

What can I do personally?

- Eliminate any nitrogen sources that your home contributes: excess fertilizer, animal feces, excess lawns or hard surfaces. Pick up your pet's waste.



- Control water runoff from structures and hard surfaces with gutters and drywells.



- Plant native grasses and shrubs to take up nitrogen before it gets into the ground water.



- Have your septic system or cesspool inspected and pumped out periodically. The sludge that is trucked away does not enter the groundwater system.

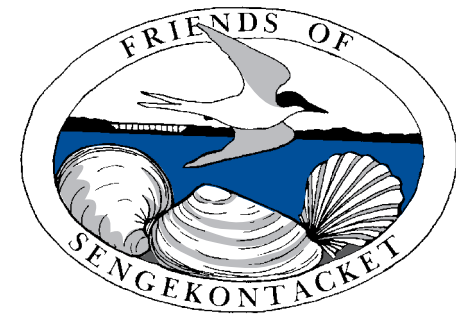
- Read the MEP report and attend the State presentations on the report findings at the town hearing. Ask questions.

What can I do at Town meetings?



- Support town zoning plans to adjust growth and development in the Sengekontacket watershed. If all unbuilt lots are developed, Oak Bluffs will increase wastewater 32% over today; Edgartown will increase wastewater 65%.
- Evaluate and vote for the best plan – with the most improvement potential and the best cost-effectiveness - for wastewater management proposed by the towns. Both Edgartown and Oak Bluffs must address the problem in Sengekontacket since the pond is in both towns.

Why should I care about the Massachusetts Estuaries Project Report on Sengekontacket Pond?



“Dedicated to the preservation of Sengekontacket Pond and its Barrier Beach”

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Edgartown and Oak Bluffs towns officially requested to have Sengekontacket Pond in the Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP).

MEP will shortly issue a report on the nitrogen limit for a healthy Sengekontacket Pond and on the current nitrogen condition and likely sources. The report will also include the results of modeling both causes and possible corrective methods.

The State will follow the action of the towns to restore Sengekontacket to an acceptable level of nitrogen. If the MEP report is not acted upon, the State will likely enforce restoration.

Why should I care?

If you **vote** in Oak Bluffs or Edgartown, you may be asked to support warrants and bylaws to :

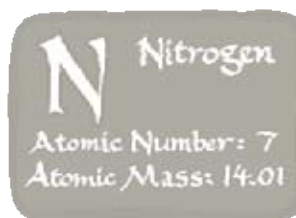
- implement nitrogen removal methods (dredging, sewerage are the most likely) and/or
- regulate nitrogen input (septic upgrade requirements, fertilizer prohibition, limits on lawn size or native habitat removal, road runoff prevention, zoning that restricts further development) and/or

- conserve land to protect wetlands and/or limit development

If you are a **taxpayer** any of the above will have town budget and tax consequences. Island-wide the estimated cost to correct the excess nitrogen levels now and from projected growth is as much as \$200M (or \$20,000 - \$40,000 per residence).

If the excess nitrogen level is not addressed both for current and future development:

- If you shellfish, continued nitrogen excess in the pond will destroy eelgrass completely and damage sensitive habitat, leading to substantial and permanent reduction of shellfish resources.
- If you use the pond for recreation, excess nitrogen will feed the green, odorous, and slimy algal growth that makes the pond unpleasant to boat and swim.



What is causing the excess nitrogen?

After acid rain (about which little can be done at the local level) here are the primary factors causing excess nitrogen:

1. Human waste – specifically urine – in septic systems and cesspools is the primary source of excess nitrogen. Title V systems remove negligible amounts of nitrogen and thus urine filters through the groundwater into the pond. In contrast satellite systems or sewerage could remove a very large percentage, thus preventing more nitrogen from entering the pond.
2. Fertilizer pollutes the pond water. Replacement of native vegetation with lawns, turf and impervious surfaces exacerbates the contribution. Expansive lawns and turf attract geese.
3. Roof, impervious surfaces (such as swimming pools) and road runoff moves surface nitrogen and other pollutants (oil, sludge) directly into pond water. Berms, bioswales, drywells and other barriers filter the pollutants.
4. Feces of dogs and cats may indirectly add nitrogen.