



Freshwater Initiative

## **Nauset, Chequessett, Pamet, Pilgrim Lenses Stakeholder Group**

### **Meeting 2 Summary: April 22, 2024**

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The second Nauset, Chequessett, Pamet, Pilgrim Lenses Stakeholder Group meeting for the Freshwater Initiative was held on April 22, 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to share information on pond management strategies and discuss considerations for strategy selection, discuss pond management actions to date, and consider criteria for prioritizing ponds for management.

During introductions, participants shared questions, concerns, or observations about ponds, including but not limited to:

- Are all ponds' phosphorus limited, or does nitrogen play a role?
- How does PFAS affect pond health?
- Concerns about foot traffic and impacts to ponds from overuse and misuse.
- Are ponds connected to groundwater and therefore drinking water?
- Concerns about cesspools, septic systems, and outdoor shower contributions of nitrogen to ponds.
- Are pond levels higher than usual, and if so, what does that mean?
- Is there a connection between a pond's trophic status and the likelihood of cyanobacteria blooms?
- Are there pollutants in pond sediments from rainfall? Should we be concerned about sunscreen in ponds?

Additional questions included to what degree pond sediments have been studied, which specific ponds in Wellfleet were above the phosphorus Ecoregion threshold in 2023, and whether sediment quality is considered as a category of impact.

Following introductions, Cape Cod Commission (Commission) staff reviewed feedback received from Meeting 1, presented an overview of the pond management strategies database, reviewed the Freshwater Pond Restoration Projects Viewer, and presented potential criteria for prioritizing ponds to manage.

Participants were asked to provide input on impacts to ponds not yet identified, what their priorities are when considering pond management strategies, what information they need to support decision

making, driving factors in choosing a strategy, and how they might prioritize ponds for management actions, as described below.

### **DEFINING THE PROBLEMS:**

Participants were asked if there are impacts to ponds that are not being captured as part of the Freshwater Initiative that they think are important. They were also asked if there are other long-term planning considerations that should be included.

Attendees noted the importance of impacts that cause ponds to close. One attendee commented on how pond sediment quality can impact water quality, suggesting there may be a role for sediment monitoring.

### **STRATEGIES:**

Upon entering the meeting, participants were asked to identify their top considerations for selecting a pond management strategy. Using a posterboard, participants could select up to three top considerations. Responses are listed below, in order of most to least votes (#):

- Level of threat (5)
- Maintenance requirements (4)
- Effectiveness (4)
- Duration of benefits (3)
- Local priorities (2)
- Community acceptance (2)
- Co-benefits (e.g., habitat, aesthetics, recreation, addressed multiple threats) (1)

Options not selected include:

- Cost
- Likelihood of obtaining permits
- Time to implement
- Time to see results

During the meeting, participants were asked to elaborate on the considerations they selected. They were asked to share their top priority and discuss why. They were also asked to elaborate on whether there is other information they feel they need.

Many attendees said the level of threat, strategy impact and effectiveness, and community acceptance are priorities when considering pond management strategies. One participant suggested that all considerations should be balanced rather than selecting one criterion.

Other priorities attendees shared include the time to see results, sustainability of implementing a strategy and the duration of benefits as important considerations.

One attendee said who has the legal responsibility to address a pond's impairment and who has enforcement power to enact strategy implementation should be factors when considering a management strategy. Another participant noted the practicality and feasibility of achieving the implementation action goal should also be considered when selecting a pond management strategy.

Another participant noted local priorities can influence pond management strategy selection, and another said cost is a priority but should be considered in light of other local efforts such as wastewater system installation or upgrades.

One attendee asked if the pond management strategy fact sheets the Commission is developing will be specific to individual ponds. Commission staff said no, but a pond's individual characteristics can be used to help decide which strategies may be best to address the problem. Participants suggested having four or five key aspects to consider when deciding on a strategy, perhaps in the form of a flow chart, as an example.

Many participants commented on the importance of education for both homeowners and visitors to provide information about ponds and their sensitive ecosystems. Attendees discussed an unwillingness of seasonal renters and visitors to comply with pond regulations, such as restrictions on when dogs are allowed at a pond, and a need to get this information to people.

