

Fall/Winter, 2025 Volume 6, Issue 2

From the President

In early 2025 the Board of Directors of CPWB embarked on a review and revision of our Mission Statement, which had received no updates since its original drafting. We sat down to discuss what was right about the existing Mission Statement and what needed attention, and you can read the results of our work below. We thank longtime Board member Dan Rothenberg for his leadership.

The timing on this was good. Our Board has been talking a great deal about where we want to take CPWB, and in order to select projects and issues to work on—other than those like the algal mats covering Waquoit Bay in May that demanded our attention!—we recognized our need for more of a roadmap, to be able to better gauge whether a given initiative is right on our way to our destination, or more of a detour.



Over the past few years, CPWB has largely served a public education function, sharing important information about fertilizer use (skip it!), about stormwater runoff (let's fix it!), about cleaning up dog waste (let's scoop it!), about landscaping (let's feature native plants!), and generally trying to keep the public informed about the sadly degraded state of Waquoit Bay.

The Board remains committed to advancing CPWB's role in public education, and to that end we featured a conversation at our annual meeting in August with Steve Rafferty of the Water Quality Management Committee (WQMC), and Bryan Horsley, Project Assistant at Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center (MASSTC) about the WQMC's watershed planning process and the status of the Urine Diversion Pilot Project overseen by MASSTC. See inside for a summary of the meeting. [Please note that CPWB will co-sponsor a webinar reprise of this conversation on November 20, 4-5:30pm with the Falmouth Pond Coalition (FPC) and Falmouth Water Stewards. If you receive this newsletter in time to register, go to *falmouthpondcoalition.com* to receive a link. If you see this after November 20, the webinar will be recorded and available for viewing on the websites of the FPC and CPWB.]

In addition to public education initiatives, CPWB has been taking a more activist advocacy stance on behalf of Waquoit Bay. To that end:

⇨ In January we sent a letter to Falmouth's Board of Health in support of Buzzard Bay Coalition's proposal for a change to the Health Code that would require installation of Innovative/ Alternative Septic Systems for new construction.

⇨ We have attended Board of Health meetings and public hearings to speak on behalf of CPWB in favor of the code changes, which we are very pleased to announce will go into effect on November 15.

⇨ We brought the issue of algal mats carpeting Waquoit Bay to the attention of the WQMC and the Falmouth Enterprise in May, and were grateful to see over 50 people attend a meeting of the WQMC at which we enumerated steps we would like to see the WQMC take to accelerate action on remediating water

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CITIZENS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WAQUOIT BAY

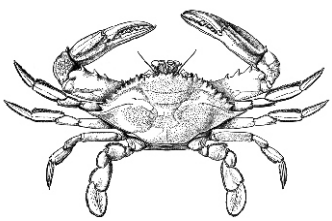
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Meet Some of Our New Board Members

We’re pleased to announce our new Board members, who were presented and voted in during our Annual Meeting this summer. Read on to get to know them and learn a bit about their backgrounds:



Tim Martin has been a year-round resident of Monomoscoy Island in Mashpee since May 2014. Originally from the Midwest, he has a background in physics and developed a passion for conservation early on through work with his father in the 1970s, focusing on passive solar homes and anaerobic digesters. Tim spent 40 years at the U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory, specializing in atmospheric science. His work involved the design and deployment of field instruments to monitor interactions between Earth's surfaces and the atmosphere.

Currently, Tim serves as President of the Monomoscoy Island Improvement Association and has been an active member of the water quality monitoring team in Waquoit Bay for several years, contributing to the UMass Dartmouth SMAST project. In addition to his scientific and environmental work, Tim is deeply involved in the arts and local history. He is passionate about vocal music and acoustics, and he serves as President of the Falmouth Genealogical Society, whose mission is “Connecting People with Their Family and History.” He also brings expertise in computer data acquisition and control, internet applications, and researching information about both the living and the deceased.

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quality in Waquoit Bay. We intend to go back to the WQMC to reiterate our concerns and check in on their progress on some of our suggested action items.

⇨ We have identified affordability of septic system upgrades as a key issue for CPWB, and to that end we have sent a letter this month in support of House Bill H.4082 seeking to change the current Non-Refundable Title 5 Septic Tax Credit Law to a Refundable Title 5 Septic Tax Credit to the Joint Committee on Revenue. This bill, submitted by Falmouth State Representative David Vieira, would greatly increase access of lower- and middle-income households to the tax credit for connecting to a sewer system or upgrading to a Nitrogen-reducing septic system (I/A system) for people living in Nitrogen Sensitive Areas. With passage of bill H.4082, up to $18,000 could be claimed to reduce the cost burden for eligible households.

So we have *plans*. It is high time to make progress on fixing the stormwater runoff site at Martin Road and Route 28, identified in the report prepared in 2023 by Scott Horsley and Tufts graduate students that was commissioned by CPWB, and we are working on a homeowner's guide to residential wastewater (see inside for a teaser) to help educate Falmouth on what's coming and what our choices will be—but we'll be better able to execute them with your input and support. CPWB is a reflection of its members and the issues important to them. Send us feedback on the new Mission Statement—what have we missed? Send us your ideas! Let us know if you'd like to attend Board meetings and hear what we're up to. It is past time to push for change for Waquoit Bay and it needs all of us.

