



Freshwater Initiative

## **Sagamore Lens Stakeholder Group**

### **Meeting 2 Summary: April 23, 2024**

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The second Sagamore Lens Stakeholder Group meeting for the Freshwater Initiative was held on April 23, 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:

- The importance of communicating that property values can change due to changes in pond water quality as a way of connecting with many pond shore property owners.
- The urgency of addressing the potential public health impacts associated with toxic algae blooms (and other water quality impairments).
- The need to address ponds where nitrogen and septic may be the primary source of the pond's problems, but that planned sewer service may be delayed.
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of pond groups and towns in addressing pond problems, particularly related to initiating, permitting, and managing an activity, and how ownership influences those roles.

Several participants noted they are encouraged by the level of interest and participation in addressing pond water quality. Some made observations about the transitory nature of ponds.

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 providing data on pond degradation impacts to real estate values, that this may be an effective way to connect with many people. Attendees also noted the importance of recognizing impacts to human and animal health from pond impairments, suggesting more frequent, or even real-time, data collection could be used to advise pond managers and citizens when it is okay to use a pond. This could possibly be executed through testing new technologies. Participants agreed on the importance of getting information out to people.

One attendee suggested funding for long-term maintenance of remediation measures can be a barrier to strategy implementation.

## 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 (#):

- Effectiveness (7)
- Community acceptance (6)
- Co-benefits (e.g., habitat, aesthetics, recreation, addressed multiple threats) (5)
- Cost (3)
- Level of threat (3)
- Duration of benefits (2)
- Likelihood of obtaining permits (2)
- Local priorities (2)
- Maintenance requirements (1)
- Time to implement (1)
- Time to see results (1)

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 cited effectiveness as a top priority in choosing a pond management strategy. Community acceptance and duration of benefits were also cited by multiple participants. Duration of benefits was cited as specifically important when town resources are limited in terms of the

number of projects that can be managed simultaneously. Other priorities cited included the level of threat, cost, and time to see results.

Many participants suggested prevention, such as prohibiting nutrients from entering ponds to begin with, as a priority for pond management. Attendees suggested education could aid those efforts.

One attendee said local priorities drive strategy selection, and noted how competing local priorities can affect those decisions. Another attendee said their priority would be the strategy that is most impactful, but other strategies may be easier to implement.

Many participants agreed that understanding a pond, its ecosystem, biology, and the problem it is facing, are key first steps to strategy selection.

One participant suggested biochar as a strategy to address certain impairments. Commission staff noted its inclusion in the pond strategies database.

Another participant commented that states such as Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine have state funded lakes programs, such as Maine's "LakeSmart" program. These programs can include youth engagement, research, public education, and implementing mitigation projects.

Many people commented on the need for public boat washes, and suggested best practices from other states, including New York's Lake George could be adopted. Participants noted lack of local control at state-owned boat launches and said this is a barrier to install or operate boat wash stations at those locations.

## **PROJECTS:**

Town 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.

One town staff attendee provided an example implementation project to address cyanobacteria impairment of one local pond. Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds were used to perform a diagnostic study of the pond and management recommendations were received from a consultant. The town decided to use SolarBee circulators as the management strategy, which were also purchased using CPA funds. The town found those circulators to not be spatially effective and to have a high yearly maintenance fee. The town then applied for Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program funding to install stormwater management measures and nutrient deactivation.

This staff member noted the need to have spatial data to backup selection of a particular strategy, noting that the circulator approach was chosen based on community acceptance and lack of support for using alum as treatment. This staff member also commented on the need for management

strategies to be in line with local wastewater planning and to be aware of external factors, such as potential regulatory changes.

Staff from another town noted a pond study that was done found inputs from septic systems and pond sediments to be the primary issues affecting one local pond. The area near that pond is not scheduled to be connected to sewer in the near-term so the town chose alum treatment and stormwater management measures as ways to address the impairment until the area around the pond is sewered. Staff from this town commented that the town is still evaluating the effectiveness of the alum treatment, which will guide the town's adaptive management approach to any future pond management activities. Town staff also shared that while a strategy may work well to address an impairment, purchasing, funding, and maintenance costs need to be considered prior to implementation.

### **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 said pond water quality should be weighed heavily, where "red flag ponds" or ponds with public health closures should be prioritized for management.

Another attendee suggested those ponds related to drinking water or where drinking water wells are influenced by pond water quality should be a priority.

Another attendee said ownership and access should be weighed more heavily; if it is a popular pond with multiple activities and more people enjoying it, that may be a better use of tax dollars.

The Sagamore Lens stakeholder group will meet again on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, from 9:00 – 10:30am at Old Sandwich Town Hall.

## **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

- Ashley Fisher, Town of Mashpee
- Amber Unruh, Town of Barnstable
- Darcy Karle, Town of Barnstable
- Susan Dangel, Save Mashpee Wakeby Pond Alliance
- Kim Comart, Falmouth Ponds Coalition
- Lucinda Keith, Falmouth Ponds Coalition
- Joyce Bock, Falmouth Ponds Coalition
- Michael Smith, Barnstable High School
- Leanne Drake, Town of Sandwich
- Jodi Cutler, Joint Base Cape Cod
- Steve Waller, Association for the Preservation of Long Pond
- Jane Ward, Association for the Preservation of Long Pond
- Kathy Fox Alfano, candidate for State Representative

### Cape Cod Commission Staff Present

- Kristy Senatori, Executive Director
- 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

- Julie Hambrook, Association to Preserve Cape Cod
- Lynn Francis, Association to Preserve Cape Cod