



Below is an update on our activities over the past year and our plans for 2026. Going forward, as per requests from our members for more information, we will be sending out monthly updates. We have expanded our membership over the past year and have been very busy working with our town partners to implement new initiatives to clean up our waters. Please plan to attend our annual meeting on **Saturday, June 6, 2026 at 10 am at the Harwich Community Center** to learn more about our work and connect with like-minded Harwich residents. We greatly appreciate your support of our work.

2025 Recap

- **Pond Pledge:** We launched an HPC pond pledge and yard sign campaign, which we will continue with renewed outreach in 2026 to neighborhoods throughout Harwich: <https://www.harwichwaters.org/pond-pledge-and-support/>
- **Pond Testing:** We worked with our new Director of Natural Resources Stephanie Ridenour to establish new testing protocols that align with standards used across Cape Cod, and we added two new ponds to be tested in the coming year. We also supported our town partners in Natural Resources and Conservation on their 2026 budget requests for new testing equipment and expanded pond diagnostic assessments.
- **Educational Outreach:** We wrote and published Pond Profiles on our website for 24 of the named ponds in Harwich and are working to collect information to be able to do the same for the remaining ponds. To care about something, you first have to know about it. We also created and continued to share our HPC bookmarks that outline pond-friendly practices. Our outreach efforts included local libraries, shops and town buildings.
- **Septic Maintenance:** We created a septic checklist for homeowners so they are educated on best practices for septic maintenance and posted it on the HPC website. We are also excited to share that out of the list of town approved septic haulers, five Harwich-owned businesses are offering HPC members a \$25 discount for their services at the time of booking an appointment! www.harwichwaters.org
- **Partnership Outreach:** We continued to meet with other environmental organizations on the Cape to share ideas and collaborate on common projects. An especially notable

event was our tour of the Alternative Septic System Test Center in Sandwich where we learned about cost-efficient technologies for preventing nitrogen and phosphorus from entering the groundwater: <https://www.masstc.org/>

2026 Plans

- Provide monthly updates to our HPC membership to share information, education and opportunities to engage.
- Update our HPC website www.harwichwaters.org and create a more engaging social media presence to increase community engagement and support.
- Plan for a well attended and interactive Annual Meeting. **SAVE THE DATE!!! Saturday, June 6, 2026; Harwich Community Center; 10am.**
- Continue to collaborate with other towns and pond coalitions across the Cape on:
 - Alternatives to septic systems
 - Invasive pond weed eradication
 - Healthy and pond friendly Cape Cod lawns and gardens
- You can help us with our three main goals for 2026 by volunteering on any of the following initiatives:
 1. **Expanded testing:** HPC, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, is seeking volunteers for our expanded baseline pond testing. APCC (Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod) is also seeking volunteers for cyanobacteria testing. Please email info@harwichwaters.org if you are interesting in joining us for either program.
 2. **Educational outreach:** Please pass on information about pond-friendly practices in landscaping and septic maintenance to your network of friends and colleagues.
 3. **Fertilizers and pesticide regulation:** Please join us in our efforts at Town Meeting and other venues to advocate for tighter regulations on fertilizer and pesticide use. Our monthly newsletter updates will let you know where and when we will be targeting our advocacy work as we seek to partner with a wide coalition of Harwich town employees, business owners, clubs, organizations and residents.

Thank you again for your support in our efforts to ensure cleaner waters in Harwich!

Susan Cyr

President, Harwich Ponds Coalition

www.harwichwaters.org