- Maggie Megaw

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Mission Statement: Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration, preservation, and protection of Waquoit Bay and its estuaries through research, advocacy, stewardship, education, and coordination with local, regional, state and federal stakeholders.

Objectives /Action Items

Objective*:* Improve and preserve the quality of water, sediment, and habitat of Waquoit Bay and its watersheds.

Action*:* Advocate for better management of all factors affecting water quality of the Bay and its sources, including sewage treatment, advanced wastewater systems, stormwater management, and ecologically responsible land use.

Action*:* Purchase, install, and maintain pet waste bag stations at sensitive locations.

Action*:* Engage in education and advocacy efforts for ecological best practices in land use, including reduction or elimination of fertilizer use and encouraging native plant landscaping.

Action*:* Coordinate with local, state and federal governments and agencies so that regulations, development, transportation, infrastructure, and restoration projects align with CPWB objectives.

Objective*:* Educate the general public and partner with like-minded environmental organizations to advance the core mission and objectives of CPWB.

Action*:* Publish and distribute newsletters, and maintain a website and social media presence to inform and update members and the general public.

Objective*:* Identify land and water uses within the Bay's watersheds that contribute to water, sediment and habitat degradation. Evaluate impacts and potential remediations.

Action*:* Fund and promote studies of water, sediment and habitat degradation problems in the Bay and its watersheds. Seek grants and other public and private funds to hire experts to better understand problems and their potential solutions and share results to further CPWB objectives.

Objective*:* Recognize and partner with recreational and commercial stakeholders to support uses compatible with CPWB's mission.

Action*:* Support commercial and recreational uses that depend upon a healthy bay and watersheds without undermining ongoing efforts to restore and maintain water and habitat quality.

You Too Can Make a Difference

It's time. It's time. This Fall/Winter newsletter may not feel like it's time but it is. Time. Time to start thinking about inexpensive, fairly simple, incredibly doable ways to help our communities, neighborhoods, and larger environments actively contribute to the health of our local plant and animal habitats. And beyond.

Depending on the location of your town, this summer's drought conditions and restrictions have had a detrimental impact on our yards. Many now have some scarcely green areas, bare ground, and hard-packed soil, with the crab grass being the healthiest and greenest part. The rectifying choices we make in 2026 for our outdoor living spaces will have a long-term impact.

To try something new, we will give you information on the "who" and "how" but let's start with the "why" from a variety of sources. From a previous CPWB article: "We now know the cumulative damaging environmental effect of these lush thick lawns but they are worth repeating. The chemicals (herbicides, pesticides, insecticides for mosquitoes and ticks) are broad-spectrum and kill many non-targeted species like bees, butterflies, and birds. The nitrogen/phosphorus fertilizers make their way from the lawns into all of Cape Cod's water bodies and water table, causing algae growth that smothers the formerly sandy bottoms of fresh and salt water ponds. The well-documented research across the Cape shows an incremental deterioration in water quality."



From Andrew Gottlieb, Executive Director of APCC, speaking on organic fertilizers at a CPWB Annual Meeting: "The heavy rains we frequently have wash all lawn products into the bays; the plants there don't discriminate whether the nutrients were organically or synthetically derived. Lawn companies make money by the number of visits, the quantity of fertilizers used, and the numerous trips to cut the fertilized grass. If we want clean water, we need to make small changes such as adding native plants, adding clover to lawns, and letting moss grow in shade. No fertilizer is best." And in a stark passage from a truly stunning book that should be on everyone's night table or Christmas list (The Comfort of Crows by Margaret Renkl): "Different poisons are put out on lawns to keep wildflower seeds from germinating, to kill those that germinate anyway, and to kill the insects that eat the "desirable" plants. And those poisons don't stay put, they end up in the air and the water. They end up in our bodies, linked to asthma, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, autism, and several cancers. Every time I see my neighbors' children rolling around on their poisoned lawns, absorbing into their skin and breathing into their lungs these dangerous endocrine disrupters, I have to work hard not to cry. So much life is imperiled by what is merely fashionable: a green lawn, a tidy yard." Whew.

We do see lush green lawns but we also need to look for local yards that were planned or evolved into ones of environmental mutualism. Cape Cod and Waquoit native Paul Henriksen had always loved nature; he grew up in a home that was surrounded by woodlands and his first decision with the large lot he had purchased on Collins Road was to try to duplicate what he had loved as a child. His second influence came from the environmental courses he had taken at Cape Cod Community College where he learned of the septic and lawn run-off that was destroying our estuaries. And he smiles telling of his third influence: "I didn't want to spend a lot of time mowing grass." Wanting to have a small grassed area around the home under construction but also with a natural woodland setting, he had his developer replace the soil in the large sunny area in the front. He then spread ten pounds of American Meadows Wildflower Seeds (Northeast Region) over the soil and followed that with a covering of a natural grass seed layer to protect the wildflower seeds and then let it be.



Seven years later, the front is an ever-changing magical mix of plants, grasses, colors, and textures that change each season and evolve each year. It requires no watering or care; the only maintenance is that after the second hard frost of the late fall, Paul mows it back to spread the seeds and he's done. All done. If the variety of plants isn't enough of a joy, the presence and evidence of animal wildlife is constant. Along with the expected pollinators floating over the top, Paul describes the fox, turtles, salamanders, rabbits, coyotes, wild turkeys, and he shows the crushed long grasses in the middle of the area where the deer bed down for the night.

