August 2023

NEW Title V Regulations

**FAQS**

**When will I need to replace my septic system?** *The timeline will be determined after there is an approved TMDL for Red Brook Harbor, Hen Cove, and Pocasset Harbor. The TMDL should be in place toward the end of 2025 into early 2026. Then Bourne will determine the timeline if a Watershed Permit is requested.*

**What is a TMDL?** A TMDL is the calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed to enter a waterbody so that the waterbody will meet and continue to meet water quality standards for that pollutant, NITROGEN. A TMDL determines a pollutant reduction target and allocates load reductions necessary to the source(s) of the pollutant.

**What are I/A Septic or “Denite” Septic Systems?** A septic system that includes oxygen-free conditions in part of the treatment process. They can remove over 90 percent of nitrogen through a process called denitrification. Denitrification converts nitrate to nitrogen gas which is then released into the air. Denitrification requires a type of bacteria that grows in oxygen-free conditions.

**New sewering vs. I/A septic systems.** *New town sewer systems take up to 10 years to begin to work. First there is the engineering, then the building of the treatment plant. While also digging up every street, then connecting the piping to each property. Conventional wisdom says that town sewering will cost between $100,000 and $125,000 per property. The town would need to float bonds to pay for this. Property taxes would increase.*

*I/A systems can cost $25,000 to $50,000 per property. Completion time is weeks. They begin reducing nitrogen immediately upon completion.*

**Which I/A system should we use?** Any I/A systems that are approved for “General Use” by Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

1. **Are there funding options to help pay for septic upgrades?** *Barnstable County has the best current options. Unfortunately, we are not eligible until Red Brook Harbor, Hen Cove and Pocasset Harbor are declared nitrogen impaired. The Phinney’s Harbor Watershed is impaired. If you live in the Phinney’s Harbor watershed you are eligible for the Barnstable County financing program. Failed systems or systems that require repairs are eligible for the septic loan program – even if the location is not in an impaired watershed. For non-failed systems there seems to be a requirement that the Town mandate the upgrade – so even if you are in an impaired watershed the Town mandate of upgrade may be required. Voluntary upgrades do not seem to be eligible regardless of location. I do not know what restrictions there are on state tax credits or how that program works.*
2. *The State has tax credits to help pay for Title V upgrades.*

**What is a Rain Garden?** Rain gardens are specially designed and planted depressions in the ground that collect, filter, and treat stormwater. These slightly sunken gardens allow collected water to be taken up by plants or slowly infiltrated (i.e., filtered into the ground), reducing the amount of water running off site. Rain garden soils—which are typically amended with mulch and sand to promote proper moisture levels and drainage properly— also remove pollutants (including metals, nutrients, sediments, oils/grease, and organic matter) before they reach groundwater or flow to coastlines and local waterbodies.