of sight into the impacts of climate change. We’re observing the vernal pools and biodiversity of the wetlands impacted by summer droughts, large scale brush and forest fires, rising sea levels, and coastal flooding. We’re seeing how prolific non-native flora is impacting food sources for the native fauna. We’re seeing and feeling how difficult it is to keep pace with the demands of day to day life that also disconnects us from being part of the oceans, forests and community. The more we try to slow down, spend more time learning and connecting with Cape Ann, the more we see how climate change is rapidly shifting the landscape with devastating effects for friends, family and local businesses. Drastically changing weather patterns threaten both natural habitats, vital ecosystems, and economic sustainability alongside our ecological stability.

Our journey back to home has not only reignited our connection to this remarkable place but also deepened our commitment to its stewardship in the face of climate change. Each day spent in Cape Ann serves as a reminder of the intricate balance between nature and community, and the urgent need for collective action. The challenges we face are daunting, yet they also present an opportunity for innovation and collaboration. By actively engaging with our neighbors, harnessing local resources, and fostering sustainable practices, we can contribute to a resilient future for Cape Ann. We remain hopeful that our individual and collective steps can inspire and grow broader community involvement. Together, we can foster a culture of appreciation and responsibility, ensuring that Cape Ann remains a vibrant and thriving home for generations to

come. The journey may be complex, but it is one we embrace with gratitude and determination, knowing that every action counts in the fight for our environment and our community.