

Brewster Ponds Coalition

Strategic Objectives and Tasks for 2026

(Key responsibilities shown in blue parentheses where appropriate and specific)

Part I – BPC ACTIVITIES AND WORK PRIORITIES

Objective 1 - Participate and engage in Town and Cape-wide governance to influence governance decisions and resources committed to protecting ponds and other water resources

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Continue to have BPC representation on the Water Resource Task Force, Natural Resource Advisory Committee, and Board of Health (David, Ron, and John, respectively)
- Track work of other Town committees such as the Select Board, Conservation Commission, Land Use Planning, Sea Camps Advisory, Community Preservation, and others as appropriate
- Continue to work with the Cape Cod Commission and APCC on their pond networks and work, sharing our experiences and learning from others (Ron, John, Kevin)
- Continue to ally and work with Brewster Conservation Trust on issues of common interest. (John, David)

Objective 2 - Monitor and try to assure good progress on the Town's efforts to protect ponds

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Review/comment on updated IWRMP when available (John, Susan, David)
- Review/comment on Pond Management Plan as available, including contents, conclusions, priorities for pond studies, pond study scope, and study schedule (Ron, John)
 - o Studies to be done by Town, by BPC, possibly by Blueberry/Sols Pond Association
- Review and comment on Board of Health and Conservation Commission actions and proposed regulatory changes related to ponds – e.g., septic tank requirements, buffer zones, fertilizer use by contractors, PFA protection measures, etc.

Objective 3 - Continue citizen science programs at their current level, perhaps increasing

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Monitor 18 ponds for cyanobacteria and possibly add Canoe Pond, and Cliff and Flax Ponds in Nickerson State Park if approval is obtained from the MA DCR. (Ron and Citizen Science Team)
- Work with the town on cyanobacteria testing/monitoring work to make BPC's work as useful as possible, hopefully helping to resolve differences between Town and APCC needs and methods. (Ron, John, Karen Malkus-Benjamin)
- Continue satellite cyanobacteria pilot program/research participation if the project is ongoing (Marty Burke)

- Participate in pond studies as needed and as useful to the Town, such as collecting field data or analyzing data. Mobilize and train volunteers for such work as needed and possible.
- Support participation in APCC Cape Cod Pond Watchers Bio-survey Program, with a goal of improving understanding of the biological health of ponds related to such matters as:
 - o Invasive species, rare/endangered species, desirable species (e.g., frogs, turtles), fish, etc.
 - o Shoreline use, vegetation, or areas where improved vegetative buffering is needed
- Support other areas where BPC volunteers could help understand pond issues or improve Brewster's ponds and overall environment. Examples might include:
 - o Participation in Town or pond Clean-up days and programs
 - o Participate in Herring Run counts and studies

Objective 4 – Conduct projects and Scientific Studies to promote pond health and improve knowledge on how best to do this

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Complete study on phosphorus travel from septic systems – Fall of 2026 (John)
- Initiate and fund 2 pond studies on priority ponds, in collaboration with the Town (who presumably will initiate 2 studies on other ponds) (John)
- Explore and evaluate emerging technologies in septic systems, notably related to phosphorus removal technologies. Advocate and maybe help finance pilot systems (working with MASSTC) to accelerate DEP approval of Phosphorus removal technologies in septic systems
- Explore and support trials of pond remediation technologies as possible, such as sonic systems, aeration, alum use, or other technologies for cyanobacteria/algae control
- Support the Canoe Pond aeration system upgrade approval, perhaps by helping interface with the Conservation Officer, or providing financial support to overcome Town requests for information.

Objective 5 - Continue education programs to the public on what is needed to protect ponds

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Continue the School children education program with curriculum and field trips to 2nd and 5th graders in Brewster, and possibly create a similar program for middle school students. (Marcia)
- Scholarship program – 2 scholarships at \$2,000 each for High School graduates (Marcia)
- Present 2 to 4 forums or programs for adults relevant to protecting ponds. Possible programs might be on the Pond Watchers program (with APCC, in spring), buffer zones (with Conservation Commission, using education materials from DEP). Other programs to be developed. Coordinate with BCT plans in order to present complementary or joint programs where appropriate.
- Provide education program or bulletins before town meetings as needed for items relevant to ponds and water quality, and related to Town Warrants of interest

- Specifically for the Warrant for purchase of nitrogen credits from Thatcher’s Bog in Harwich .