He is not alone in finding joy in this natural evolving setting. One unexpected bonus is the small community of gardeners that slow down as they drive by.... or pull into the driveway to look.... or actually come to his door to ask questions so they can duplicate it. Some have become friends and share their own varieties of wildflowers with him. Paul works part-time at Mahoney's and views his work through the eyes of a natural gardener. Some interesting comments: Mahoney's sale of bags of clover seed has grown exponentially in the past few years; in the drought his yard clover grew better than his grass. He urges people to buy drought-tolerant grasses. "People fertilize way too much and way too early; lawns become "junkies" for chemicals and take a few years to return to a natural state."

His enthusiasm is contagious; he has turned his outdoor space into an area that requires no time and no money but gives back hours of enjoyment. It serves as a model of how to build a habitat for plants and animals that respects both. Looking at both the big picture and the small picture, it doesn't get much better than that.

- Bobye Anderson



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Leave The Leaves for Our Pollinators!

As we start our fall cleanups, consider removing the leaves off your lawn and around the house and leaving the leaves in outer beds and at the perimeter of your property. Leaves create habitat for overwintering pollinators.

In addition, consider not cutting down all your perennials to leave stalks for overwintering pollinators and a food source for birds.

Now is also a great time to make notes about your garden: what worked and what changes you might make next spring. Have a safe and happy winter!

And remember: "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."

-From Terry's Tips in **The Latest Dirt**, a Soares Flower Garden Nursery Publication
1021 Sandwich Road East Falmouth, MA 02536
Terry Soares, Co-Owner

Annual Meeting August 12, 2025

On a beautiful mid-August evening over fifty people attended CPWB's annual meeting to hear Bryan Horsley from the Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center (MASSTC) and Steve Rafferty, Chair of the Falmouth Water Quality Management Committee (WQMC) speak on Falmouth's watershed design process and options for septic system upgrades.

This year the event was held for the first time in the parish hall of the Waquoit Congregational Church. Attendees enjoyed home-baked scones and lemonade provided by Jan Smith-Rushton of Zero Waste (a bulk-buying group that aims to reduce packaging waste, support regional farmers and provide members with access to affordable, healthy food) and freshly brewed coffee donated by Rebecca Scussel's Beyond the Grind.

Rick Otis, President of CPWB, opened the meeting by announcing his retirement after four years. He highlighted CPWB's actions over the past year including a June 2025 presentation at the WQMC meeting.



Board members and officers of CPWB were voted in by the attending membership. Among these was the new president, Maggie Megaw who chaired the rest of the meeting. After thanking event supporters, she continued by highlighting Rick's significant impact on CPWB during his tenure. These included sharing his expertise from a lengthy career at the Environmental Protection Agency, introducing a new electronic filing system, and initiating "project leads" that attract innovative ideas and energy from individuals unable to commit to a Board position.

Maggie also acknowledged the contributions of Matt Patrick, a former CPWB president, who passed away at his home on July 19th in Waquoit and expressed gratitude for his significant contributions and service to CPWB, Falmouth, the Cape and the Commonwealth.

The Conversation with Steve Rafferty (WQMC) and Bryan Horsley (MASSTC)

Maggie prefaced the conversation with some background information about CPWB. In its early days CPWB focused on land conservation, with its founders Winifred "Winnie" Woods and Deborah Moore Williams especially to thank for saving Washburn Island from becoming a high-end resort. The mission of today's CPWB is education and activism with the present focus on water quality. When a large algal bloom spread across Waquoit Bay this spring, many concerned citizens voiced their concerns at the June 25th WQMC meeting. Rick and Maggie presented CPWB's list of actions critical for restoring the Bay: accelerate submission of the Waquoit Bay watershed plan to the Mass DEP; expand options for septic system upgrades for homeowners; endorse changes to the health code to require Innovative/Alternative (I/A) systems for new construction; help to expedite Department of Public Works repairs to stormwater runoff sites; and consider subsidies for septic upgrades. To this list CPWB would now recommend that the WQMC collaborate with counterparts in Mashpee to monitor wastewater treatment plants whose effluent affects Waquoit Bay.

The Speakers



Steven Rafferty is an engineer, former Falmouth Water Superintendent and current chairman of the WQMC which is an advisory committee to the Select Board on such matters as sewering projects, outfall pipes and state-mandated watershed plans.

Bryan Horsley is environmental project assistant at the Massachusetts Septic System Technology Center (MASSTC) where he leads the urine diversion liaison group. MASSTC acts as a gatekeeper for innovative septic systems, testing to verify vendor claims.



Watershed Planning Process

Steve reported that Falmouth accepted the state-mandated option to write watershed plans aimed at reducing nitrogen flow from the town's fourteen watersheds into the estuaries - the so-called nitrogen sensitive areas. It is a twenty-year plan with the need for periodic updates. Having decided to first develop a Town-Wide Watershed Plan, the WQMC is working on defining the areas that will require either sewering or I/A systems based on the need to reduce the total maximum daily limit (TMDL). The areas that will be sewered will likely expand whereas the areas for I/A systems may shrink. Cost-effectiveness is an important consideration in these decisions.

