

Ripples

2018

If you own property in or visit Brewster, you know that our 80 ponds are a special part of your life. The habitat they provide, their beauty and their recreational benefits are obvious. More importantly, they are a looking glass into the health of the Cape Cod Aquifer—the source of ALL your drinking water. Unfortunately, today, many of Brewster's ponds suffer impaired water quality due to historic practices and development impacts such as septic systems and fertilizers.



Look inside to learn about the education and research programs, developed by dedicated volunteers of the Brewster Ponds Coalition, who are working to keep your ponds clean, safe and healthy— and how you can help make a difference.



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Join the BPC to preserve Brewster's Ponds

Message from Our President

Dear Brewster Neighbors and Friends,

This Fall marks the third anniversary of the founding of the Brewster Ponds Coalition. As we reflect on this - and look forward - it's appropriate to take stock of what we have accomplished in this short time. The Brewster Ponds Coalition was formed by a small group of motivated volunteers who are inspired to seek solutions to protect our freshwater ponds—covering more acreage than any other town on the Cape! In just 3 short years, this support network has grown to more than 300 families and individuals who have become directly engaged

in the mission. This issue of Ripples illustrates how these collective efforts are truly advancing the mission "of preserving and nurturing the natural beauty, healthy habitats, and recreational opportunities of Brewster's Ponds". Thank you very much for being part of this important effort.



Sincerely,
Tom Vautin
President



BCT president Hal Minis presents the award to BPC president Tom Vautin at the BCT annual meeting.

The BPC Wins Prestigious 2017 Conservationist of the Year Award

The Brewster Conservation Trust (BCT) presented the BPC with its 2017 Conservationist of the Year award at its August annual meeting in recognition of the coalition's leadership and actions in conserving Brewster's ponds. This award is possible only through BPC supporters' efforts and the BCT's guidance in helping our organization thrive.

SEVEN SIMPLE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO KEEP OUR PONDS CLEAN

1. Pump your septic system every three years
2. Use native plants in your yard to reduce fertilizer and water usage
3. Plant a rain garden to absorb driveway and lawn water runoff
4. Pick up pet waste along the shore, roads, and in your yard
5. Dispose of prescription drugs at the Town Police Station, not down the toilet
6. Dispose of oil & other chemicals at Town Transfer Station receptacles and at Hazardous Waste Collection Days
7. Prolong the life of your septic system and don't rinse food from plates down the drain. Instead scrape fat and waste into your trash and/or compost vegetable matter

More Information at brewsterponds.org



BPC Education Programs Encourage Pond Preservation



A common question we hear is: “How can I help my pond stay clean and healthy?” The BPC strives to both inform people about our ponds’ fragile ecology and to encourage pond-friendly practices.

A major goal is the Pond Education Program to teach children about pond life and ecology. Starting in the fall 2016, two pond education kits were created—one for kindergarten through first grade and another for grades 2-5—which contain

curriculum guides, pond books, games, and hands-on activities. The kits were delivered to the Friendship, Laurel, and Partnership Schools in May 2017, where they remain as a permanent resource. Teachers used the kits in the classrooms and then students participated in hands-on activities on field trips at Long Pond. All students received a take-away bag of materials to share with their families. The next step is to develop a management and financial plan to expand the program to the public schools.

Other BPC educational resources cover pond-related issues and practices. Informative talks discuss vital issues for example the future of septic systems on Cape Cod. Pond-related technical information and planning is provided to neighborhood and pond associations. The BPC website—Brewsterponds.org—contains numerous links to online resources and videos, including the self-published Pond Waterfront Improvement Guide for planting rain gardens and swales that stop stormwater runoff from impairing ponds.

THANK YOU AMERICORPS MEMBER COREY BRAY!

Corey Bray, the BPC’s 2016-2017 AmeriCorps Member, was instrumental in the Pond Education Program’s successful launch. A recent graduate of Old Dominion University in Norfolk Virginia, Corey helped to prepare pond education kit materials, including an informative booklet about Brewster’s publicly-accessed ponds; led several hands-on field trip activities; and worked as a puppeteer. During his 11-month shared assignment, Corey worked at the Brewster Conservation Trust, the Town of Brewster’s shellfishing program as well as the BPC, giving him a taste of land and marine conservation as well as pond preservation. Corey graduated from AmeriCorps in July, and we wish him well in his next endeavor.



From left: Ryan Burch, Brewster Natural Resources Department; Sue Searles, BPC; Corey Bray; Jeff Thibodeau, Brewster Conservation Trust; Gwen Pelletier, BPC; Karen Malkus-Benjamin, BPC; Chris Miller, Brewster Natural Resources Department

BPC Citizens Scientist Program Contributes to National Research Effort

Thoughtful, long-range pond preservation solutions rely upon sound research and an understanding of pond ecology and environmental impacts. In light of this, the BPC's Citizen Scientist Program is partnering with the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, to help understand—and hopefully one day ward off—cyanobacteria's harmful effect on ponds, people, and animals. Sometimes called blue-green algae, blooms appear as slimy algae scum on the surface of the pond. If the algae scum releases cyanobacteria toxins, it can kill animals and fish that ingest it. People who come in contact with cyanobacteria can develop rashes and other irritations. Cyanobacteria blooms have become more common, causing some lakes and ponds to be closed temporarily to the public. Scientists believe the increasing frequency of blooms in our ponds is likely a result of warmer water temperatures and nutrients from septic systems, fertilizer and contaminated water runoff.



BPC Citizen Scientists, Gwen Pelletier and Doug Smith, collect water samples at Greenland Pond

The BPC Citizen Scientists collected, analyzed, and shared water quality data this past summer in Pine, Greenland, Lower Mill and Rafe ponds as part of the Northeast Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program spearheaded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Their research provides data and the location where to find this cyanobacteria.

