Brewster Ponds Coalition **7AUG2025; 6:00 - 8:00 PM**
Board of Directors Meeting **Video Conference**

Present: Susan Bridges; Tim Chase; Rob Condon; Ron Essig; Karyn Frey; David Jacobs; Kevin Kearns; John Keith; Marcia Kielb; Jane Savio
Guest Attendees: Marty Burke; Andrew Gottlieb; Bruce Semple
Meeting called to order: 6:01 PM

Pre Meeting Discussion - Cyanobacteria sampling at Nickerson State Park - Andrew Gottlieb, Executive director, APCC
Sampling for Nickerson State Park indicated "Potential for Concern"; DCR did not want to post as such and wanted it posted as "Acceptable."
Further discussion with DCR indicated they are requesting that BPC obtain a permit for research before sampling can resume in Nickerson. There has never been a request for a permit in the many years of data collection. DCR claims that a permit allows them to have refusal to allow posting; APCC disagrees and states that a permit does not indicate refusal to allow posting.
Submitted a joint application from APCC and BPC this afternoon.
Two ponds in Nickerson have been greyed out on the APCC map.
Messaging from both APCC and BPC will be the same – and the message will be posted on both websites.

Standing Topics

1. **Reviewed and approved minutes of the 9 July 2025 Board Meeting**: Motion made and seconded to accept the minutes as written; unanimous approval
2. **Confirm and document email votes between Board meetings:** None
3. **Incoming mail:**
   a. Our 10-year nonprofit status renewal has been approved
   b. FMLA forms have all been submitted; no response to date
4. **Treasurer's Report:**
   a. Financial statements: Rob presented the financial files, noting that the BPC has **$**243,003.48 in assets. For the month of July, there were $7638.65 in expenses, and $574.00 in donations.
   b. Approval of expenses and reimbursements: Motion made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report; unanimous vote in favor of its acceptance.
5. **Miscellaneous administrative matters:**
   a. Reminder: Election of officers at September Board Meeting
   b. Date for Strategic Planning Meeting proposing mornings of 25 and 28 SEP

New Business
Current Priorities

1. Annual Meeting: Saturday 8:00 for setup w/ Friday setup 1:00
   Over 92 attendees RSVP'd

2. Herring River Watershed Permit and Pond Property wastewater management plan
   Copies of the latest plan sent and was presented at the Select Board meeting.
   Town's plan is to pay for a Conservation Restriction with Harwich.
   Backup plans include some wastewater management hookup to a treatment plant.
   Of concern is that there will still be a housing development on Long Pond.

3. Meeting with the BCT re: common concerns
   Working together in hopes of avoiding the housing development on the Long Pond property and to propose alternative locations for housing.
   What are the fundamental principles for affordable housing?
   The specific criteria for choosing a site involves a combination of factors: proximity to transit; location and community needs; municipal and community partnerships; and : local land use laws.
4. Fundraising challenges for non profits – Kevin
   Overall donors down; donation size up
   Other non-profits (see **Addendum 1**) across the board, an overall agreement that this is a national trend for non-profits
   Suggestion to include donor advised funds information in our appeals/ estate planning; bequests.

Committee Reports

1. **Citizen Science (**see **Addendum 2)**
2. **Septic System Plume Mapping Study**
   Sample results from early July received yesterday from both sampling sites; results pending
   Second round later in August
3. **Membership - 2025 Appeal**
   Addressing donation trends (see **Addendum 1**)

Wrap-up

- Recap decisions, action items, and follow-up assignments - Board to review APCC wording of statement regarding cyanobacteria testing at Nickerson State Park. Suggested edits requested by Monday, Aug. 11th.
- Next Board Meeting – 4 September 2025 - Google Meet
- Annual Meeting - Saturday, 9 August
- October Meeting - October 2,, 2025

Adjourn 7:51

Executive Session session begin 7:52
The Board met in Executive Session to discuss matters of personnel.
Executive Session Adjourn 8:02

Respectfully Submitted by: *Karyn Frey, Secretary*

Addendum 1
How to Address Donation Trends
Background

For several months we have seen a worrisome trend in annual donations. Fewer people are giving to BPC, which means we have what are called “lapsed donors. However, the average size of the donations we receive from people who are still donating is increasing. In other words, some generous people are stepping up to help stem the tide by giving more (we do not know if they are doing this intentionally). Unfortunately, the trend in donated net dollars is downward. In other words, those who are donating a larger amount are helping, intentionally or not, to stem the tide but they are not reversing the overall downward trend of donations.

We are not alone. This is a national trend that many other nonprofits are also experiencing. Fewer people are donating to charities of all types, but the average size of individual donations is increasing. Some experts attribute this national trend to recent changes in the tax code (much higher standard deduction) that has resulted in fewer people itemizing their charitable contributions on their annual tax returns. There are also other macro and microeconomic issues that may account for this trend.
Recommendations from nonprofit experts and leaders.

Kevin reached out to colleagues from around the country for their personal advice and also did a bit of web research how nonprofits are trying to respond to these trends. Gregory Nielson, a prominent nonprofit CEO and consultant, offered the following advice which conveniently summarizes what he heard from other sources. Below information quotes his response directly:

- “LEARN - For those who have continued to give (at higher levels), what is motivating them and resonating most with them? For those donors who have lapsed, are there any trends to be aware of? While nonprofits may be experiencing a trend, a Board should not discount the possibility that specific actions or inactions of the organization may be leading to either the growth of gift size or the loss of a segment of donors.
- REINFORCE RELATIONSHIPS - With a smaller overall pool of donors, it becomes even more important for the Board and the organization to build strong, authentic relationships with those donors who remain.
- SCENARIO PLAN - In organizations with fewer overall donors, there is a greater risk to the budget and to the mission if a larger donor ceases giving. One of the most important steps a Board can take is to plan how the organization might respond to a variety of potential situations. This is not about predicting the future but rather is an important strategic and generative discussion for the Board that builds resilience.”