Attendees also discussed wanting to understand the capacity of a pond to support certain uses, such as swimming or boating, to manage attitudes around pond usage or even limit use or tourism. Again, the need to communicate these issues to the public was articulated.

## **PROJECTS:**

Town and Cape Cod National Seashore staff present were asked to speak to pond projects in their community, including what considerations or driving factors contributed to the strategy selected and what additional information could have been helpful in the planning process.

An attendee from the Cape Cod National Seashore reviewed many projects undertaken at ponds within the seashore such as a shoreline erosion project, shoreline restoration projects, and in-pond invasive plant treatment. One restoration project decreased the size of the parking area over previous conditions to increase the restoration area and limit usage at that access point. It was suggested that additional education strategies to encourage good behavior at pond access points could be helpful, in addition to model bylaws.

One attendee noted a collaboration between the Seashore and the Wellfleet police department to station a police detail at an ocean beach to effectively calm user activity and increase compliance

with regulations at that location. Others noted that Cape Cod National Seashore agents have also collaborated with town staff to monitor pond access points, when needed.

Staff from one town said they were working on a stormwater management project to improve water quality near a local pond. A consultant was hired to design the system and that project is going to town meeting for funding.

### **PRIORITIES:**

Participants were asked about criteria they think are important when prioritizing ponds and whether there are certain criteria that should be considered more heavily than others.

One attendee suggested that ownership and access considerations could be separate criteria when prioritizing ponds for management strategies, and that access could also be an environmental justice issue. An attendee observed that access issues are nuanced. Another participant suggested prioritizing ponds that have high usage.

The Nauset, Chequessett, Pamet, Pilgrim Lenses stakeholder group will meet again on Monday, June 3, 2024, from 12:30 – 2:00pm at the Wellfleet Public Library.

## **Meeting 2 Agenda**

1. Introductions: Cape Cod Commission (Commission) staff will facilitate the introduction of meeting participants.
2. Defining the Problems: Commission staff will summarize stakeholder input from meeting 1 regarding threats to Cape Cod ponds and discuss and define the problems the Freshwater Initiative aims to address.
3. Strategies: Commission staff will provide a brief overview of the water quality strategies database. Stakeholders will be asked to identify and discuss the information that will be most impactful for local identification of strategies and decision-making.
4. Projects: Stakeholders will share their experiences and observations of strategies implemented on Cape Cod, their successes, challenges, and lessons learned.
5. Priorities: Stakeholders will discuss priorities and values for selecting a pond management strategy, including but not limited to cost, co-benefits, and time to implement. Commission staff will share information and gather feedback on prioritizing ponds for evaluation and implementation of strategies.
6. Next Steps: Commission staff will discuss next steps for participants, including future meeting dates and topics.

## Meeting 2 Participants

### Stakeholder Participants

- Sophia Fox, Cape Cod National Seashore
- Alex Bates, Town of Eastham
- Carl Persson, Ocean Solutions, Inc.
- Heith Martinez, Town of Wellfleet
- Emily Beebe, Town of Truro
- Barbara Carboni, Town of Truro
- Melyssa Millet, Town of Provincetown
- Karen Ruymann, Friends of the Village Pond Watershed
- Mike Fisher, Wellfleet Conservation Commission
- Nick Picariello, Wellfleet Board of Health
- Tom Slack, Wellfleet Natural Resources Advisory Board
- Leon Shreves, Wellfleet Conservation Commission
- Bob Stewart, Wellfleet Conservation Commission
- Geoff Sanders, Cape Cod National Seashore

### Cape Cod Commission Staff Present

- Erin Perry, Deputy Director
- Heather McElroy, Natural Resources Program Manager
- Tim Pasakarnis, Water Resources Analyst
- Tara Nye Lewis, Water Resources Analyst
- Jessica Rempel, Natural Resources Analyst
- Michele White, Special Projects Coordinator

### Partners in the Regional Pond Monitoring Program

- Sophia Feuerhake, Association to Preserve Cape Cod