



Pocasset Water Quality Coalition
P.O. Box 852 Pocasset, MA 02559
www.pocassetwaterquality.org

March 2, 2021

Dear Member,

We want to update you on our progress and activities over the last six months.

Why we are committed.

We have a very committed Board of Directors. Some members have lived in Pocasset for less than twenty years, while some of the older board members have summered here for 70 years or more! Whether they are a twenty-year resident or have spent virtually a lifetime here, every board member has a story that shows their love for these waters and the wildlife that inhabits them.

Our board members often reflect on their early days in Pocasset:

"As a boy, I could see down a few feet of water and see the eelgrass," said a 60-year-old,
"Now, the water is murky and filled with 'green slime.'"

"Starfish, shrimp, horseshoe crabs, and scallops were all plentiful in the early 1950s. I remember as a boy all the juvenile scallops starting to swim to the surface of the water in mid-August, foretelling of a bountiful harvest come October, said a 76-year-old. I could not wait to go scalloping every fall."

How we started

In recent years, many of us had focused on 1962 when the Town of Bourne stopped the water flow between Barlow's Landing Harbor and Hen Cove as one of the primary causes of our pollution. Sludge, sediment, and sand from Hen Cove cover acres of marshland and channels, ending the cove's natural flushing.

Frank Gasson, a 78-year resident of Pocasset, championed restoring this area, and in the process founded PWQC. In November 2019, with the help of many committed supporters, our highly energized group secured a \$50,000 grant from the Community Preservation Committee of the Town of Bourne to undertake a study to determine what the water flow would be from a rehabilitated waterway. Frank and others wanted to know how helpful this renewed water flow could be in improving the water quality of Hen Cove.

Initial engineering study into causes and possible solutions

The Town of Bourne retained the BSC Group, an engineering company in Boston, to undertake a study and deliver a preliminary report by September 2020. On October 23, the BSC Group submitted a draft report for review and comment. The draft report was disappointing, as it did not adequately address several of our primary issues as identified in several meetings and town forums. The Board reviewed the draft report in depth and communicated our concerns and observations to the town. Our key concern

was the lack of mention of Hen Cove in the study. We are waiting for the final report to be issued to see if any of these concerns were subsequently addressed in the final report.

Issues driving water quality

Over the past several months we learned a lot about other grass roots groups in surrounding towns that have been collecting data and have been able to start funded projects to address a range of issues that are affecting similar waterways in and around the Cape. Among these issues are the great harm to our bays, harbors, and marshes from:

- Old leaching cesspools or inadequate septic systems,
- Runoff from lawn fertilizers,
- Stormwater runoff into the bay
- Chemical plumes entering the ground water

Commonality with other communities

We have begun dialogue and collaboration with a number of these organizations across the Cape to gather more information and discuss the common causes and fixes for pollution. These conversations are with board members from allied organizations and a range of scientists accessible on Cape Cod.

Focus for Action

The Board has reviewed our initial year of learning to design our pathway to the future. We have organized several subcommittees to address the key functions necessary to address the work ahead focusing on the listed drivers of water quality. These functions include:

1. Finance/Administration
2. PR/Development Marketing
3. Fundraising (members, businesses, donors)
4. Liaison to Town and other Organizations
5. Technical

We want your help

As we look forward to planning activities for the upcoming summer season in Pocasset, we are looking for active volunteers who could assist and the “planning” and “doing” of our activities. If you are interested in helping form one of these committees, please let us know by contacting the group email box below.

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions at: <https://www.pocassetwaterquality.org/contact/>

Our objective is to be as effective as possible in protecting and cleaning up our waters. We seek a day when we can again see the sandy bottom of our bays standing in a few feet of water, eelgrass thriving, and the juvenile scallops reappearing every August.

Thanks for your continued interest and support.

The Board of Directors of the Pocasset Water Quality Coalition