

THE ORLEANS  
**BLUE PAGES**

*A Guide to Protecting  
Cape Cod Waters...*





## Orleans Pond Coalition

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The Orleans Pond Coalition began in the fall of 2003 as a collaboration of already existing individual pond associations in Orleans and was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization in 2005. Because of their concern for the increasing degradation of fresh and salt water ponds, the associations sought collectively to protect and improve them. By working together, they could avoid duplication of effort and, while each body of water differed in its specific environmental problems, the solutions were likely to be commonly applicable to each of them.

Membership in the OPC has been extended to all who are concerned about our bays, ponds, marshes, streams and the ocean, since as this booklet illustrates, it is not only the immediate neighbors that have an impact on these bodies of water. Maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of all us who enjoy the intrinsic pleasures of the Cape – its beaches, birds, fish and water – will be crucial to solving the problems before us.

*The Orleans Blue Pages* is designed as a reference and resource for you and your family and others who want to protect the environment and especially our waterways. We hope you will keep it handy and will consult it for information and suggestions. To obtain more copies of *The Orleans Blue Pages*, visit [www.orleanspondcoalition.org](http://www.orleanspondcoalition.org). We also hope you will consider joining the Orleans Pond Coalition and have included an envelope with a membership application.

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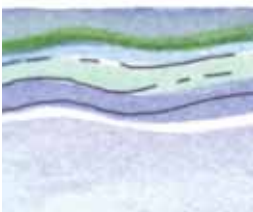
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# Acknowledgements

This book was born on the shores of Puget Sound as the *Puget Soundbook* © 2003, 1991, by author James A. Kolb and illustrator Diane Gusset Bressler. The *Puget Soundbook*, originally funded by the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority, is part of the award-winning FOR SEA family of curriculum guides for grades 1-12, available from FOR SEA Institute of Marine Science, Indianola, Washington 98342 ([www.forsea.org](http://www.forsea.org)).

The *Puget Soundbook* grew into the *Island Blue Pages*, with permission, by the “Booklet Committee”, a dedicated group of volunteers from Vineyard environmental groups, the Martha’s Vineyard Commission, and town employees under the leadership of the Martha’s Vineyard Shellfish Group, who adapted it to the East Coast waters of Martha’s Vineyard. The Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah) provided the major funding. For a complete version of the *Island Blue Pages*, visit the website [www.islandbluepages.org](http://www.islandbluepages.org) or contact the Martha’s Vineyard Shellfish Group at 508-693-0391.

The Orleans Pond Coalition, with permission, adapted the *Puget Soundbook* and the *Island Blue Pages* to *The Orleans Blue Pages* reflecting conditions specific to Orleans but also generic to Cape Cod in hopes other organizations would continue to spread the word to protect our waters. To learn more about OPC, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting fresh and marine waters, visit the website [www.orleanspondcoalition.org](http://www.orleanspondcoalition.org). For information on reproducing these materials, email [info@orleanspondcoalition.org](mailto:info@orleanspondcoalition.org).

The Orleans Pond Coalition is deeply indebted to Jim Kolb and Diane Gusset Bressler, creators of the *Puget Soundbook*, and the Martha’s Vineyard Shellfish Group and Wampanoag Tribe of Aquinnah, creators of the *Island Blue Pages*, which continue to inspire all lovers of water on both coasts.

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*Cover photo: Geri Appleyard Photography, [www.geriappleyard.com](http://www.geriappleyard.com)*

# Protecting Our Waters

## Together we can make a difference!

**W**hen we think of Cape Cod, we think of water. Water dominates our landscape and our history. The region's landscape was shaped by multiple glacial ice ages. Humanity's history on the Cape traces back through the Nausets and Wampanoag Tribes to over 10,000 years ago.

Archaeological evidence of shoreline campsites, extensive shell mounds and water-centered legends attest to the central importance of water in the lives of the Cape's first inhabitants.

Early settlers from Europe also built their villages around harbors or along freshwater streams that provided water for livestock, shallow wells, and dams to harness the water's energy for mills. Like the Native Americans, they depended heavily on fish and shellfish harvested from the great ponds and the ocean. In later years, marine commerce, fishing, boat building, and whaling became the Cape's economic mainstays.

Today the well-being of our towns is still intimately linked to the health of our waters. We are never far from our ponds and beaches. Many of us fish local waters for sustenance or sport. Seasonal residents and tourists flock to the Cape to bask and hike on its beaches, swim in its waters, catch and eat local fish and shellfish, and go boating on its sparkling bays.

All these activities require clean water and a healthy marine ecosystem. We share our waters with a vast array of aquatic plants and animals. We depend on them to maintain the ecological balance that keeps our paradise intact. They need our help to survive.

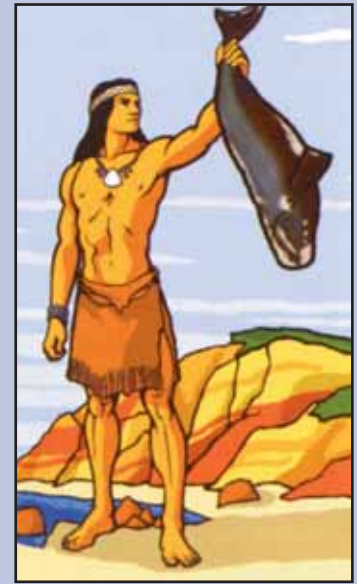
During the past several decades, Cape people have noticed that the water quality of our salt ponds, harbors, and shorelines has been deteriorating. The water grows greener and murkier in the summer months. Slime algae proliferate on rocks and dock ladders; the numbers of valued fish and shellfish are declining. Studies by local scientists and shellfish wardens confirm that areas in some estuaries lack enough oxygen to sustain life.