The monitoring program has been used in other parts of New England, but BPC is on the front line of the work on Cape Cod. It uses Bloom-Watch!, a free smartphone app to photograph and submit descriptive information to researchers and health officials about a suspected bloom. A Lim-Tex cyanoScope kit, purchased by the BPC, provides more in-depth monitoring. The Citizen Scientists collect water samples containing microscopic plants and animals through long nets from a boat or from shore, which are collected in bottles and, through easy-to-handle instruments, are then separated and analyzed with a digital microscope. Data and images from the cyanoScope are shared with other naturalists in an online group, iNaturalist.org, which confirm the species of bacteria and map where blooms occur. Detailed analyses about cyanobacteria populations can be done over time, as part of the broader cyanomonitoring project.

This program is making a real difference. In August, a cyanobacteria bloom occurred in Walkers Pond, which isn't a swimming pond and unmonitored by the state Department of Public Health. It presented a hazard to aquatic wildlife, pets and people who fish in the pond. The cyanobacteria bloom was forecast from analyses of samples from the monitoring program. Looking forward, the BPC plans to develop the Citizen Scientist program beyond its pilot in 2018.



Jake Brennan, who volunteered as a tester to fulfill his Boy Scout conservation-related community service requirement, BPC Citizen Scientists Gwen Pelletier and Doug Smith, and Jake's grandmother, BPC member, Jane Johnson

DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS DRIVE THE BPC'S SUCCESS



Thank you, BPC volunteers! You've accomplished so much in three years—creating educational and research programs, developing useful resources, organizing recreational events, and advocating for our ponds—and it couldn't have been done without you! No task has been too big or small—from stormwater engineering advice to a neighborhood, to roadside trash collection on

Beautiful Brewster Day, this dedicated volunteer group continues to grow, forming a cadre of enthusiastic 'Pond Heroes' that infuse every aspect of the BPC. Special Thanks to:

- The Education Action Committee members who created and assisted with our pond education kits and field trips;
- The Communications Action members who contribute newsletter stories, social media posts, videos, and other BPC materials;
- The Pond Photographers who provide amazingly beautiful photos;
- Citizens Scientists who gathered and analyze our pond water samples;
- Membership Action Team members who set up, check-in, and breakdown events;
- Others who volunteer as needed—joining our Beautiful Brewster team, building and manning our Brewster Conservation Day exhibit; organizing our Eco-Paddle and nature walks, performing administrative functions.

Nancy Gustafson-Smith Wins the BPC 2017 Splash Award

The BPC "Splash Award" recognizes an individual's exceptional contributions to improve Brewster ponds' water quality, beauty, and natural habitats. This year's Splash Award recipient is Nancy Gustafson-Smith, a happy, sunny, and hard-working BPC volunteer, who's involved with the BPC in so many ways—including the Education Committee and Eco-Paddle. Originally from Maryland, Nancy retired to the Brewster to enjoy the Cape's fresh and saltwater and numerous opportunities for outdoor activities. She credits her love of the outdoors for prompting her to become a BPC volunteer—and we're glad that she did. We enjoy working with you, Nancy, and thank you for everything you do for the BPC.



BPC 2017 Splash Award Winner, Nancy Gustafson-Smith, setting up the Brewster Conservation Day Exhibit

CARROLL JOHNSON: A POND PRESERVATIONIST'S VISION LIVES ON



Carroll Johnson worked to protect the special places he loved. He bought land on Long Pond in the early 1960s, where his family and he camped in a pump house before building a family retreat in the 1980s. He devoted himself to pond preservation, serving as a water quality volunteer with the Ponds and Lakes Stewards (PALS) and more recently with the Brewster Ponds Coalition. He inspired his grandson, Jake, who fulfilled his Eagle Scout conservation-related community service requirement this past summer, by becoming a Citizen Scientist tester. Johnson, 91, passed away in May. We thank the family and friends who donated to the BPC in his memory:

*Joyce and Osborne Bearse
Curtis Blake
Richard and Deborah Burke
Charles and Keyth Carter
Sharon and Wayne Chickering
Traci Claywell
Donald Cooper and Martha Mitchell
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Elizabeth Finch
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Steve McPeake
State Street Foundation Matching Gift Program
from Bruce Johnson
Robert and Maureen Steinmann*

Want to be a Pond Hero?

Want to be a Pond Hero? Join the BPC and check out brewsterponds.org/volunteer to view the many member volunteer opportunities in these areas: Events: Help Run BPC events; Education: Explain How We Can Protect Our Ponds; Protect: Gather Research to Better Protect Our Ponds; and Communications: Get the Word Out About Our Ponds and the BPC. Any time you can offer is appreciated and you'll receive any required training. Thank you for volunteering!



Memorials, Honors, and Bequests

A pond's beauty and joy forms a bond that lasts a lifetime—that favorite sunset view, swimming spot, or secret fishing location. Honor a loved one's memory “in lieu of flowers” or recognize someone's special affinity to ponds by donating to the Brewster Ponds Coalition. Donations are accepted at brewsterponds.org/join---donate or P.O. Box 459, Brewster, MA 02631. Each donor will receive a personal thank you note and will be listed under memorial and honor donations separately in our annual report. We welcome bequests and please contact us at 508-258-9801 for more information.

2017 Contributing Members Helping to Preserve Brewster Ponds

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Mission Statement

The Brewster Ponds Coalition is dedicated to preserving and nurturing the natural beauty, healthy habitats and recreational opportunities of Brewster's ponds, and to safeguard them for current and future generations.

The Brewster Ponds Coalition is a 501(c)3 independent, non-profit, charitable corporation. Contributions are tax deductible.