

Taking Action: the Big Picture

If we make healthy choices for our bodies, the chances are we'll be healthier. The same goes for our environment. We, residents and visitors alike, are stewards of our phenomenal water resources; our lakes, ponds, streams, tidal estuaries, wetlands, and harbors – and most precious of all, the groundwater aquifer. The health of these resources depends on the choices we make.

What can you and I do to preserve these resources today and for the generations to come?

First: Everyone lives on the water. Refer to the maps in Chapter 1 of this booklet. Which watershed do you live in? Become familiar with your watershed. Think about what its resources mean to your daily life. How would your life be changed if you didn't have clean water to drink and swim in, and fish and shellfish to eat?

Second: Put into practice as many of the suggestions offered here as you can. You don't have to adopt them all at once. Start with one, or maybe several, and when they become part of your routine, add a few more. Talk with your family, friends, and neighbors about what you're doing "waterwise". Spread the "water word"!

After you've had one or two meetings about the issues, tackle a project that will impact water quality in your neighborhood. For example, you may choose to begin with a stream, pond, or beach walk.



Drawing by Kassie Foss

Third: Individual actions are important, but organizations are also essential. If you already belong to a group that is active in protecting our water resources – TERRIFIC! If you don't, remember, there are many ways to get involved. No matter what your interests and skills, no matter how little time you think you can offer, there's a place for you. Serve on a town board, join a conservation group or volunteer at a special event. No matter what you do, you'll be joining others who share your concerns and want to make a real contribution to safeguard our water resources. Here are some activities you may wish to consider:

- **Join your local watershed group** such as Friends of Chatham Waterways, Friends of Pleasant Bay, or a local "Friends of" pond group. If there is no watershed group in your area, start one!



- **Participate in a beach cleanup.** The main one is Coastal Sweep in September each year. Keep an eye on local newspapers for details. Better yet, be a proactive person and pick up any trash you see every time you walk the beach.

Get informed and involved! That's the key to changes that will protect and enhance our waters. Your educated involvement can make a difference!



- **Volunteer to help at the Household Hazardous Waste Collections** held each year.
- **Help organize a public presentation on water issues.** Events are scheduled throughout the year.
- **Become an advocate for nitrogen and phosphorous removal technologies** for both home and municipal facilities. You can help inform others about new technologies that remove nitrogen from our waste and can help save our ponds and estuaries.
- **Help educate the next generation about the importance of protecting our water** by volunteering on school field trips to water resource areas, wastewater treatment facilities, and town wells.
- **Start your own initiative!** There are new approaches to water-related issues appearing daily. Maybe you have an idea no one has thought of. Every step forward counts. The goal is to protect our precious water resources, any way we can. Everyone has a stake in our water resources.



Although it takes time for these changes to take place, we cannot wait until everyone else has cleaned up before we do our part. We all need to do our share to protect the quality of our waters, and we can take pride in our efforts. We can make a difference for the Cape. Use the suggestions in this booklet at home, first. Then employ the same information at work and in your community. All the actions you take to benefit the region will benefit you, your family, and your community. Seems like a deal we can't refuse!