Objective 6 - Continue effective communications with BPC supporters and the larger community about pond and water resource issues, needs and opportunities.

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Ripples Magazine out in November
- 4 Newsletters - Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall
- 2026 Pond Guide in April
- Maintain current and easily navigable website
- Provide bulletins/email blasts about upcoming events, meetings, needs, etc. as appropriate

Objective 7 – Continue to hold events relevant to pond protection that inform the public of pond protection issues, engage supporters in BPC work, or build the BPC community

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Pond Summit – Spring
- Annual Meeting - August
- Participate in Brewster Clean-up Day and Brewster Conservation Day
- Participate in Daffodil Days, Eco Expo, Brewster in Bloom
- Host Eco-paddles, walks, bike rides, others as ideas are developed – number and type to be determined
- Volunteer thank-you picnic

Objective 8 – Do effective outreach to local pond associations to help them in their efforts to protect and restore ponds

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Continue to reach out and collaborate/support local pond groups
- Continue Pond Protection Pledge program and explore ways to get more traction
- Support any good protection projects Associations propose – storm runoff, buffers, rain gardens, beautification, pond remediation, etc.
 - E.g. - Beechwood Drive, Blueberry Pond, Upper Mill – Leland Rd, others?
- Help pond association with getting approvals for planned projects
 - E.g. - Canoe Pond Aeration system?

Objective 9 – Collaborate and partner with other Cape Cod pond and environmental groups to share information, take advantage of their knowledge, experience, and capabilities, and help pond protection in all of Cape Cod.

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Continue to work and ally with the Brewster Conservation Trust on environmental matters of mutual concern and interest
- Engage and work with the Harwich Ponds Coalition, notably related to Seymour Pond studies/work, but also the other 7 ponds that Brewster and Harwich share.
- Outreach to the Orleans Ponds Coalition and possibly other pond groups to see where the BPC and they can effectively collaborate.
- Collaborate with the Barnstable County Clean Water Center (formerly MASSTC) to see if there are opportunities to pilot phosphorus-removing septic systems, with the goal of accelerating adoption and DEP approval of such technology

PART II – BPC ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Objective 10 - Maintain the financial capacity to fulfill our goals and implement specific plans

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Continue sound management of finances
 - o File 990 and other government filings as required
 - o Do regular evaluation of financial status and needs, notably including monthly financial reports to the Board
- Maintain income needed to satisfy, at a minimum, annual operating expenses (administration, communications, events, education, citizen science), projects planned or in the works, and some smaller new projects.
- Maintain a healthy reserve of funds to cover operational expenses and possible new projects, recognizing that larger project expenses may draw down the reserve.
- Explore opportunities for grants to support our work or projects, such as from the Eddy Sisters fund, Cape Cod 5, or others.

Objective 11 – Maintain and increase our organizational capacity to achieve the objectives given above and to fulfill our organization’s mission. This includes maintaining a large, engaged membership, a sufficient number of active volunteers to support our work and activities, and a committed, active Board of Directors.

Specific Tasks/Outcomes

- Maintain and increase healthy, active volunteer participation in committees – Education, Events, Communications, Citizen Science, and Projects
- Continue efforts to recruit new board members with diverse backgrounds, interests, and skills, and to have leadership succession plans. Recruit younger members if possible.
- Reaffirm our commitment to the BPC’s communication consultant with a compensation package, as much as we are financially able, commensurate with her substantial skills and contributions.

- Provide thanks to our donors - thank you letters via Neon, personal outreach, or other methods - at least quarterly, and annually
- Give regular thanks and recognition to our many volunteers – in our communications, volunteer picnics, etc.