



Environmental News

Upcoming Events: Let's Take a Hike . . . or a Dip!

Ready, Set, Plunge!

**Thursday, January 1, 2026, "Freeze the Day" Polar Plunge - Check-in 10am to 10:45am
Mashpee-Wakeby Pond at Attaquin Beach, Check in at Naukabout Brewery, 13 Lake Avenue**
Hosted by the Mashpee Recreation Department and Naukabout Brewery, the Polar Plunge begins at 11am. Cost is \$25 per person, with proceeds benefiting the Kiwanis Club of Mashpee. Details may be found [here](#). (Note: Jan 1st is incorrectly listed on their webpage as a Monday, but their flyer is correct.)

First Day Hikes in Mashpee

**Thursday, January 1, 2026, First Day Hike, Meet at 2B Center Street, Mashpee at 9am
Lowell Holly Reservation, South Sandwich Road, Walk begins at 10am**

Join the Native Land Conservancy (NLC) for a walk through the Lowell Holly Reservation on South Sandwich Road. This event starts at the NLC office at 2B Center Street at 9am where refreshments will be served. Due to limited parking, carpooling is encouraged to Lowell Holly where the walk will begin at 10am. Additional information may be found [here](#).

**Thursday, January 1, 2026, First Day Hike, Starting at 10am
South Cape Beach State Park, 668 Great Oak Road, Mashpee**

Sponsored by Waquoit Bay Reserve, this one-mile winter walk is open to all ages, with hot chocolate available at the end of the walk. Heavy wind, rain, or snow may cancel. Information is available [here](#).

First Day Hikes Across Cape Cod

Thursday, January 1, 2026, First Day Hikes - in various towns, with varied start times

Thanks to the Barnstable Land Trust, a comprehensive list of First Day Hikes - from Falmouth to Chatham to Provincetown (some starting as early as 7am!) - are listed on their site at: <https://blt.org/firstdayhikescapcod>.

Additional Nature Walks in January

**Saturday, January 3, 2026, South Cape Beach State Park, 9am
Saturday, January 10, 2026, Mashpee River Woodlands (North), 9am
Saturday, January 17, 2026, Pickerel Cove Conservation Area, 9am
Saturday, January 24, 2026, Mashpee River Woodlands (West), 9am
Saturday, January 31, 2026, Lowell Holly Reservation, 9am**

Guided nature tours, sponsored by the Mashpee Conservation Department, are offered each month free-of-charge. Registration is not required, but stormy weather may cancel. For directions and

information about these walks, and those in the coming months, click on the "Guided Nature Tour" link along the left-hand margin at <https://www.mashpeeema.gov/conservation> or call (508) 539-1400, ext. 8538.

What's New at MMHS? A Vernal Pool!



Last month, MEC Board Members witnessed the creation of a Vernal Pool right on the Mashpee Middle-High School (MMHS) grounds. Thanks to the efforts of Science Teacher, Shona Vitelli, Consultant Ian Ives, and MMHS students, the ground was prepared, liners were installed, and natural materials were filled in. Now it's time for nature to do the rest!

MEC is pleased to have donated funds, in Evelyn Buschenfeldt's memory, in support of this exciting "Wetland Living Lab" project.



Information Items

Waterways in the News

On December 8, 2025, DPW Director, Catherine Laurent met with the Mashpee Select Board where she announced a new **stormwater improvement** project for **Mashpee-Wakeby Pond at Attaquin Park**. During her presentation, she also discussed the bidding process for the **Mashpee-Wakeby Boat Ramp** improvement project, and she confirmed that construction continues at the **Santuit Pond Boat Ramp**. This presentation may be viewed [here](#) starting at minute 27.

At the December 18, 2025 Sewer Commission meeting, Water Quality Coordinator, Ashley Fisher shared that the Town plans to move forward with a **diagnostic study** proposal for **Johns Pond** and **Moody Pond**.

According to the Town of Mashpee website, the **Popponeset Approach Channel dredging** was completed in early December. Details may be found [here](#).

