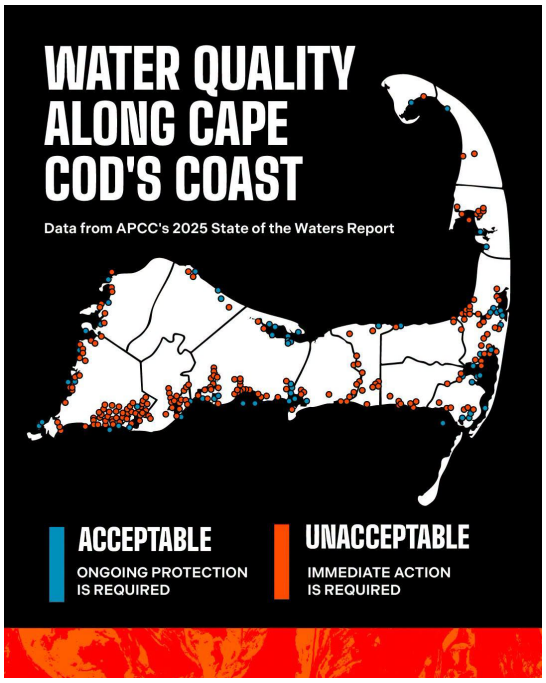
APCC's State of the Waters: A Look at Pleasant Bay

As Orleans, Chatham, Harwich and Brewster continue their work to improve water quality throughout the Pleasant Bay watershed, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod's most recent State of the Waters report provides a useful snapshot of conditions across the Bay.



APCC classifies coastal monitoring locations as either "acceptable" or "unacceptable" based on its water-quality criteria. On the 2025 map, numerous monitoring locations within the Pleasant Bay system are shown as unacceptable, while some nearby locations are classified as acceptable.

The results reflect the complexity of Pleasant Bay, a large estuarine system made up of coves, rivers, inlets and areas that differ in their circulation and connection to open water. Water quality can therefore vary considerably from one part of the system to another.

Management of the Pleasant Bay watershed is coordinated through the **Pleasant Bay Alliance**, an intermunicipal partnership of Orleans, Chatham, Harwich and Brewster. The Alliance helps coordinate the four towns' shared planning and water-quality efforts and oversees implementation of the Pleasant Bay Watershed Permit, which provides a regional framework for reducing nitrogen entering the estuary and monitoring progress over time.

Friends of Pleasant Bay has been part of that larger story for more than four decades. The organization's early advocacy helped lead to Pleasant Bay's designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) 41 years ago, an important step in the evolution of coordinated regional stewardship of the Bay and, ultimately, the establishment of the Pleasant Bay Alliance.

That commitment continues today. Friends of Pleasant Bay supports and helps fund scientific research, monitoring and other work that deepens understanding of the Bay's condition and informs efforts to protect it.

The 2025 findings provide an important benchmark as that work continues. APCC's interactive State of the Waters Data Viewer allows users to explore individual monitoring locations throughout Pleasant Bay and elsewhere on Cape Cod.

Explore the results: **capecodwaters.org/resultscapecodwaters.org/results**