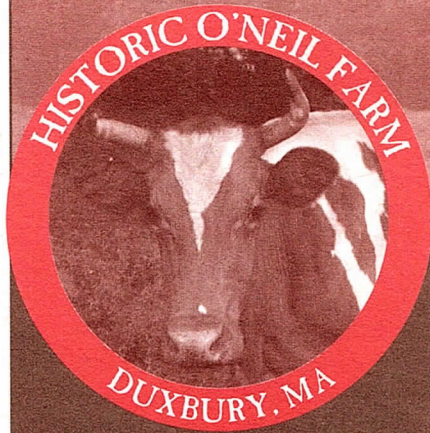


Summer 2021



The Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation committed to maintaining the 145-acre farm in agriculture in perpetuity, preserving and protecting the historic landscape and natural habitat, providing educational programs, and offering public access to the farm.

**Board of Directors:**

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Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc.  
PO Box 2755  
Duxbury, MA 02331

email:

historiconeilfarm@gmail.com  
website: historiconeilfarm.org

Find Us on Facebook  
and Instagram:



The Autumn Avenue trailhead  
parking lot is open dawn to dusk.

## 2021 Transition

**If you've ever met Carl O'Neil, you know that dairy farming is in his blood.** Fortunately for Duxbury, Carl foresaw the day when he would no longer be able to work his fields, care for his herd, and tend to all the other obligations of running a dairy operation. Preparing for that day, Carl worked with the Wildlands Trust to create the Historic O'Neil Farm, a separate non-profit organization that would buy the farm from O'Neil and his family and lease it back to him until his retirement.

Among other things, Historic O'Neil Farm was established to:

- Preserve the farm, which has operated as a dairy for over 100 years.
- Offer educational programs to educate children about the importance of agriculture in New England's history and culture.
- Provide walking trails and manage the working farm landscape to maximize the value of the land for wildlife.

Since the launch of Historic O'Neil Farm, Carl has worked hard to maintain the wholesale dairy operation but that operation will not continue. The HOF Board has worked with Carl to create educational opportunities through the schools, 4-H Clubs, farm tours, Farm Days, other options intended to complement Carl's work while advancing the farm's mission. But everyone who knows the farm – Carl, the Board, and all of you reading this newsletter – have known that eventually, Carl would want to retire and that things would have to change. Carl has expressed a desire to reduce his role and responsibilities as age has reduced his abilities and his retirement is nearing.

Carl is not going anywhere. The farm is his home. But the size of the herd and Carl's role will change in the foreseeable future.

Farmers are notoriously industrious and innovative, and as the HOF Board and Carl develop a plan for the farm's next iteration, we hope to be equally industrious and innovative. If you have visited the farm recently, walked the trails, or passed by the fields, you may have noticed that we have started an intensive effort to manage invasive vegetation in the fields. This effort will continue as we work toward improving the overall quality of the fields for the next farmer. Several of the buildings at the farmstead, including the bungalow and others are in a state of disrepair, and in the coming months those buildings may be replaced or repaired.

As we focus on all of the construction and field improvement efforts, we will cut back on our farm tours and educational opportunities to ensure public safety. Our trails will remain open, and we encourage you to enjoy them.

We look forward to communicating with you about our plans as they develop and become clear.

