



Above: Installation of underground infiltration chambers and water quality unit at 6A Landing (left) and native plantings at Dr. Lord's Road Scargo Beach bioretention area (right) (Credit: Gerald Beetham).

New and Improved Stormwater Management at Scargo Lake in Dennis

Construction is now complete at two key sites around Scargo Lake, delivering major stormwater upgrades at Dr. Lord's Road (Scargo Beach) and the Rt. 6A Scargo Landing boat ramp. These long-awaited improvements will help protect water quality in the lake and enhance habitat for river herring and other aquatic species.

At Scargo Beach, a new porous pavement parking lot and a bioretention system (a vegetated area that captures and treats stormwater) have been installed to filter runoff before it reaches the lake. At Scargo Landing, newly constructed trench drains direct stormwater into underground infiltration chambers, with an additional bioretention area located next to the boat dock. Articulated concrete mats were also installed at the boat ramp to provide a stable launching surface while preventing shoreline erosion.

These green infrastructure features are designed to slow, capture, and filter stormwater through soil, gravel, and native vegetation—reducing the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen, sediment, and bacteria entering the lake.

Before these improvements, untreated stormwater from both sites flowed directly into Scargo Lake, carrying pollutants that degraded water quality and threatened the spawning habitat of river herring. The town of Dennis identified these sites as high priorities due to long-standing water quality concerns, including elevated phosphorus levels and a rising trend of nitrogen concentrations since 2001. APCC's cyanobacteria monitoring also documented a significant bloom in July 2019, with smaller blooms in 2021 and 2022.

In recent weeks, native vegetation has been planted throughout the bioretention areas and around the new porous pavement. A mix of grasses, shrubs, and trees—all native to Barnstable County—was selected to thrive in the local environment. These plants will help stabilize soil, support pollinators, and boost the system’s ability to filter pollutants.

In total, the upgrades now capture and treat stormwater from more than 5 acres of land—delivering lasting benefits for water quality, habitat health, and community use.

Construction at this site was completed by J.W. Dubis with planting by subcontractor O’Leary. The town of Dennis and Horsley Witten Group engineers provided oversight and their technical expertise while APCC’s restoration team provided project and grant management. This project has been funded by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management Coastal Habitat and Water Quality Grants, a private foundation grant, the town of Dennis, and the MassBays National Estuary Partnership.



Above: Scargo Lake 6A Landing before (left) and after (right) construction (Credit: Gerald Beetham).