



## Brewster's Freshwater Ponds

Brewster's 80 ponds are the visible part of the vast ground water lens that lies under the lower Cape and a vital part of the scenic landscape in the Town. These ponds are extremely diverse in their size, characteristics, and quality. There are 24 great ponds (over 10 acres), most with public access. Many ponds are fed only by ground water and have no outflow while others have in-flowing and out-flowing streams. Some are very deep and have a cold water fishery while others are shallow and have a warm water fishery.

Most striking and concerning is the range of water quality in Brewster's ponds. On-going data from the PALS program on 29 ponds and the Town's Pond report in 2009 indicate that only 7 ponds have either high quality water or water quality suitable for current uses. Forty-six ponds have some level of documented impairment or possible impairment. The major sources of pollutants in our ponds include pathogens and nutrients from septic systems, fertilizer from lawns, phosphorous and pathogens in storm water runoff from roads, driveways, and other impervious surfaces, and some historical sources such as phosphorous from previous agricultural lands. Improving water quality in Brewster's ponds will require both town-wide solutions and strategies that are customized to the characteristics of individual ponds. This is what the Town and its Comprehensive Water Planning Committee are doing.

The CWPC is now completing the second phase of its planning process that has focused on managing nitrogen in the Pleasant Bay watershed, analyzing the build out potential and its impact on storm water, pond management, and identifying wastewater options. The Town has already taken some significant steps to reduce pollution of water resources in general and in ponds more specifically. These include adopting an innovative natural resource protection by-law in the zones of contribution to Town wells, reducing fertilizer application on the Captain's Golf Course, and retrofitting storm water systems. Future actions may include more analysis of specific ponds, new approaches to septic tank siting and management, more storm water management practices, and continued land acquisition in collaboration with the Brewster Conservation Trust.