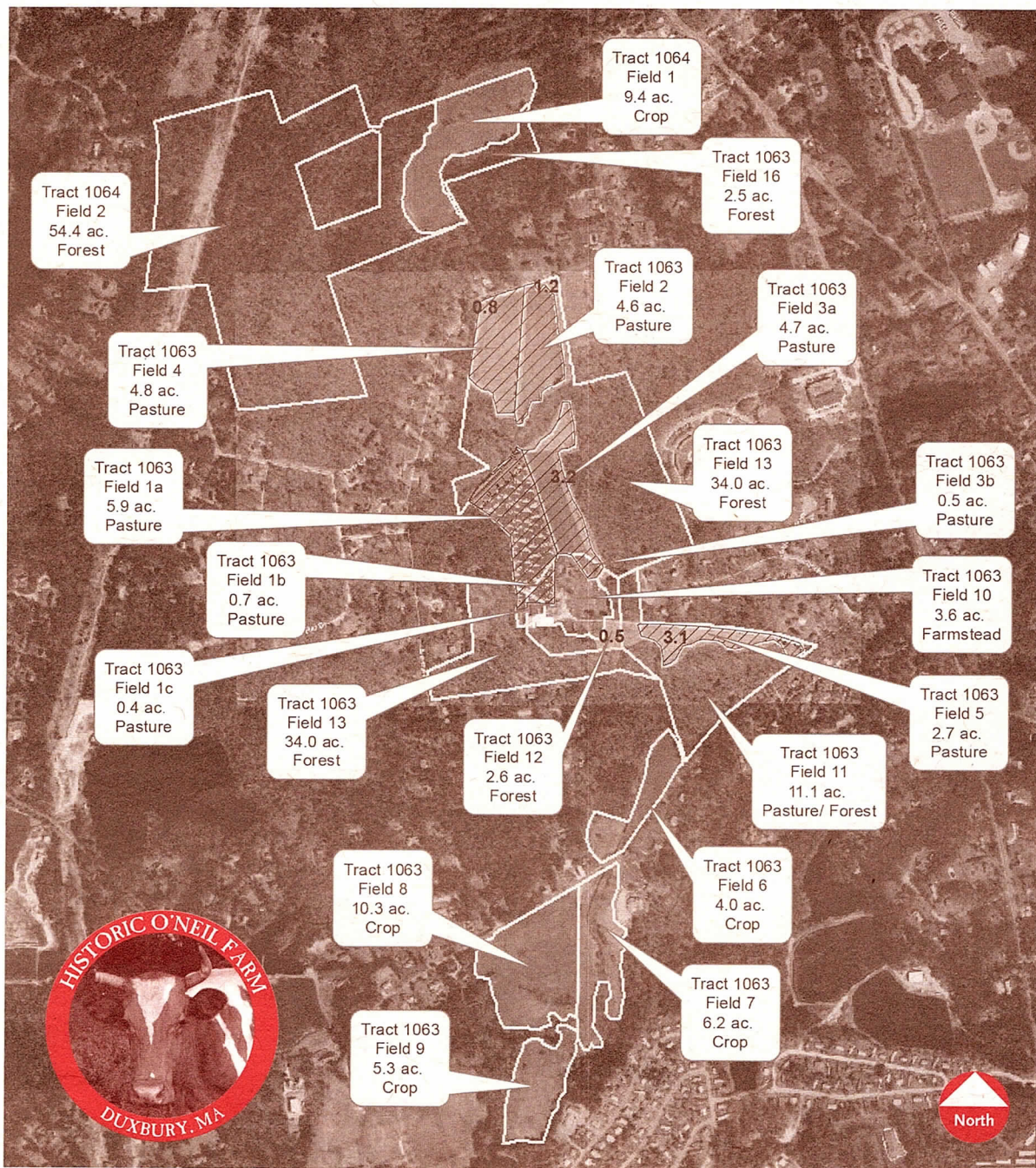
**Thank you for your important support.**



# O'Neil Farm Invasive Plant Management

If you have walked the trails at O'Neil Farm lately, you will see the amazing work that has been done to combat the invasive species that were taking over the farm fields. Walking down the Avery trail you can view approximately 21.5 acres of pastureland that have been cleared of the large multiflorous rose bushes and other invasive vines. Mr. O'Neil had always named the fields with alphabet letters so he could tell you what hay came off what field, but for invasive management, we had to break the fields up more specifically and also used colors to code the extent of the invasives. The attached map shows the Historic O'Neil Farm pasture and forest property (not including o Fortune

Lane purchase). On the map the areas with the diagonal lines (Field 2, 3a, 4, and 5) were where we had the largest infestation. The Field 5 and 3a had the heaviest hit with invasive plant species. The initial work was completed last year on Field 5 and if you drive down Winter street you will see quite a difference in the quality of the field. Before the cattle had only a narrow trail to enter the small field by the front fence, now it is clear. You can also see the old stone fence that was completely covered with invasive brush. This year the focus has been on Field 3a, 2, and 4, with spot treatments in field 12, 1b and the barnyard. There is such a difference in the fence line, the area around the





This Stone Wall in the Avery Trail Field Was Not Visible Last Year. For Before and After Photos of the Fields, Visit the Website.

brook, and as you look across the fields. We've included photos, but we hope you walk the Avery trail and see the difference yourselves. We appreciate the amazing work done by Abraham Monahan from Bartlett Tree Experts and Sean Moran from Blarney Construction.

