

Act locally on wastewater issue

Cape Cod's problem is the world's problem – ignorance. We ignore the fact that shellfish are scarce, that eel grass is disappearing from our estuaries and that food fish are dwindling because we are overwhelming nature's ability to balance itself. Nitrogen pollution of our waters is ruining our precious Cape Cod way of life.

Science and academia know, and point out to us, that as much as 80 percent of this nitrogen comes from our septic systems, and the majority of the rest comes from our lawns. There are more than 125,000 septic tanks on the Cape. Think of your septic tank as your car running on two or three of the six cylinders it has. How bad would the air be? You wouldn't tolerate it, but that is what is going on under your feet with your water!

We are being told by the state and EPA that we must reduce this nitrogen loading by as much as 80 percent or more in many locations. What can we do? Biomechanical scientists and engineers are working diligently to improve our home wastewater treatment processes, and government at all levels is wrestling with various ways to limit input and improve treatment, but you **HAVE** to help. Use less water with flow-restricting shower heads. If you are in the market for a washing machine, buy a front load machine – they use only about

half the water of top loaders, and save you energy with much more efficient spin dry cycles. If you have a dish washer, only run it when full. If you have an older high capacity flush tank toilet, change it for a newer 1½-gallon flush model that meets current codes. Let your lawn grow deeper, use compost and organic fertilizers, and plant ground cover, shrubs and flowers where rain water exits your roof. Talk to your friends, neighbors and co-workers about the situation.

Just as in the movie "War of the Worlds", despite all the vain efforts of mankind to defend itself from the invading aliens, nature conquered them with natural bacteria. With a little help from us, Mother Nature can take care of the problem, but we each must do our part.

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