

Grants aid wastewater planning projects

■ The county hopes all Cape towns will be able to benefit from the studies.

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Well-documented nitrogen increases in the Cape's bays, ponds, estuaries and drinking water have alarmed civic leaders, business owners and other residents.

But concern alone won't make Cape waters pristine.

In an effort to help Cape towns respond to demands for better wastewater management, the county's Wastewater Implementation Committee recently awarded \$186,000 to fund five planning projects.

The projects range from evaluating capacity levels at a Lower Cape treatment plant to studying the possibility of establishing Mashpee's first municipal sewer system in the Popponesset Bay watershed.

WIC chairwoman Augusta McKusick hopes the projects, which directly involve seven Cape towns, will serve as models for the remaining municipalities.

The town of Barnstable, for instance, will use its grant to develop a

Funds awarded

The county's Wastewater Implementation Committee has awarded \$186,000 to fund these five projects:

■ **Bourne:** \$13,500 for the town's board of health to map the various types of septic systems throughout the town.

■ **Mashpee:** \$33,000 for the town's sewer commission to use a computer model to evaluate how different types of sewer systems might work in the Popponesset Bay watershed.

■ **Barnstable:** \$39,500 for the town's Department of Public Works to study effluent disposal and potential treatment sites.

■ **Yarmouth:** \$50,000 for the town's Department of Public Works for an evaluation of small, community-sized wastewater treatment technologies.

■ **Orleans, Brewster and Eastham:** \$50,000 for an evaluation of capacity and treatment levels at the Tri-Town Septage Treatment Plant, which serves all three towns.

method to identify, rank and select potential wastewater discharge sites based upon their impact on the environment, among other issues.

County leaders hope other towns will someday be able to draw from Barnstable's study to locate new treatment facilities.

Said McKusick, "Suddenly, we have this opportunity as 15 different towns to sit down at the table and understand that we all are at different places in the process, and can re-

ally benefit from each other."

The 24-member WIC includes a representative from each of the Cape's 15 towns, as well as several county departments, the state Department of Environmental Protection and the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce.

The grants were derived from a \$350,000 reserve fund for wastewater issues fueled by the county's fiscal year 2002 budget surplus.

The WIC reviewed 13 "pre-propos-

als" for grant funding from 10 towns in the fall of 2003, with requests totaling \$723,000.

The committee directed Cape Cod Commission staff to work with six of the proposals to develop full projects, which were evaluated for scientific merit and the likelihood they could be copied across the region.

"They're all looking at wastewater issues that could be undertaken by any town," said county hydro-geologist Tom Cambareri, who staffs the WIC.

After the town of Dennis withdrew its project, the five remaining awards were approved by the county's Assembly of Delegates and the county commissioners.

The county will also put \$125,000 from the wastewater reserve fund, as well as \$77,000 from other sources, toward the U.S. Geological Survey's groundwater modeling project. The computer model will help towns evaluate the interaction between new and proposed wastewater discharge sites.

John Hodgkinson, Orleans delegate to the county assembly, has asked the county for \$150,000 to replenish the reserve fund from the 2003 county surplus.

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