



Dear Oyster Pond project stakeholder,

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an update on the Oyster Pond restoration project including 2026 salt marsh monitoring activities, progress on marsh restoration plans, and notice of upcoming opportunities which would benefit from your involvement. The restoration goals of this project are threefold: 1) replace the undersized culvert under the Shining Sea Bikeway with a 4 ft x 6 ft box culvert to improve marsh health, public safety, and water quality; 2) facilitate vegetation recovery and reduce mosquito breeding habitat in the upstream salt marsh by improving drainage through the creation of small channels on the marsh surface; and 3) reduce and control the spread of the invasive variety of the plant, *Phragmites australis* (common reed) to reestablish high-quality habitat for fish and wildlife.

Salt Marsh Monitoring

APCC plans to collect additional data in 2026 to expand the project team's understanding of baseline conditions. The data will be used to assess changes after the new culvert is installed under the Shining Sea Bikeway to inform adaptive management strategies and meet restoration goals. The 2026 pre-restoration monitoring is supported by a Salt Marsh Restoration and Monitoring Grant administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

This summer APCC staff will return to existing long-term monitoring plots, along with a few new plots, to deploy sediment traps, record observations of vegetation cover, and survey elevation (see map attached on pg 3). Sediment traps are a minimally invasive technique to measure how much sediment settles onto the marsh surface over time (see photo to the right). The expectation is that sediment accumulation on the marsh will increase after the Shining Sea Bikeway culvert is replaced, bolstering the marsh's defenses to sea level rise.



Sediment traps, made with small centrifuge tubes and netting to keep out snails and crabs, are inserted in the marsh surface.

In order to better understand sediment movement during tidal exchange within the main creek, APCC will also deploy turbidity sensors in the tidal channel downstream and upstream of the Shining Sea Bikeway culvert.

Turbidity sensors measure water clarity and will be used to calculate how much sediment is suspended in the water. The turbidity sensors will help the team understand the source of sediments as well as address any unforeseen impacts from restoration actions that may require adaptive solutions.



*Dissolved oxygen logger
deployed at Oyster Pond in 2024.*

In addition to the turbidity sensors, APCC will also redeploy automatic data loggers to measure dissolved oxygen (a proxy for water quality), water level, and salinity. The dissolved oxygen sensors, as you may have seen in the past, are housed in long, white PVC tubes (see photo to the left) and will be deployed from late June through August to capture the most stressful time of the year for fish and shellfish.

General updates

Consultants at Woods Hole Group continue to develop restoration designs that focus on drainage enhancements in select areas of the waterlogged salt marsh. The project team also continues to work closely with Cape Cod Mosquito Control Project to create and clear these proposed drainage channels within the salt marsh as these areas of standing water are perfect breeding habitat for mosquito larvae. Once these pools drain, native salt marsh plants can revegetate the bare areas, boost the production of organic peat, and support a stable salt marsh surface. Woods Hole Group also continues to develop management plans for *Phragmites australis* bordering the upland edge of the upstream marsh. Consultants at Fuss & O'Neill are working to finalize the culvert replacement design package and have been in close contact with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Rail Division and the Falmouth Department of Public Works to coordinate review of permit-ready designs.

Upcoming Opportunities to Get Involved

Although construction funds are not yet secured, APCC anticipates construction to occur no sooner than the winter of 2028-2029. The project will enter the permitting phase this summer/fall, which involves public hearing events. To stay informed about the upcoming permitting hearings and construction timeline, be sure to visit the Oyster Pond website and sign up for the mailing list (if you have not already done so). You can also visit the website to learn more about the project.

Please contact me, Jordan Mora, at jmora@apcc.org if you have any questions concerns.

Sincerely,

Jordan Mora
Lead Ecologist
Association to Preserve Cape Cod



QR code to Oyster
Pond website
([apcc.org/oyster-
pond](https://apcc.org/oyster-pond)).