Many of our current water quality problems result from land use practices, rapid local development and population growth. Every additional septic system and newly fertilized lawn further pollute the waters. Each house may seem unimportant by itself, but multiply the impact of a single household by thousands of households and it becomes clear why our irreplaceable water resources are deteriorating before our eyes.

**The good news is that it's not too late to save our waters – if each of us plays our part.**

### THE NAUSET'S

The Nauset band, a branch of the Wampanoag Federation, originally inhabited the Orleans area. Samuel de Champlain, one of the earliest explorers to enter Nauset Harbor in 1605, despite an initial altercation, undertook good relations with the Indians. However, in 1614 Captain Thomas Hunt captured 24 natives and sold them into slavery in Spain, not the last of less endearing acts. Among those sent across the sea was Squanto, later of much help to the pilgrims at Plimoth. Much decimated by European disease before the Pilgrims' arrival, their numbers continued to decline; by 1764 there were but four Nausets in Orleans/Eastham.

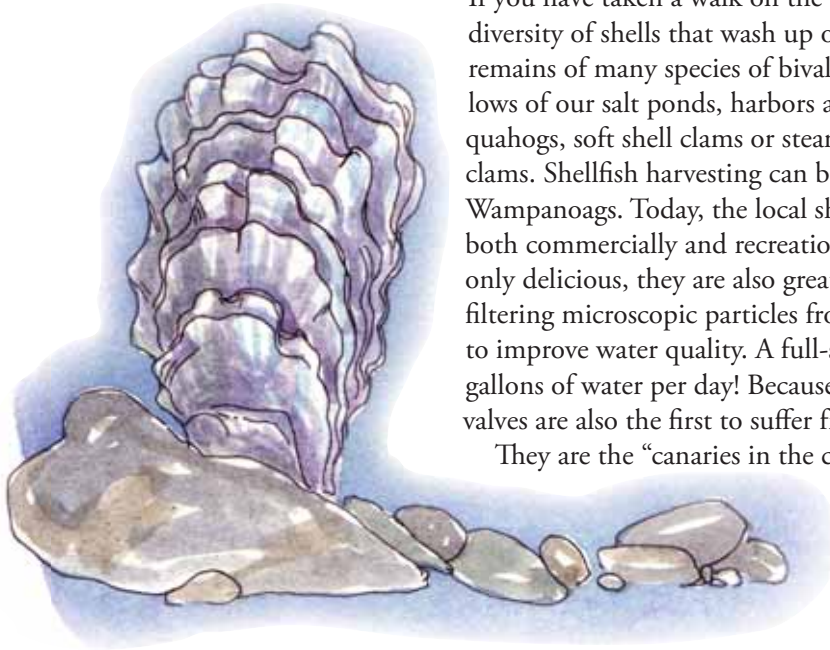


We all want to protect our water resources, but often we do not know what we can do. The Orleans Blue Pages will give you some ideas. It begins with the big picture – providing everything you need to know about the Cape’s water cycles – and then identifying actions that each of us can take to safeguard our region’s waters. Many of the solutions are simple; some will even save you money. Join us to protect the health of our waters.

Please keep this booklet near your phone book as a handy reference. Share it with members of your household, or lend it to a neighbor or friend. If you are a landlord, give your tenants a copy; most likely they will also want to know what they can do to protect our waters.

## Cape Cod Neighbor

### Bivalves: Nature’s Water Filters



If you have taken a walk on the beach, you’ve noticed the incredible diversity of shells that wash up on the shores. Those shells are the remains of many species of bivalve mollusks that populate the shallows of our salt ponds, harbors and bays. These species include oysters, quahogs, soft shell clams or steamers, bay scallops, mussels, and razor clams. Shellfish harvesting can be traced back to the first Nausets and Wampanoags. Today, the local shellfish beds continue to be fished both commercially and recreationally. Those amazing creatures are not only delicious, they are also great for the environment. As they feed by filtering microscopic particles from the water, they act as natural filters to improve water quality. A full-sized oyster can filter more than 25 gallons of water per day! Because of their incredible filtering ability, bivalves are also the first to suffer from pollution and poor water quality.

They are the “canaries in the coal mine” of the marine environment.

### ARE YOU FLUID IN WATER TERMINOLOGY?

- Aquifer:** Underground sediments saturated with water.
- Watershed:** Area of land in which all water, whether above or below the ground, is constantly moving downhill towards the same body of water. A watershed may include thousands of acres and water may travel many miles from the highest elevation point to the body of water at or near sea level.
- Runoff:** Downhill movement of rainfall, over impervious surfaces or slowly permeable soils, to a discharge point: a wetland, a fresh or coastal pond, or the ocean.
- Groundwater:** Water stored in or moving through the aquifer.
- Recharge:** Process where precipitation moves through the soil and reaches the groundwater, replenishing the aquifer.
- Water table:** Underground, the top level of soil permanently saturated with water. A household well taps into water below the water table.