The property map outlines the properties to help us plan for future conservation practices. You will notice the Duxbury Town owned fields 6, 7, 8, and 9, which are not part of the Historic O'Neil Farm property, but relied on for hay. Field 1b is a heavy use area since the cattle enter and exit the barn in that area and it has had a drainage issue that we have been working to address in the last decade. This area will require additional work as we plan for the future. There are also two old granite brook crossings that have begun to collapse and will require improvements so that farm equipment can safely cross the stream and travel between fields.

For invasive control Historic O'Neil Farm applied for and received a three year grant from NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) for a total of \$24,373.00. We have spent significantly more than that so far this year and we have appreciated all of your donations and continued support. This is going to be a multi-step, multi-year process but we are committed to restoring the hayfields back into great haying and grazing land for the cows that live here at Historic O'Neil Farm.



## Calf Corner



Pixie, a Holstein Born March 23rd. Pinkie's First Baby.

## Black Racers and Turtles

The other night, several of us were talking about all the wildlife you can see at the farm and on the trails: deer, fox, coyote, rabbits are all common sights. Carl asked if anyone had seen Box Turtles or Black Racers? Box Turtles? Black Racers? "We used to see both of them at the farm, down by the streams, in the fields." He said.

According to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Eastern Box Turtle is a small terrestrial turtle typically between 4.5 and 6.6 inches long. It gets its name from a hinge on the lower shell that allows it to enclose head, legs, and tail completely within the upper (carapace) and lower shells. The carapace is usually dark brown or black with irregular yellow, orange, or reddish blotches. The head, neck, and legs also vary in color and markings, but are generally dark with orange or yellow mottling.



This turtle likes to live on the land, as opposed to in ponds or streams, and can be found in both moist and dry woodlands and the edges of streams, places the farm has loads of! The turtles hibernate in the winter but start to come out in the spring and are most active in the summer months. They forage for slugs, insects, earthworms but also mushrooms, berries, roots and leaves.

Okay, so we know what a turtle looks like but what is a Black Racer? If you don't like snakes you might want to skip ahead.

The Black Racer, also known as Coluber constrictor, is a snake that can get pretty large, up to 73 inches (over six feet!) long according to Mass Audubon. The Black Racer, is mostly black and, as the name implies is very fast, though it would prefer to get away from danger rather than bother people. Also, as the name implies, the Black Racer is a constrictor, like the much larger boas and pythons who, thankfully, do not naturally like the cold New England climate.

According to Carl, he used to see both the Eastern Box Turtle and the Black Racer when he was growing up but he hasn't seen them in a while.

Historic O'Neil Farm enjoys all the photos you have captured and shared by mentioning and tagging us on Facebook. We are launching our Instagram account [@historiconeil](#) and would love for you to mention us when you share your observations as you walk the Avery and Chandler Trails. If you happen upon wildlife as you explore the farm tag us also at [#hofwildlife](#). We can't wait to see if someone spots a Box Turtle or even a Black Racer (if from a distance). Please be careful not to disturb the wildlife.



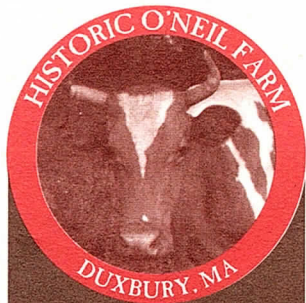
Visit our website at: [www.historiconeilfarm.org](http://www.historiconeilfarm.org)  
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See inside for:

- HOF Invasive Plant Management
- Calf Corner
- Black Racers and BoxTurtles

# Historic O'Neil Farm is Moo-ving Forward



## Thank You

**for Your Financial Support of Historic O'Neil Farm**

The major field improvement project is in the final phases, but there will be more field maintenance and improvement in the coming years along with improvements to the barns and homestead. As Mr. O'Neil takes this time to reassess and we are evaluating our structures we are taking a step back from hosting activities, such as, milking demonstrations and tours. We will resume programs hosted at the farm as soon as we can. We encourage to you visit the farm via the Avery and Chandler trails throughout the seasons. We appreciate all of your financial donations and notes of encouragement. Thank you for your support.

Donations can be made using the adjacent form and mailed to :

**Historic O'Neil Farm, P.O. Box 2755  
Duxbury, MA 02331**

or online at

[www.historiconeilfarm.org/donate](http://www.historiconeilfarm.org/donate).

The board of directors thanks you for your generosity and continued support.

✂

**YES, I am committed to helping Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc. move into the future.** Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$25    \$50    \$100    \$250    \$500    Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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