Recovering Lapsed Donors

Every reputable web source Ihe consulted recommended steps like the following:

- Use personalized communication to find out why lapsed donors left or why they reduced their donation. Reasons will vary so we should not assume we know the answer.
- Express appreciation for past donations (customized by dates and amounts) and highlight the impacts (specific outcomes) of their support.
- Offer options to them to become reengaged – volunteering, helping with annual volunteer/donation appeals, special invitation to events, invitation to a board meeting.

- Don't wait for donors to lapse before engaging in personal communication. Have ongoing engagement with donors, especially large donors, including personalized messages regarding progress on issues we know are especially important to them.
- Make it as easy as possible to donate – provide return envelopes in mailers, give credit card options on websites, etc.
- Give people multiple ways to give including gifts in kind such as cars, stock) and donations via digital wallet or cryptocurrency
- The use of Donor Advised Funds is on the rise (significantly). These allow a person to set up a designated fund with a qualified organization (like a community foundation or some investment funds like Fidelity), receive the immediate tax deduction, then give the money away later to selected organizations.
  - Ask current and potential donors if they have a DAF and ensure they know they can use it to make a contribution to BPC.
- Promote DAF giving on our donation webpage and make it an easy payment option.
- Because the average age of our donor pool is likely on the high side, the BPC should also develop a planned giving strategy. We can ask all donors (lapsed and current) to list BPC as a beneficiary in their estate plans as a bequest and on their IRA, 401(k) or 403(b) plans. Explain to donors ages 70+ that they can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution from their IRA.
- Invest in technology that enables younger people to easily support BPC using their smartphone and digital donations tools. Utilize social media and crowdfunding campaigns consider reducing our focus on emails; many marketing and solicitation emails end up in spam or the trash bin.
- Speak to our current corporate partners. Ask about any planned adjustments to their giving strategy. Remind them of how our mission is aligned with theirs. The importance of your work and your plans to promote their philanthropic support to the community and their customers.

Clearly the problem of lapsed donors as well as other funding are national issues affecting most nonprofit organizations. There is no easy answer to these issues. Moreover, BPC is already following many of the recommended strategies described above.

Addendum 2
Citizen Science Report - August 2025
Ron Essig and Karyn Frey

Cyanobacteria Water Testing (BPC/APCC)

- The 2025 monitoring season began on May 27 and will end on October 29.
- Twenty ponds are being sampled in 2025 by 60 volunteer citizen scientists.
- Ron had several calls and emails during July with the interim Brewster Health Director Sherrie McCullough as town decisions on health advisories were made.
- July 1 - Ron and Anne Jacobson did off cycle sampling at Lower Mill, Seymour and Upper Mill ponds.
- July 7-9 - Week #4 of regular sampling.
- July 9 - Town of Brewster issued a public health advisory for Lower Mill Pond.
- July 11 - Ron met new Health Director Dan Syriala and Assistant Sherrie McCullough at Seymour Pond to demonstrate the sampling process.
- July 16 - Ron and Karyn Frey did off cycle sampling at Lower MIll, Seymour and Upper Mill ponds.
- July 21-23 - Week #5 of regular sampling.
- July 30 - Ron and Kristi Dondlinger did off cycle sampling at Lower MIll, Seymour, Upper Mill and Walkers ponds.
- July 31 - Town of Harwich issued a public health advisory for their portion of Seymour Pond. Town of Brewster did not reciprocate.
- July 31 - Brewster Health Dept advised BPC that it was their responsibility to post signs at affected beaches, so Ron took down a precautionary sign that he put up at Walkers Pond with their earlier approval. So BPC is effectively out of the sign business this season unless otherwise instructed by the Town.
- August 2 - Town of Brewster lifted public health advisories at Lower Mill and Upper Mill ponds.
- August 4 - Town of Brewster issued a public health advisory for Seymour Pond.
- August 6 - Ron and Karyn were on a Zoom with APCC staff regarding sampling in Nickerson State Park. Mass DCR is requiring a Research Agreement to continue this work.
- During July, Ron responded to many citizen inquiries about the health status of Lower Mill, Seymour and Upper Mill ponds that were either in the APCC Potential for Concern category or had posted Town public health advisories.

Pond Satellite Imagery Study (BPC/EPA)

- Studying the use of satellite imagery to monitor ponds to answer questions; 1) can satellite images correlate with on-the-ground conditions? 2) can satellite imagery be a screening tool to deploy monitoring resources?
- Marty Burke will again have the BPC lead for this study in 2025 and will work directly with EPA without involving NOAA or the Cape Cod Commission.
- Anticipated 2025 volunteer team: Burke, Essig, Ferguson, Giannini, Proujansky, Craig, Bleichman, Bellush and Kerns.
- Ponds in study: Long, Seymour, Sheep, Upper and Lower Mill
- The 2025 season is progressing well.
- A total of 60 measurements are planned across the five Brewster ponds by the end of September.

Other:

- July 8 - Ron attended the Alewife Committee meeting where passage to Slough Pond was discussed.
- July 12 - Ron assisted at Brewster Conservation Day.
- July 18 - Ron attended the Mass DCR aquatic vegetation workshop at APCC headquarters.
- July 31 - Closure date for the Town of Brewster Pond User Survey. There were 669 responses.

2025 Annual Budget: $6,000

January 2025 Expenses: $0
February 2025 Expenses: $0
March 2025 Expenses: $0
April 2025 Expenses: $3,500 (APCC grant)
May 2025 Expenses: $379.94
June 2025 Expenses $0
July 2025 Expenses $0