APCC Releases its State of the Waters: Cape Cod 2025 Report

Earlier this month, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) released its latest data regarding Cape Cod's **State of the Waters** in our estuaries, ponds, and municipal water supplies. Details may be found at: <https://capecodwaters.org/>.

Recycling News - Holiday String Lights Now Accepted through January 24th

Holiday String Lights may be dropped off for recycling at the **Mashpee Transfer Station** through January 24th. Look for the bin labeled "**Recycle Holiday String Lights Here**" located in the Recycling area of the Transfer Station.

Proposed New Sewer Phase Map - Mashpee Wastewater Management Project

A new map of proposed Sewer Phases was presented to Mashpee Sewer Commissioners at their December 18, 2025 meeting. Sometime within the next few months, a joint meeting with the Mashpee Select Board may be scheduled for discussion and approval of this proposal. A copy of the map is available [here](#). To watch the discussion, click [here](#) and start at hour 1, minute 45.

Cape Cod's Drought - Still at Level 2

As of December 10, 2025, Cape Cod remains at a **Level 2 "Significant Drought"** status. Hopefully, the recent storms will bring some relief soon. In the meantime, residents are urged to continue conserving water use, both indoors and outside. Latest drought updates may be found at the [MA Drought Status website](#).

MEC's Chemical-Free Yard Sign Campaign

Since April, MEC's **Chemical-Free Cape Cod Yard Sign Campaign** has been in full swing, aimed at promoting Chemical-Free Yards that are safe for our Children, Pets, Waters - and Nature as a whole.

Already, our signs are proudly being displayed in yards across Cape Cod, including Dennis, Falmouth, Mashpee, Pocasset, and Sandwich. Thanks to all who have chosen to set an example for their friends, neighbors, and local associations - by helping to save our environment, one yard at a time!



Information on how to join our campaign may be found [here](#).

Reminders

Cape-Wide Conservation Calendar of Events

The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts and its nonprofit members publish updates to their **Regional Calendar of Events** on an ongoing basis. This Conservation Calendar includes programs from villages and towns across Cape Cod, encouraging both visitors and residents to take part in nature and environmental events. The wide list of current programs may be accessed at: www.blc.org/capeconservationcalendar.

Cape Cod Freshwater Strategy Report - Ponds and Lakes

The Cape Cod Commission released its final **Cape Cod Freshwater Strategy Report** this past summer. This guide outlines a data-driven approach to evaluating, protecting, and restoring Cape Cod's ponds and lakes, and a framework for improving their overall health. Additional information and the report itself may be found [here](#).

Textile Recycling is Now Mandatory - It's the Law!

Due to the solid waste crisis in Massachusetts, effective November 2022, it is **now illegal to discard any clothing or other textile item in the trash**, even if stained, ripped, threadbare, or one of a pair. This includes footwear, bedding, table linens, accessories such as belts and scarves, and even stuffed animals for children and pets. The full list of textile items that must now be recycled is available [here](#), courtesy of Bay State Textiles. To assist residents in complying with this law, **MEC now sponsors textile recycling drives twice each year** — in **April** as an Earth Day event, and in **August** alongside the County's Hazardous Waste Dropoff. Exact dates and times for each April and August event, once known, will be posted on our homepage at www.mashpeemec.us.

River Restoration Projects

Under the program name, "**Source to Sea**," projects continue which aim to help restore the health of the **Mashpee River, Quashnet River, and Red Brook**. To learn more, information may be found at: <https://waquoitbayreserve.org/coastal-training-programs/source-to-sea>

**Please share this newsletter with your friends, colleagues, and neighbors who may have an interest in this information.
Our thanks to each of you for your own efforts on behalf of our town, our region, and the environment!**

To Join or Donate

Our Board meets the 2nd Thursday of each Month (January - November) via Zoom starting at 4pm, and our Annual Meeting immediately precedes the September Board Meeting. All are welcome.

The Mashpee Environmental Coalition (MEC) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization – dedicated to educating and advocating on behalf of our natural resources for over 25 years.

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See what's happening on our social sites:



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