

## Origin of the Hay Property

*By Cheryl Ferrara*

The name of the Hay Conservation and Recreation Area may seem confusing at first. The long, narrow stretch of sloping land that ends at Broad Cove is more like a meadow bright with lupines (in season) than a hayfield. The area is named for its donor: John Hay.

Mr. Hay was a naturalist, visionary and author. He spent the last years of his life in Bremen after moving to the area from Cape Cod, Massachusetts. He died in Bremen at the age of 95.

Mr. Hay was born in Ipswich, Massachusetts, but grew up in New York City. His interest in nature was developed during his summer visits to his grandfather's home on Lake Sunapee in New Hampshire. He graduated from Harvard College in 1938 and purchased 18 acres on Cape Cod just prior to World War II. After the War, he lived there with his wife and children, expanding his estate to over 50 acres. Much of his land remains under conservation protections.

Mr. Hay co-founded the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in 1954 and authored 18 books, including a book of poetry. His first book, "The Run," celebrated the environmental uniqueness of Stone Brook Valley in Brewster County (MA) where he served on the Brewster County Conservation Commission and championed the acquisition of hundreds of acres of salt marsh for conservation.

His writings advocate for forward vision when considering environmental causes, particularly the preservation of sensitive wetlands. In his eighth book, "In Defense of Nature," published in 1969, Mr. Hay postulates that nature and the human experience run in tandem. He believed that the loss of the former reduced the possibility of imagination in the latter. He postulated that focusing on nature provides us the ability to expand our minds.

The matching gift, from his family, for the Hay Property allowed the Town of Bremen to purchase the land for half its cost. Bremen residents approved the purchase of the 10-acre property in June 2013, and in November 2013, approved a parking lot near the road. Later, in 2015, residents voted to further improve the property by adding a country-style road from Route 32 down to the water and a parking lot near the cove.