MASSTC and the Urine Diversion Project

Bryan explained that MASSTC is a division within the Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment. Although it is primarily focused on testing innovative/alternative septic systems, it is also about two years into researching the concept of urine diversion and its potential to reduce nitrogen pollution in residential wastewater. The Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) has approved three urine-derived fertilizer products in Massachusetts. Mass DEP has identified a permitting pathway for the project and will allow the measurement of the nutrient content captured in that urine. This would allow the town to incorporate urine diversion into watershed plans as a method of nitrogen reduction to meet water quality goals. The project has solicited about 170 participants, around half of which are in the Falmouth. With a grant from the DEP, they have narrowed the focus on four watersheds in Falmouth, including Waquoit Bay, Great Pond, Green Pond and Bournes Pond. The next step is to refine the list of participants via an online survey and then conduct in-home assessments of potential participants to get the list down to just twenty-five. Those homeowners will then sign a contract to allow disbursal of a $7,500 subsidy which in most cases should cover the complete cost of the installation. Installation could be one or more toilets in the home. The system will be monitored for two years through quarterly visits. The grant also pays for monitoring, sampling, sample analysis and tank pump outs. After the project ends, the homeowner assumes the cost of the system. The initial permit on the system will be for three to five years after which the homeowner will have to file for an extension.

Nitrogen Credit for Other Waster Water Systems



Bryan said that systems such as composting and incinerating toilets have been around since the 60's or 70's, but the general sense is that people are not as willing to use these methods as they are further outside of the usual habits of going to the bathroom in clean water and flushing. Composting toilets are approved in Massachusetts, but they do not get any nitrogen reduction credit because no one has really advocated for it. Bryan believes that urine diversion has become more prevalent because it is more socially acceptable. Composting and incinerating toilets, black water and grey water systems all have the potential to reduce nutrient pollution. However, the state regulators and watershed planners are not yet on board with these alternative systems. The Urine Diversion project is trying to prepare the urine diversion system to a point where it could potentially be incorporated into the areas where I/A septic systems are going to be mandated.

Steve mentioned that oyster aquaculture is allowed by the state as an approved nitrogen removal system. He agreed that MASSTC may make good progress in getting the DEP engaged in the process of approving urine diversion for nitrogen reduction credit. The UD model could be easily applied to incinerating or composting toilets. The black water/ grey water systems have other challenges including timely pump outs. Various other methods of nitrogen reduction include fertilizer reduction and stormwater management.

Financing and Tax Credits for Residents



Steve commented that the cost of an I/A system or the cost of a sewer betterment is comparable to buying a good new car. Although as of now the town of Falmouth has not provided any subsidy, the WQMC is looking at this issue and considering cost reduction options such as buying I/A systems in bulk and supporting a bill that would allow a tax credit that would be refundable even if you don't have a tax bill. The Aqua Fund and Cape Cod Five also offer low interest loans. Part of the Town-Wide Watershed Plan will be to deal with this financial question, but ultimately it may mean doing what several other Cape towns have done, namely, pass a substantial Proposition Two and Half override. WQMC wants to keep everyone informed of the process. They will be looking for funding at the state level and welcome folks to advocate for the Cape at the State House.

Seasonal Homes

When asked if it makes sense to require I/A systems in seasonal homes or rather to offer the option of installing UD, composting, incinerating or blackwater/greywater systems/ tight tank systems, Bryan referred to his colleague and director of MASSTC, Brian Baumgaertel, to say that there is no way to guarantee that those homes will remain seasonal. It was agreed that choice is important; that one of these alternative systems should not be mandated over others. He also mentioned that towns prioritize homes that are closest to a water body as they impact the water body the soonest.

Steve mentioned that the underlying rule on zoning is that you don't write a regulation that applies to only one or two lots and then requiring all others around do something different. If the state approves systems like urine diversion for nitrogen credit, those homeowners are welcome to use those alternative systems. However, they cannot be excluded from complying with the need to reduce their nitrogen flow – even if seasonal.

Bryan said that it is important that everyone understand that it is not necessarily a question of either I/A system or UD. In fact, the two systems could work together. There may be very positive impacts of doing both on some sites. MASSTC is adamant that sewers are needed in certain areas, innovative septic systems are needed in some areas, and that urine diverting and composting systems can also help play a role toward the water quality goals.

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We Want You to Know

Urine Diversion Pilot Project—Volunteers Sought in Waquoit Bay Watershed!

The long-awaited Urine Diversion Pilot Project (UD Project) is finally at hand! In June of this year, The Barnstable County Department of Health and Environment's Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center (MASSTC) received a grant of almost $417,000 from the Healey-Driscoll Administration to launch the pilot, as part of $3.1 million in grants to support projects that prevent, control, or reduce nitrogen pollution in Massachusetts' waterbodies. This grant, combined with funding already approved by Falmouth Town Meetings in November of 2024 and May of this year, will be used to fund the installation of UD systems in 25 homes commencing in 2026 when UD toilets manufactured by American Standard are expected to become available. Priority for participating homes will be given to properties located in the watersheds of Waquoit Bay, Eel Pond, Bournes Pond, Great Pond, and Green Pond. If you are already on the list as a potential candidate for the pilot, you should have received correspondence from Bryan Horsley of MASSTC. If not, or if you would like to be added to the list—it's not too late! Send an email tobryanhorsley@capecod.gov. The pilot will provide significant subsidies to participating households to cover much of the cost of the plumbing conversion. This is a very exciting program which it is hoped will demonstrate the efficacy of urine diversion in reducing nitrogen from septic system effluent.

