
Thousands of years ago, huge ice chunks left by a melting glacier were buried in sand carried by meltwater. When the ice chunks melted, they left “kettle” holes in the land surface. Kettle holes that were deep enough to reach the water table flooded with groundwater to form ponds.

Consider the ponds of Cape Cod as open wells. Any tap water that you drink on Cape Cod originated as groundwater - it is our sole source of drinking water.

Unlike the water in a river basin or other flowing system, the water in Cape Cod ponds has a long “residence time” - complete flushing can take ten years or more. Anything added to one of the ponds stays in the water for a long time. Please do your part to preserve the beauty of the ponds, and the purity of the drinking water supply.



Save Our Ponds

While the shorelines of ponds may be privately, town, or federally owned, the water itself is a public resource. We can all work together to preserve the pond environment for the future by following the suggestions outlined in this brochure.

You can also take steps at home that will help preserve your community’s drinking water quality.

- ❖ Reduce the area that you keep as a lawn, and practice sustainable lawn care through the use of natural or no fertilizers and pest control products. Plant native species that do not require any fertilizer. Water deeply and less frequently. Maintain a higher grass height which helps reduce weed growth. Taller grass requires less watering.
- ❖ Consider reducing and eliminating the use of hazardous products in your home. A variety of natural cleaning and household products are widely available.
- ❖ Practice regular septic tank maintenance.

For more information about what you can do to protect our ponds, visit: <http://www.nps.gov/caco/naturescience/lakesandponds.htm>.

Cape Cod National Seashore
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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Help Keep Ponds Beautiful



Freshwater ponds - clear, warm water, tree-lined shores, birds and wildlife: a unique experience

Take only memories, leave only footprints.

- ❖ Leave the pond cleaner than when you arrived.
- ❖ Use waterproof sunscreen.
- ❖ Put garbage in garbage cans, or carry it away with you.
- ❖ Do not litter. Cigarette filters, band-aids, and diapers last for years. Broken glass and fish hooks are safety hazards.
- ❖ Wildlife can ingest and be harmed by fishing line, plastics, and other discarded materials.

Use established paths and leave your dog at home.

Use stairs or designated trails where they exist. If you walk parallel to a shoreline, keep back from the edge. Stay off steep banks and vegetation both on land and in the water. Foot traffic kills the grasses and shrubs that stabilize the sloping shoreline. Dogs and horses can cause destruction. Run-off from rainfall can further erode damaged slopes. Motorized vehicles, including boats, mopeds, motorcycles, and ATVs are prohibited. Check with the park and towns for dog regulations.

Use restrooms.

Human and animal waste can turn a clear kettle pond murky. Use the restrooms.

Where there are none, and if you must, use the woods, not the water or the shoreline bushes. Well-fitting swim diapers are recommended for babies.

Ponds are home to more than people.

Enjoy and explore through observation - without handling plants and animals. Do not pick plants: some are rare and unique to these habitats. Leave pond animals in their homes and natural settings. Frogs that are repeatedly captured can die of exhaustion. Squeezing a frog or tadpole can damage organs and cause death. Aquatic animals can suffocate in a net, bucket, or dug-out hole. Sunscreen and insect repellent on hands can harm animals that, in part, breathe through their skin. Do not take turtles, frogs, and tadpoles, or plants. They are protected by Federal law.

