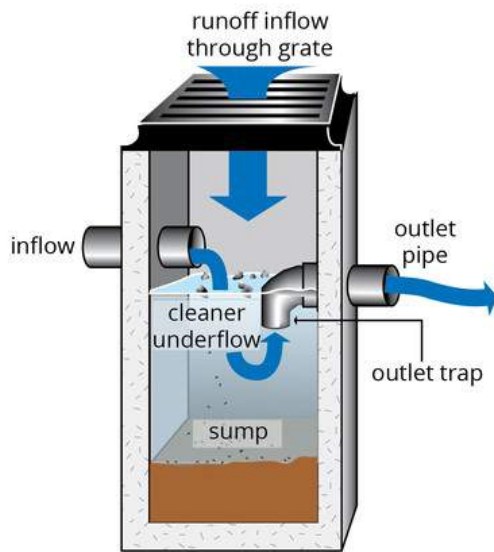


## Collecting Data on Catch Basins

- adapted from a program developed by the Falmouth Pond Coalition (FPC)



Unmanaged stormwater contributes to poor water quality in our ponds by conveying nutrients and contaminants. While the traditional catch basins do little or nothing to treat stormwater, they do help control the flow and help to capture and settle out sediment and litter—that is if they are maintained and properly functioning.

This neighborhood program, designed by FPC, is one way that we can help existing stormwater control structures do their best job and help to protect our ponds.

If your roads are maintained by your town's Department of Public Works (DPW), please first speak with your DPW about your interest in

assisting the town through this volunteer program that is designed to identify catch basins that require cleaning or repair. The intention of this program is to work collaboratively with the town for the public benefit of pond health and preserving stormwater infrastructure.

If you live on private roads, unless you have a special agreement with your town, it is up to you or your neighborhood association to maintain the stormwater controls. This program will help you identify and prioritize needed maintenance or repairs.

### Let's get started!

1. **First Step - Outreach.** Talk to your neighbors about the importance of having catch basins cleaned and properly maintained to protect the health of the pond and keep roadways safe – maybe this is at the next homeowners meeting, or pond group meeting, or a friendly message sent out via email or by knocking on doors. Enlist volunteers to be data collectors for this program. (It's a great activity to involve students!)
2. **Mapping.** The first task will be to map the catch basins in your neighborhood. Check with your town to see if they have something like this already that they can provide you with. Municipalities have been required to map their stormwater systems. Some towns have a online GIS maps on their website that allows you to locate any street on a map and take a screenshot.

If your town has online maps, locate the map layer with drainage systems. Zoom in on the area where you want to collect data. Take a screenshot of the map and include the key telling you which are catch basins, manhole covers, etc. **From a practical standpoint, limit the map to 6-8 catch basins with house numbers showing. Print the map. If you have more than one map, number the maps to keep track of them.**

If no mapping exists, someone with a little skill can hand draw, noting street name and nearest address to the catch basin.

**3. Materials needed by volunteers:**

Phone with camera  
Flashlight  
Clipboard

Data collection form  
Metal measuring tape  
Map of assigned catch basins

**Sample data sheet given to Data Collector**

Street name: Ripple Rd.		Date: 9/22/23	Map: #3
Closest Address	Depth ft/in	Photo taken	Comments

4. Volunteers should be instructed to

- Document their observations on the form (eg) lots of debris and/or sediment around the drain; directly overflows to the pond, etc.
- Take a picture if a problem is visible and note on form if a photo was taken.
- Using the measuring tape, extend the tape down into the basin and take the measurement at the grate level when the tape initially hits the sediment. Record this on the data sheet.
- Using a flashlight, peer into the basin. Observe if there is standing water. Sometimes the overflow pipe can be seen. Document any observations in Comments.

5. For ease of communicating with your town, an electronic spreadsheet will work best. Here is an example of how a spreadsheet can be set up in excel.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Closest Street address	Depth Ft/In	Comments	photo	Town Road	Private Road	Date Inspected	Date Cleaned	Inspected by
22 Ripple Rd	2 ft. 3 in	says lead to waterway		x		7/8/23		Suzy B
24 Ripple Rd	6 ft			x		7/8/23		Suzy B
32 Diamond Way	4 ft, 3 in	covered with leaves, debris	x	x		7/8/23		Suzy B
39 Diamond Way	1 ft. 2 in	water above sediment almost to road	x	x		7/8/23		Suzy B

Enter the data into an electronic version of spreadsheet that you or your pond leaders will provide to your town Department of Public Works. Color code different streets and color code important comments and sediment depths. Try to organize the streets in a manner that provides a somewhat continuous loop for the DPW to follow as they empty the catchment basins. Take photos to document your work in collecting this data.

**If you have questions, contact the Falmouth Pond Coalition: [falmouthpondcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:falmouthpondcoalition@gmail.com)  
They will offer some practical advice!**

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**We are grateful for FPC for developing this program to  
engage volunteers to help protect water quality in our ponds!**



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