- Maggie Megaw

Residential Wastewater Options

As part of our mission to educate the public around issues that impact water quality in Waquoit Bay and throughout Falmouth, CPWB and the Falmouth Pond Coalition--with a little help from Bryan Horsley of MASSTC--are developing a Homeowner's Guide to Residential Wastewater Options. Our goal is to help clarify the process underway in Falmouth (and across Cape Cod) of reducing nitrogen (and phosphorus) pollution in our ponds, bays, and estuaries per a mandate from the MA Department of Environmental Protection. Here's what we plan to cover:

- What is a watershed? How can I figure out what watershed I live in? How many watersheds are there in Falmouth?
- What is a watershed plan? Why is Falmouth having to do this? When will the plans go into effect? What timeline will they be on? How will success be measured?
- What does this mean for me? Will I be required to upgrade my current Title 5 system? How long will I have to deal with it?
- What will my options be? How do I know if my house is slated to be on a sewer system? What if my septic system fails? What if I have a cesspool? What if I want to build a house? What if I want to add a bedroom onto my house? What if I want to build an ADU?
- If I want to get ahead of this (GOOD FOR YOU!), what are my options today? What are I/A systems and are they all equal? What is a composting toilet? An incinerating toilet? A blackwater system? A greywater system?
- I have heard about a urine diversion (UD) pilot project happening in Falmouth. Can I get into the pilot? Will UD ultimately be an option I can choose for my house, and if so, when will that be?
- How much do these systems cost? And what "extra" costs, like engineering, excavation, landscaping, am I going to face?
- What financial subsidies, tax credits, low- or no-cost loans are or will be available?
- My house is seasonal only. Does that change anything? Are some of these choices better than others for me?
- Where can I see these systems in person?

Our plan is to have our Guide live online where it can be updated when there are new options or information available. Let us know what you'd like to see included in this Guide!

- Maggie Megaw

Redbrook Community Engagement Meeting

The first Source to Sea-Red Brook Community Engagement meeting was held on July 31 at WBNERR's Boat House. The meeting was well-attended by concerned citizens impacted by the Red Brook Road culvert failure and the ongoing decline in Red Brook's water quality. Tonna-Marie Rogers, WBNERR Manager, facilitated presentations from key project partners, including representatives from APCC, town officials from Falmouth and Mashpee, and engineers from the Horsley Witten Group. A lively and thoughtful discussion followed, with attendees raising questions about the timing of the culvert repair and planned road closures; safe options for walkers and bikers and stormwater management features in the repair project; the possible return of wildlife and open waters displaced by the culvert failure; the spread of invasive species; and potential land acquisitions from neighboring properties. A follow-up Community Engagement meeting is expected before the end of the year, though a specific date has not yet been set.

- Patty Waltner

Mashpee Town Meeting

Support for cleaning Mashpee waters remains strong as evidenced by the resounding passage of Article 4 at Town Meeting and Ballot Question 1. Voters approved funding for a community cluster wastewater system north of Mashpee-Wakeby Pond. This system will substantially reduce phosphorus from entering the pond and nitrogen from flowing into the Mashpee River and Popponesset Bay. The Town of Mashpee is firmly committed to addressing water quality in Waquoit Bay. Using the funding approved in May 2025, the town has been actively seeking a site for a treatment plant and recharge area. Currently narrowing in on a possible site, the town's goal is to present an Article for design funds at the May 2026 Town Meeting. Last year, Mashpee's Capital Improvement Committee approved $12.48 million for design for fiscal year 2027 and $128.7 million for construction in fiscal year 2028.

- Michaela Wyman-Colombo

Oyster Harvesting on Waquoit Bay - Available all winter long!

One of the best parts of winter on the Cape is Oyster Season. With a Shellfish Permit ($6 – $100: senior - non-resident rates), you can harvest up to one peck of oysters every week throughout the season! Check your town's website for official open status, regulations, and maps of safe shellfishing areas:

https://www.mashpeema.gov/department-natural-resources/shellfish-division

https://www.falmouthma.gov/255/Shellfish

Rules and Regulations

- Permits: Required for all shellfish harvesting.
  Available at the Town Clerk's Office, Mashpee Town Hall
  Mail-in and Online Instructions for Falmouth available on website.
- Opening Date: Mashpee and Falmouth: November 1, 2025* (see details below)
- Closing Date: March 31 at sunset
- Permitted Areas: Be sure to check current Shellfish Maps on your Town's website.
- Harvesting Hours: Sunrise to sunset
- Harvesting Days: Any day of the week (Sunday–Saturday)
- Limit: 1 harvest per week, up to 1 peck (approx. 8 dry quarts)
- Size Limit: Oysters must be at least 3 inches long
- Inspection: Be prepared to show your permit and harvest to Shellfish Officers, Natural Resource Officers, or other authorized personnel (including volunteers).

Helpful Details

- Mashpee Open Season, as of our print date: Mashpee Neck Landing (Ed Baker Boat Ramp) and Seconsett Causeway.
- Falmouth Open Season, as of our print date: West Falmouth Family Area, Inner Little Harbor Woods Hole (SC-4.2), Quisset Harbor (BB-58), and Fiddler's Cove (BB-54).

