

Report of the Pleasant Bay Resource Management Alliance

The Pleasant Bay Resource Management Alliance is an organization of the Towns of Harwich, Orleans and Chatham to implement the recommendations of the Pleasant Bay Resource Management Plan. Chatham voters approved the plan at the 1998 Special Town Meeting (November). The Alliance has a Steering Committee with one member selected by the Board of Selectmen in each town. This year the Chatham Board of Selectmen voted to appoint an alternate member to the Steering Committee, and appointed Ms. Jane Harris to serve in that capacity. The Steering Committee is supported by a Technical Resource Committee consisting of resource management professionals from each town, and representatives of Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management, the Cape Cod Commission and the Cape Cod National Seashore. A coordinator for the Alliance manages implementation activities with the committees.

The Alliance was successful in securing private grants to support many programs. Project highlights from 2001 include:

- The Alliance completed the second season of bay-wide water quality monitoring. Many thanks are offered to the more than 100 volunteers who collected water quality samples at 16 locations across the Bay from June through September. The samples are analyzed at the SMAST Laboratory at UMASS-Dartmouth. Results from the 2000 monitoring season were compiled and distributed in the *Pleasant Bay Citizen Water Quality Monitoring Program Interim Report 2000*. A similar report compiling results from the 2001 monitoring season is planned for publication in early 2002. In 2001 the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection signed off on the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for the program.
- Town Meetings in all three Alliance communities approved similar bylaws to prohibit the operation of personal watercraft in Pleasant Bay. The bylaws were developed in response to the National Park Service's decision to prohibit PWC within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore. The bylaws received approval from the Massachusetts Attorney General conditioned on the review and approval of the Massachusetts Division of Environmental Law Enforcement. A decision on the bylaws from the latter agency is expected early in 2002.
- Progress continued on the Intertidal Habitat and Sediment Assessment Study launched in late 2000. The study will provide baseline information about the physical characteristics, vegetation, and animal and plant populations of the Bay's intertidal areas. It will also develop an on-going monitoring program to ensure the vitality of these ecologically critical areas. The study is funded by grants from the Sudbury Foundation (\$12,500), Edward Bangs Kelley and Ezra Kelley Foundation (\$8,000), and the Alliance towns. In 2001 the Friends of Pleasant Bay, Inc. contributed \$10,000 toward second phase of the project.
- The Alliance published for public comment draft *Guidelines for Private Walkways and Stairways in Fresh and Marine Resource Areas in Pleasant Bay*. The *Guidelines* are intended for use by local conservation commissions and boards of appeal/planning boards in the review of permit applications for walkways or stairways over marine or freshwater wetland resources.

- The Alliance published the *Pleasant Bay Shoreline Access Enhancement Program*. The publication includes a detailed map indicating lateral shoreline access along the bay, and information on facilities available at each of the 26 public access points on the bay's shoreline.
- The Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs approved the *Guidelines for Docks and Piers in Pleasant Bay*. The *Guidelines*, which were developed by the Alliance and local conservation commissions and planning boards, have been relied upon by commissions and boards in each town to revise regulations governing the permitting of docks and piers.
- The Alliance obtained a grant from the Community Foundation of Cape Cod to publish three editions of a *Citizens Guide to Estuarine Protection*. Each edition will be targeted to the specific nitrogen loading conditions within a selected sub-embayment and associated sub-watershed of Pleasant Bay. The guides are intended to increase public awareness of the effects of nitrogen on marine eco-systems, and to provide a foundation for community debate and consensus building on water quality goals and strategies for nitrogen management.

The Alliance appreciates the Town's on-going financial support and commitment toward its efforts to preserve the natural resources and public enjoyment of Pleasant Bay.

Respectfully Submitted By:

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