



MAY 2026

SAVE THE DATE: Annual meeting-Sat, June 6, 2026; 10 am at the Harwich Community Center!

AGENDA for June 6

- Quick update from the HPC Board on current and future projects.
- Guest Speakers:
 - Brian Baumgaertel from MASSTC; Brian will share some of the innovative technologies that MASSTC is working on to improve and protect our waters. Check out the website if you are not familiar with MASSTC – www.masstc.org
 - Marie Chieppo from CFS Regenerative Design; Marie, who is the co-author of APCC's Guidelines for Cape-friendly Landscapes, will share her insight on ecological design and what can YOU do in your own landscapes to minimize impact on our ponds and waterways.
 - Michael Lach from HCT; Michael will be back to share an update on HCT's very busy year and what they have planned for this next year!

Pond Testing

- **THANK YOU** to our PALS testers who braved the chilly April weather and waters!
- The in-person training for our new volunteers for Cyanobacteria testing with APCC will be on Thursday, May 14, from noon to 1pm at 120 Clearwater Dr on Bucks Pond. As a reminder, this testing will start on June 2.
- We will confirm teams, times and shifts in a calendar after that training.
- There will be a PALS refresher training on Monday, June 22 at Saquatucket Harbor at 2pm. Anna Lisa Mudahy from SMAST will lead the training.

Cape Cod Ponds Network

For those of you who subscribe to the weekly APCC newsletter, you may have seen reference to a "Cape Cod Ponds Network" meeting. Harwich Ponds Coalition is part of that network and we have met in person on our own and through APCC's virtual session to share ideas and updates on what we are all doing.

- Most of the pond groups have done a pledge similar to our pond pledge or are moving forward with one.
- The other pond groups were looking to do a more permanent yard sign, smaller than ours, with some shared features like the wave of water but room for the specific pond logo. We are happy with our current design and have plenty of inventory if you would like to purchase one! We will have them at the June 6 meeting!
- One of the ideas was to put a buoy with a red flag in the middle of a pond that has tested positive for cyano and needs to be closed. There are concerns that not all private residents with pond front access will see the posted notifications or online notifications on the pond closures and this is an additional warning.
- Brewster has reached out to collaborate on some of our shared pond concerns like Seymour Pond (which had a cyano bloom and closure last summer).
- And all pond groups were active in their town meetings to advocate for those articles and policy discussions with pond impacts.

THANK YOU!! Huge thanks to those of you who showed up to Harwich Town Meeting and voted in favor of some of the environmental articles that will positively impact the environment and our ponds' collective health.

- We were excited to see HCT's petition for Robbins Pond acquisition go through which will protect more pond front acreage.
- SGARS rodenticide ban also passed which was a huge win for our local wildlife as well as our pets!
- And we were very excited to see the home rule petition on fertilizer reduction pass. There was some spirited discussion on this article during the town meeting and some confusion on what this all means. Here are the highlights:
 - A home rule petition in Massachusetts is a legislative tool that allows cities and towns to request special authorization from the state legislature (the General Court) to pass laws or regulations tailored to their local needs, which they cannot enact on their own. It is a mechanism for local self-governance, enabling municipalities to bypass general state laws to address unique issues.
 - Harwich is asking for the ability to enact more restrictive regulations regarding fertilizer because of the impact on our ponds and waterways, which are our most valuable environmental resource and our most valuable economic asset. Harwich and the rest of Cape Cod and the Islands are relatively unique in Massachusetts because the sole source aquifers just beneath our sandy soils supply all of our drinking water.
 - As shared in a prior newsletter, several other Cape towns have already passed home rule petitions and they are pending with the Massachusetts Legislature, awaiting

approval. (**Nantucket and Orleans**). Harwich will now join them once the Select Board files the petition with the State. Wellfleet's home rule petition on fertilizer reduction passed in Oct 2025 but there is no pending bill yet.

- **Barnstable, Brewster, Chatham, Eastham, Mashpee, and Provincetown** adopted strict, nitrogen-oriented regulations in 2014.

Hope to see you at the meeting on June 6!!