-Lisa Bonneau

MASSTC Tour ~ September 12, 2025

Following a conversation between Bryan Horsley, MASSTC Project Assistant and Steve Rafferty, Chairman of Falmouth Water Quality Management Committee (WQMC) at the annual CPWB meeting this summer, a group of CPWB members took a field trip to the MASSTC alternative septic system testing grounds, a project that has been providing onsite third-party independent testing of advanced and alternative septic systems and now toilets since 1999. According to their website, "MASSTC has been active in the development of national performance standards, particularly in the area of proving nutrient reduction. They have tested over thirty treatment products in addition to conducting research on questions relating to pathogen transport, removal of pharmaceuticals and personal care products and a myriad of other projects."

We met at the entrance and were ushered into the yard where Bryan spent an hour and a half walking us through a rather large field of septic tanks and alternative septic system experiments. We learned how the different experiments are being monitored, what the goal of each project is, and enjoyed the last remains of a flower and vegetable garden watered this summer with diluted urine. We were also introduced to the testing ground's newest addition, a 3-chamber Phoenix composting toilet. Bryan explained how it works and got up close and personal as he demonstrated where the woodchips are added and how the compost is to be extracted.

Some of the experiments we toured:





Stop #1: Bryan shows the CPWB group MASSTC's greywater recycling, urine diverting and composting eco-toilet systems. Phoenix composting chambers are typically installed with waterless dry toilets like this one.



Stop #2: Bryan shows the CPWB group MASSTC's non-proprietary soil and woodchip-based nitrogen removing "layer cake" IA septic systems.

Stop #3: Bryan shows the CPWB group the NitROE system developed by the company Klean Tu. This system is rated as a Best Available Nitrogen Reducing Technology by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. These composite samplers are set to collect a sample every 30-minutes for 24-hours.





Stop #4: Urine derived fertilizers are applied on these six individually lined test cells to test their performance and to collect information about nutrient leaching. This project is funded by Cotuit Solar, a local solar installer.

- Lisa Bonneau

Politics 101 - Town Meeting

As CPWB works to sharpen its focus on advocacy, we thought it would be useful to our members to dig into how Falmouth and Mashpee town governments work, since our support for policies or programs on behalf of Waquoit Bay will need to be advanced strategically—something that is hard to do if you don't understand how the system works. We are launching a series in this newsletter called *Local Politics 101*, and while Town Meeting in both Falmouth and Mashpee will have concluded by the time you read this piece, we are starting this series with an explanation of Town Meeting, what it is and does, how to become a Town Meeting Member (in Falmouth, that is—if you vote in Mashpee you are already a Town Meeting Member!), and more. Town Meeting is the most accessible level of formal involvement in town governance, and we hope to see more advocates for Waquoit Bay make the effort to attend Town Meeting in Mashpee or decide to run to become Town Meeting Members in Falmouth!

⇨ *So what is **Town Meeting** anyway?*

Town Meeting is a form of local, direct democracy that dates back to Colonial times. In fact, the attempt by Parliament to abolish Town Meeting was one of the inciting causes of the Revolution. As stated in Citizen's Guide to Town Meetings published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, "Town Meeting is both an event and an entity. As an event it is a gathering of a Town's eligible voters, and is referred to as 'the Town Meeting.' As an entity, it is the legislative body for towns in Massachusetts, and is referred to simply as 'Town Meeting.'" As the town's legislative body, Town Meeting sets salaries for elected officials, approves the budget and specific appropriations, enacts bylaws and zoning changes, and approves or rejects a wide range of actions proposed by the Select Board, Town Departments, standing committees, and others.

⇨ ***When** is Town Meeting? And what is the **Warrant**?*

Town Meeting is held twice yearly, in October and May in Mashpee, and November and April in Falmouth. Some years, Town Meeting is adjourned without completing its work on the first evening and rolls over to a second evening, but often all business is concluded in one night.

The **Warrant** is the roadmap for Town Meeting. It lists the time, place, and agenda for the meeting, and only those Articles listed on the Warrant may be discussed and voted by Town Meeting Members. Town residents can read the full text of the Warrant online at the Town website, and it is also published in both the Mashpee and Falmouth editions of The Enterprise.

⇨ *Who are **Town Meeting Members**?*

Mashpee has an Open Town Meeting structure, meaning that any registered voter in the Town of Mashpee may attend Town Meeting *and vote* on Articles presented. If you want your voice heard in Mashpee, you need to show up to attend Town Meeting in person. Town Meeting is broadcast by Mashpee TV.

Falmouth has a *representative* Town Meeting structure, with Town Meeting Members elected at the May general election to one-, two-, and three-year terms. Any resident may attend Town Meeting and ask to speak, but only elected Town Meeting Members may vote. Persons wishing to serve as Town Meeting Members "pull papers" at the Town Clerk's office, and need to submit 10 valid signatures from residents in their precinct on their nomination paper in order for their name to appear on the ballot. They may alternatively be elected at the same election by write-in vote. In the event that a current Town Meeting Member is unable to complete his or her term, individuals wishing to fill such a vacancy can stand up at the precinct meeting prior to Town Meeting and be voted in by precinct members in attendance. If you are interested in filling a vacancy, call the Town Clerk's office to ask if there are openings in your precinct, then go to your precinct meeting and let your precinct captain know that you would like to stand for election. This is a great way to get involved in local decision-making! Note that Town Meeting is broadcast live by Falmouth Community Television (FCTV).

