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The Committee for the Great Salt Pond  
PO Box 1092 • Block Island, RI 02807



# The Committee for the Great Salt Pond

BLOCK ISLAND, RI

Member Newsletter | Fall 2019

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## A Day in the Life of the Pond

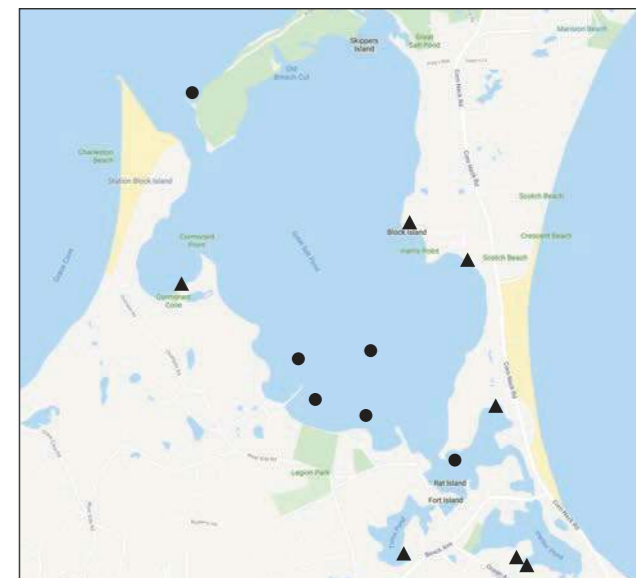
Thank you for your support of the Committee for the Great Salt Pond. We are happy to report that the pond remains healthy, our water quality-monitoring program is active and our annual Swim the Pond continues to grow as a demonstration of how great the pond truly is.

**Summer 2019.** Many of us spend time on the Great Salt Pond in one pursuit or another without having an overall view of how many different activities are going on at the same time. At our annual meeting, some twenty speakers talked about their typical day on the pond. We were astonished by how diverse and vibrant the pond community is, proving its importance to our Island. Thanks to all of these many presenters.

This summer the Town of New Shoreham's boat counts showed that on any given weekend day during the summer there are as many as 2,500 boats moored on the pond! It has become clear that there are thousands of people – as many as 4,500 -- on the pond daily, putting stress on the waters as well as the island.

**Water Quality Testing.** The CGSP samples the water at 14 sites every two weeks from April into November. Six of the sites are on or just outside the harbor while eight are at tributaries near the pond where we track flow and contaminants from the watershed areas. We measure and assess the health of the pond, including nitrogen and oxygen levels as well as nitrates and bacteria. Based on our data, the pond is relatively clean throughout the summer. There are some hot spots that we keep a close eye on, but interestingly enough, most of the concerns stem from faulty septic systems or storm water run-off in the tributaries!

The CGSP is working with the Town regarding storm water run-off, the effects of a new sidewalk planned for Westside Road between Dead Eye Dick's and Champlin's, and research and grant applications to better understand the bottom of the pond and silting of the inner ponds and the Hog Pen area.



**LEGEND**  
● In-pond Sampling  
▲ Tributary Sampling

All sites monitored since 2001

### OUR MISSION

To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Great Salt Pond, including its shorelines and wetlands, and to promote appropriate and productive uses of the Pond's resources by residents, visitors and local businesses.

### OUR WEBSITE

[www.cgspblockisland.org](http://www.cgspblockisland.org)

Visit our website where you can catch up on activities for the coming season, pay your annual dues or make a donation. There is a page dedicated to the 6th Swim the Pond event on July 26, 2020. You will be able to read all the details about the event, including registration for the swim.

### FUNDING

Individual contributions, membership dues, special events, program grants. IRS 501(c)3 non-profit.

Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

### ABOUT US

#### Directors

- Sven Risom, President
- Cheryl Moore, Vice President
- Cindy Pappas, Treasurer
- Betsy Pyne, Secretary
- George Davis
- Henry duPont
- Tricia Foley
- Bob Greenlee
- Bruce Johnson
- Carl Kaufmann
- Catherine Pucket
- Mitchel Silberbush

#### Members

Approximately 450

#### Governance

Up to 16 Directors

#### Committee for the Great Salt Pond

PO Box 1092, Block Island, RI 02807  
[www.CGSPBlockIsland.org](http://www.CGSPBlockIsland.org)

July 25, 2020

Swim the Pond-6  
Andy's Way • 11:00 am

Register today.  
[www.CGSPBlockIsland.com](http://www.CGSPBlockIsland.com)  
Go to 2020 Swim



The Great Salt Pond Swim

6

September 6, 2020  
Annual CGSP Meeting  
4:00 pm





**Swim the Pond.** At the 5th annual CGSP Swim the Pond in July, some 109 swimmers entered the water at Andy’s Way, swimming a 1-mile loop toward Beane Point and back. Five groups ranged from very competitive and recreational swimmers to the last group that used fins and floatation devices. All had fun while showcasing the clean water and outstanding recreation area. In the photo to the right, happy swimmers were the order of a beautiful blue-sky day. We would like to thank all our volunteers and sponsors as well as Ocean Adventures and the Block Island Club for their support. Please save the date of July 25th, 2020, for Swim the Pond-6!



**Shellfish and Aquaculture.** In addition to eating oysters, crabs and shellfish from the pond, many people enjoy doing their own clamming. Did you know that over 2,400 clamming licenses were sold in 2019 and some 30,000 “keeper” clams were “seeded” into the pond! Shellfishing is a real income source for the town. In addition to clams, the Shellfish Commission has been working on managing and harvesting green crabs, a long-time invasive species.

Aquaculture is strong in the pond with four oyster farmers actively growing oysters, and two kelp farmers developing a new aquaculture crop. The beauty of sugar kelp is that it grows in the fall and winter with a spring harvest. So while the pond is quiet and empty of tourists, the kelp farmers are busy growing a healthy new crop.



**Our Partners.** While all of these activities go on, the Harbors Department ensures that everything runs smoothly by patrolling the pond, operating the pump-out boats and monitoring shellfishing and anchorage. The CGSP is working with the Harbors Department to share water quality data and to support the recreational as well as commercial uses of the pond.

The CGSP also works with The Nature Conservancy, The Block Island Conservancy and The Block Island Maritime Institute (BIMI), each with its own special mission to support the island’s beauty and natural habitats. Throughout the summer, the TNC conducts fish counts and seining for fish as well as leading educational tours around the pond with a focus on fish, shellfish and birds. The new fish and marine tanks at BIMI are a must-see. It is a true joy to realize the abundance of public educational opportunities.



There are also many people sailing, kayaking and paddleboarding on the pond. Both the Block Island Club and the Community Sailing Program have active and growing sailing activities that include the BI school program, adult lessons and racing Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturdays. Continued maintenance of a large recreational area is essential to a healthy pond. I think we all agree that it is always a pleasure to see the sailors, paddleboarders, kayakers and swimmers enjoying and exploring the pond.

**We Need You!** We hope you agree that the CGSP legal protection efforts, water quality testing, swim events and our active role in leading research to study the pond is important to you. Several years ago, the CGSP led the charge to build the walkovers across from the Beahead and Solvikan properties in order to protect the pond from dune erosion at the beaches. We are currently working to create a safer and significantly improved beach access walkway at Andy’s Way.



Approximately \$11,000 has been raised by friends and family in memory of Jon Emsbo given his passion for the Great Salt Pond. We have \$4,000 left to meet our goal and there is still time to be part of this effort. We thank you for considering a special donation.

We hope that this letter brings warm thoughts of summer on Block Island on these colder winter days. Please renew your membership or become a member of the CGSP so we can continue our work to protect the Great Salt Pond. If you are able, a little extra for the Andy’s Way walkway project would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration and we hope you have a fantastic holiday and new year. And in advance, thank you for your continued support.



The Board of Directors, Committee for the Great Salt Pond

*The CGSP would like to thank all the organizations and businesses that work on and support the Great Salt Pond and to all the presenters at our annual meeting.*