



Executive Director's Report ~ September 30, 2020, Annual Meeting

I'd like to take this opportunity to look back on APCC's work and achievements over the past year. By any measure, the year was both busy and productive, and was marked by significant steps forward in our advocacy, science and educational outreach programs.

As you may recall, at last year's annual meeting we released the first State of the Waters: Cape Cod report. In that report, for the first time, a comprehensive analysis was conducted on the Cape's coastal embayments, freshwater ponds and drinking water supplies, and the results were given easy-to-understand scores based on their water quality. The report brought great attention to the need to move far more aggressively in restoring the quality of our water resources.

APCC spent much of the year making sure the momentum continued from our landmark victory to establish the Cape Cod and Islands Water Protection Fund. The fund, adopted into law in 2019, creates a funding source for water quality management projects from the short term rental tax. We followed up on that achievement by assisting with the program's implementation and with the development of regulations that will guide the process for towns to receive much-needed funds for treating nutrient pollution and finally cleaning up the Cape's waters.

We also forged new partnerships that recognized our shared interest with some parties with whom we have sometimes disagreed in the past. APCC, with the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, Cape Cod & Islands Association of Realtors and Housing Assistance Corporation, created a coalition that called on towns to dedicate a percentage of the revenue they receive from the short-term rental tax for investment in infrastructure to restore and protect water quality. These investments will protect the environment while also providing opportunities for affordable housing production and appropriate economic growth.

On another issue, APCC spoke out strongly and repeatedly against the federal government's rollbacks of environmental regulations and its other assaults on the environment, particularly with regard to changes that would impact the Cape's water and air, and that would add to the threats we face from climate change.

We continued to increase our focus on climate change, advocating for the adoption of state climate legislation, continuing our support of the Vineyard Wind project, actively participating in the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative, promoting reductions in carbon emissions for our region and working with various partners on increasing the Cape's resiliency to climate impacts. And, in practicing what we preach, earlier this year APCC's electricity use became carbon-free with the installation of rooftop solar panels and a backup battery storage system, thanks to a challenge grant from the Tern Foundation and the donations of our members. Special thanks to E2 Solar, our solar contractor, who has partnered with us on a referral program that generates a donation to APCC for every solar install they do. The program has generated \$1,500 for APCC so far, with more to come. Thank you to those who went solar this year.

Our Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program continues to expand. Last year and again this year, with the help of our partners we have increased the number of freshwater ponds we monitor for toxic cyanobacteria blooms. This has developed into a very important program for APCC and for Cape Cod. The program helps to alert the public about potential health threats and generates greater awareness about this growing environmental issue as well as about pond water quality.

APCC is in the 14th year of serving as the Cape Cod region's host for the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program. Through the MassBays Program, APCC works with Cape communities to help coordinate projects such as our volunteer river herring monitoring program, restoration planning, stormwater management, climate change adaptation and other initiatives.

APCC's Restoration Coordination Center continues to assist Cape towns with restoration projects that improve the Cape's water resources and habitats. During the past year, the Restoration Coordination Center worked on stormwater projects in the Three Bays area of Barnstable, the Childs River restoration in Falmouth, and other restoration projects at Sesuit Creek in Dennis, Parkers River in Yarmouth, Sunken Meadow marsh in Eastham, Freeman's Pond in Brewster,

Red River Beach marsh in Harwich, Frost Fish Creek in Chatham and Red Lily Pond in Barnstable.

APCC's education and outreach program continued to deliver a message of environmental stewardship to Cape Cod residents and visitors. A prominent part of the program is APCC's living landscape, which is a showcase feature at our offices in Dennis. It promotes ecologically-friendly landscape practices that include native plantings, water conservation and no fertilizers or chemicals.

Throughout last year, APCC staff gave numerous presentations across the Cape and sponsored talks by expert guest speakers. With the limitations we face this year, we continue to keep our members informed and engaged through weekly e-newsletters and printed newsletters sent out three times a year. We have also been able to reach out to new audiences through videos produced by APCC on ponds, stormwater, river herring, natural landscaping and other subjects with the help of volunteers, the town of Barnstable Channel 18 and Cape Media.

Much of APCC's work, particularly our river herring counting and cyanobacteria monitoring programs, as well as the upkeep of our living landscape and other projects, would not be possible without the assistance of our volunteers. We are truly grateful for their dedication and contribution.

I want to acknowledge the individuals who participated in APCC's internship program this year. We have always been fortunate to attract talented interns and Melissa Langley, Becca Miller and Carl DePuy all rose to the occasion and made great contributions to our ongoing summer monitoring programs. Finally, I want to recognize the exceptional work done by APCC staff. Lauren Powers, Don Keeran, Kristin Andres, Jo Ann Muramoto, April Wobst, Kevin Johnson, and our Development Consultant Alice Denison are second to none in their abilities and commitment to Cape Cod. I want to thank them for making APCC the effective force that we are.

A more detailed review of APCC's work can be found in the [2019 Impact Report](#).

Andrew Gottlieb, Executive Director