

Some Results of Nutrient OverLoading, August, '08

Aerial photos by Jeff Norgeot; Uncle Harvey's closeup by Liz De Lima



Uncle Harvey's Pond is pea-green with an algal boom; inset top left is closeup of the pond surface



Shoal Pond, with lots of plant life, is slowly filling in



Plant "explosions" in Critchett's Pond

Nutrients (Nitrogen and Phosphorus) travel into our saltwater embayments and freshwater ponds and fertilize microscopic plants (algae) and pond weeds, sometimes causing uncontrolled growth called "algal blooms." When this occurs, the algae release huge quantities of oxygen, but when they die and fall to the bottom of the pond, the process of their decomposition depletes oxygen from the water. In extreme cases, this can result in fish kills (Cedar Pond in 2002 and Meadow Bog in 2005). Nutrient loading is killing our waterways NOW. The problem will only increase in the future.

Vote 'YES' on the draft Wastewater Plan; Save our Waters!



Sarah's Pond showing algae, with Meadow Bog, Little Quanset Pond, and Quanset Harbor in the background



Oleans Town Cove with Yacht Club on left; plankton bloom shows red in the water

Setting the Record Straight: What the Draft Comprehensive Wastewater Plan IS and IS NOT

The Plan IS

A phased, flexible, adaptable plan for sewerage about half of Orleans to meet our regulatory requirements to clean up our surface water bodies.

The Plan is designed to be accomplished in six phases, with the OPTION for future generations to decide to move on to full sewerage of the town IF they choose.

The Plan is necessary because of State and Federal regulations. We can choose to do it now and do it “our way” or later at higher cost and with someone else in the driver’s seat.

The Board of Selectmen has made the initial policy decision to insure that capital costs are covered at 80% on property tax and 20% on “betterments” for those who are served by a sewer. The policy is a commitment for equitable “cost” to individual home owners whether they are served by sewer or a Title 5 system.

Property taxes will increase, but will do so incrementally when each step of the Plan is undertaken.

The special state funding (SRF) available between 2009 and 2019 will set aside 35% of EACH YEAR’S total SRF funds for towns who are eligible. This 35% refers to the percentage of the yearly amount of state funds that can be allocated to these projects, not to individual town projects.

No capital expenditures will be made until the “validation” and verification is satisfied. (This task has often been referred to as “peer review.”) As each step of the Plan moves forward, Town Meeting will be able to vote on the expenditures.

The Tri town site has been studied and modeled for more than twenty years. Disposing of treated effluent there is SAFE for homes in the area and the environment. The Namskaket Marsh System has the greatest capacity to handle additional effluent. It is reported to be at about 1/3 its capacity to handle additional nutrients without causing degradation. Along with Little Namskaket and a small wedge of Nauset Heights, this is the only area in town that has capacity to handle additional nitrogen.

The Plan will work and will serve future generations well.

The Plan IS NOT

The Plan is NOT written in stone. It provides for specific benchmarks to re-evaluate where we are going. It is adaptive to unforeseen future events and conditions.

The Plan does NOT ask for funding during the October 27, 2008 Town Meeting.

The Plan is NOT a plan for town-wide sewerage in the first 6 phases.

Disposal of highly treated effluent at the Tri town site will NOT cause degradation to the Namskaket Marsh or Cape Cod Bay, nor will it cause basements to flood and septic systems to fail because of high water. Monitoring wells will be installed to measure ground water elevations to keep people assured of these projections of safety.

Treating our human waste is NOT optional. We are responsible from both legal and environmental standpoints. We would ask “no voters” –

If not this, what? If not now, when?



Orleans Pond Coalition

The Board of Directors urges attendance at the Special Town Meeting, October 27, 6:30pm, Nauset Middle School

PLEASE VOTE YES!

Approve the Draft Wastewater Plan!