⇨ *What are **Articles** and how do they come before Town Meeting?*

The majority of Articles are items placed on the Warrant by the Select Board, often on the recommendation of the Town Manager and other town boards, departments, and committees. Articles typically have an associated cost that Town Meeting is asked to approve or disapprove, and each Article is reviewed by the Finance Committee which may recommend approval of the Article or "indefinite postponement." Note that while "indefinite postponement" means defeat for a given Article at a given Town Meeting, the same or a similar Article can be inserted into a Warrant at a subsequent Town Meeting for new consideration.

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⇨ *What are **Petition Articles**?*
In both Mashpee and Falmouth, Petition Articles are drafted by town residents and must be signed by 10 petitioners, using a form obtained at the Town Clerk's Office. The Town Clerk certifies the signatures and the petition is filed with the Office of the Select Board for insertion into the Warrant prior to the closing of the Warrant, generally about 75 days before Town Meeting. Instructions for filing a petition Article can be found on the Mashpee and Falmouth Town websites.

⇨ One more thing. Not all Articles approved by Town Meeting in Falmouth and Mashpee are immediately given the green light to proceed. Some Articles approving large capital projects such as sewer and other wastewater projects with significant financial impacts on taxpayers are often subject to separate ballot vote.

Finally, we want to conclude with a special plea to members of Falmouth's Precinct 7--which includes many voters living in the Waquoit Bay watershed--to **attend precinct meetings and vote in general elections.** Precinct 7 has a historically low voter turnout, the worst in Falmouth. If we want to have a voice in matters of importance for Waquoit Bay, we need to turn out and vote! If becoming a Town Meeting Member isn't for you, it's still important to attend your precinct meeting and let your Town Meeting Members know how you would like *them* to vote.

Meet Some of Our New Board Members

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Glenn McCarthy grew up spending summers along Waquoit Bay and Popponesset Bay and in woodlands and ponds in between. In addition to being a clean water advocate, Glenn is an entrepreneur and business owner. In 2010, after 20 years working in Europe and Asia, Glenn returned to the cape and bought a house in Mashpee.

While he immediately sensed something had changed with the waters, it was not until 2018 when it struck him just how far the bays had been degraded. Glenn was part of the founding team of Mashpee Clean Waters in 2019 and continues to advocate for and support local clean water and environmental efforts.

As an avid sailor, kayaker, swimmer, and trail runner Glenn spends a great deal of time on Waquoit Bay as well as in and around the area's freshwater ponds and neighboring estuaries. Glenn has been involved in Mashpee's successful efforts to fund waste water treatment and is proud of the progress that has been made to date. He had recently been focusing on storytelling as a way of addressing the systemic root causes that underlie our polluted waters.



Hannah Werdmuller is an ecologist with a background in wetland restoration and conservation. Originally from the United Kingdom, Hannah has long family roots on Metoxit Point, their love for nature shaped by summers spent in the woods on the bank of the Moonakis River and splashing about in Waquoit Bay. Now a permanent wash-ashore based in Waquoit, Hannah also creates and enjoys art and local live music, and the #3 at the Moonakis Café.

Remembrance of Matt Patrick



Matt Patrick, former President of CPWB, was an important political actor in Falmouth for over 30 years. He served two terms on the Select Board, five terms as Falmouth's Representative to the State Legislature, was a Precinct 7 Town Meeting Member up to the last, and was a decades-long member of CPWB. He passed away on July 19 of this year at his home in Waquoit.

Matt was a leader in all things related to the environment, whether that was water quality, alternative energy, or land conservation. For many years he worked with Trout Unlimited to restore the Quashnet River to a productive trout stream and was instrumental in achieving permanent conservation of 800 acres in the Quashnet watershed, an accomplishment ranking in importance with CPWB's founding activities in saving South Cape Beach and Washburn Island. That action forever staved off new sources of pollution traveling down the Quashnet River to the Moonakis, and from there into Waquoit Bay.

Today, in 2025, Matt's political acumen and forward thinking continue to bear fruit for the Town of Falmouth, and indeed for the entire Cape and Commonwealth. In the early 2000's the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection made its first attempt to require towns with degraded estuaries to develop 20-year plans to clean them up, and the only technologies considered were sewering and certain septic systems. After Town Meeting twice rejected sewer projects as too expensive, Matt played a key role in promoting a different approach.

At Spring Town Meeting of 2011, Matt, Hilde Maingay, and Earle Barnhart presented Article 17, requesting an allocation of $2.28 million for demonstration projects of alternatives to central sewering, such as permeable reactive barriers, inlet widening, oyster aquaculture, and ecotoilets, with a specific earmark of $500,000 for the study of composting and urine-diverting toilets. Article 17 passed, and after a decade of frequently voiced local skepticism concerning alternative approaches, in particular urine diversion, the Town has come to see that the concept of adaptive management of wastewater gives the process of watershed planning more tools with which to work, and offers the promise of significantly lowering the costs of nitrogen reduction in our bays and estuaries. The entire process, from passage of Article 17 to the adoption by DEP of new and more flexible wastewater planning requirements would probably not have occurred without the hard work and political skills of Matt Patrick.

Around 2014, Matt turned his focus back to CPWB, and led the effort to reinvigorate the organization and rebuild its membership and its advocacy role on behalf of the Bay. In 2017 he became President of the Board and served until 2021, when he was diagnosed with cancer. Under his leadership the Board grew in size and has been reenergized, engaging more actively with the local issues impacting Waquoit Bay. Today's CPWB is committed to the goals Matt pursued over his long and impactful career. Matt was busy and he was productive. So much of what he accomplished was fueled by his love for Waquoit Bay, and we are indebted to him for his leadership of CPWB and his vision of a restored estuary. We think of him every time we see the CPWB logo, for which, talented artist that he was, he provided the central image.

- Winthrop Munro and Maggie Megaw

WAQUOIT BAY
NATIONAL
ESTUARINE
RESEARCH
RESERVE

Go Green Quashnet River Hike

Join Waquoit Bay Reserve staff on Friday, November 28th at 12:00pm – 2:00pm for a moderate 2.2-mile hike along the Quashnet River. There are a few moderate hills and a possibility of puddles and gullies near the river.
Leashed dogs are welcome.
Meet at the Quashnet Trail head parking lot; 62 Martin Rd., East Falmouth.

Holiday Open House

The Waquoit Bay Reserve is hosting a Holiday Open House
Saturday, December 6th from 12:30pm – 3:00pm.
Create your own coastal holiday crafts and build a festive gingerbread house with an ocean/estuary theme! Friends of Waquoit Bay Reserve will have a Pop-up shop offering merchandise and membership information.
Holiday treats and hot chocolate will be served. Reservations encouraged!
www.waquoitbayreserve.org.

First Day Hike

January 1, 2026
South Cape Beach 10:00am-11:30am
Join Waquoit Bay Reserve staff for a walk along the beach to start the new year. Walk will be approximately .5-1 mile long on soft sand. Warm up with a campfire and hot chocolate at the end of the hike. Steady rain or snow cancels.

Questions? Jayne.dicandio@mass.gov



WAQUOIT BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE
131 Waquoit Highway Waquoit, MA 02536 508.457.0495

2025 Fundraising Appeal

Every nonprofit organization needs to raise funds for its activities, as every reader of this newsletter knows from the contents of your daily mail and inbox. CPWB's last significant outlay of funds was in connection with the study of sources of pollution to the Moonakis River that CPWB engaged Scott Horsley and his graduate students from Tufts University to prepare in 2022. We have not undertaken any similar projects since, and consequently we have dialed down our appeals in the past year for contributions. In our strategic planning for the coming 12 months, however, we are working to identify projects to benefit the Bay, either on our own initiative or to which we will want to lend financial support. With that in mind, we hope that you will consider making a year-end contribution to CPWB. Your $35 donation makes you a member of CPWB; donations in any other amount are gratefully accepted. All contributions will be used to forward the objectives of the organization, and will be used prudently for the greatest return on your investment.

Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of Waquoit Bay and its estuaries. Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- - - - - - - - - -(Tear here and send to: P.O. Box 3021, Waquoit, MA 02536) - - - - - - - - - -

Yes, *I want* to *help restore Waquoit Bay!*

_____$250 _____$100 _____$50 _____$35 _____Other $_____

Please make checks payable to: Citizens for the Protection of Waquoit Bay (CPWB)
OR Donate securely online at *ProtectWaquoitBay.org*

Name: _____

Company/Organization: _____

Local Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email:_____

Please send me more information on: _____Volunteering _____Planned Giving

Thank you for your support!

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Public Education Campaign
Maggie reported that CPWB is interested in a public education campaign to inform people about the watershed planning process and what their options will be as well as to encourage making changes sooner than the 2048 deadline that required under the DEP guidelines. CPWB is working on a Homeowner's Guide that hopefully will be completed by the end of the year. There has also been discussion of banning together with other local environmental groups.

Steve said that the WQMC is a forum that is always willing to have people come in with suggestions. Writing regular articles in the Enterprise can be very effective. The WQMC does not have a standing outreach for the water quality work. WQMC and CPWB could work collaboratively by providing regular updates of the Town-Wide Watershed Plan.

Bryan agreed that outreach and education is one of the biggest things that MASSTC does. MASSTC does science and then communicates about that science. It will host a urine diversion summit in October, for example.

Water Quality Successes
Steve mentioned the marked differences that can be seen at Little Pond after sewering in the area.

Bryan mentioned the Coonamessett River area which is an impressive example a former cranberry bog now blooming with native plants from 100-year-old seeds that had been stuck in the deep mud.

Audience Questions and Comments and Closing Remarks
An engaged audience posed questions that ranged from concerns about the integration of watershed plans between Falmouth and Mashpee to how sewer or I/A areas are determined.

At the close of the evening, Maggie thanked all for their attendance and especially Steve and Bryan for the informative discussion. She encouraged folks to get involved: Attend meetings of town committees working on these issues. Speak up! Take a tour of MASSTC! Join CPWB's efforts to restore Waquoit Bay!

- Eloise "Pam" Biscoe

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"The ultimate way to recycle this newsletter is to share it with someone who hasn't read it yet."
- Anonymous

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