



TRURO KNOW YOUR H2O

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Town of Truro's access to water is vitally important to maintaining the health of the community and its residents, visitors, and businesses. Without adequate water supply, Truro is faced with challenges associated with sustainability and growth. The Town of Truro is dedicated to transparency and has developed a [webpage](#) to provide a central location for water information. This FAQ aims to address common questions asked regarding drinking water resources and water supply infrastructure, covering topics like water supply, water rights, and Truro's water relationship with Provincetown.

TRURO/PROVINCETOWN HISTORY AND WATER RELATIONSHIP

Why does Provincetown have access to wells located in Truro?

The Provincetown Water System, created in 1889, struggled to find a potable water source. In 1907, due to the lack of potable water in Provincetown, special legislation was approved by the State of Massachusetts, titled "The Water Loan Act of 1907". This gave Provincetown the right to establish a water supply located in Truro, the authorization to borrow funds to build the system, and granted the principal water rights that led to the existing Provincetown Water System. This was further extended by legislation in 1952. See the archived 1907 act [here](#).

The Town of Provincetown and much of the Beach Point area of Truro have no access to drinking water other than the Provincetown Municipal Water System. Provincetown was granted water rights in Truro by the State, which supported the existing Provincetown Municipal Water System, more than 110 years ago.

What determines eligibility for Truro property owners to connect to the Provincetown Municipal Water System?

Properties that are near/adjacent to the existing Public Water System infrastructure are eligible to connect to the Provincetown Municipal Water System, provided they can demonstrate that they do not have access to potable drinking water through private or community wells.

WATER SUPPLY

Where does my drinking water come from?

Almost 90% of developed properties such as restaurants, cottage colonies, etc. in Truro rely on private wells or small public water supply wells. Homeowners with private wells are responsible for well maintenance and monitoring water quality. Homes and businesses in the Beach Point area of Truro are served by the Provincetown Water System because well water in that area is too high in sodium for drinking. The Provincetown Water System serves municipal buildings in North Truro including the Truro Library, Truro Community Center, the residences at Sally's Way, Truro's Public Safety Building, Truro Central School, and the soon to be residences at the Cloverleaf property off Highland Road.



What types of wells are considered Public Water Supply wells?

Public Water Supply wells include large municipal wells and smaller wells for businesses that serve the public. They must have either 15 or more connections such as cottages or campgrounds or serve an average of 25 people at least 60 days out of the year (such as a hotel, deli, or restaurant). All Public Water Supply wells must be approved by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and are required to have a Massachusetts' certified water operator. There are different classifications of these wells depending on the population served, but they all require regular testing to ensure suitable and safe water quality. For more information, click [here](#).

Each town on Cape Cod gets its drinking water from one of 6 lenses that comprise the Cape Cod aquifer. The Cape Cod aquifer provides 100% of the Cape's drinking water and is recharged solely by precipitation (rain and snow melt). Therefore, it has been designated as a "Sole Source Aquifer" under the Safe Drinking Water Act by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Is the Town of Truro looking for additional water sources?

Truro and Provincetown are exploring new well sites in the Pamet and Chequessett groundwater flow lenses. The Provincetown Water System needs to add a redundant water source to meet practical and regulatory requirements and for continued operational flexibility in Truro and Provincetown. Both existing wells and future well sites are anticipated to be sited on Truro-owned land, likely within the boundary of the Cape Cod National Seashore Park.

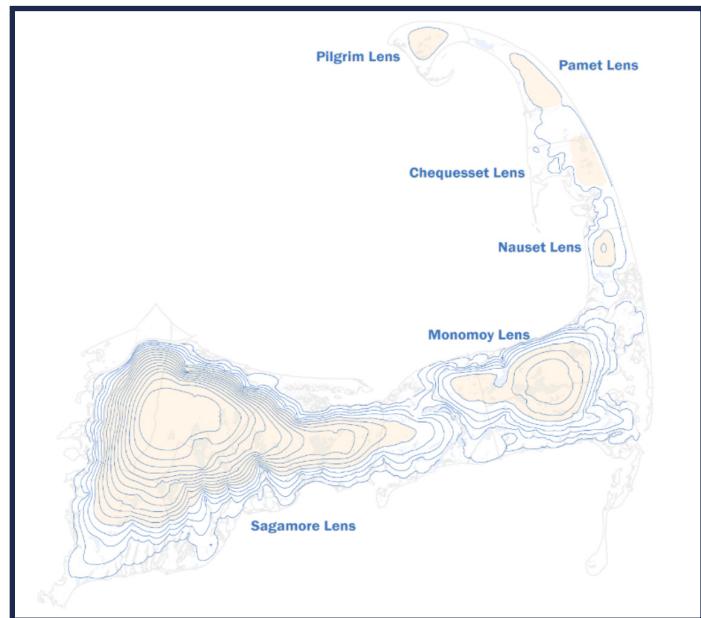
How will Truro and Provincetown meet future water needs?

For decades, Town officials from Truro and Provincetown have been addressing future

water needs through demand analysis, capital planning, and studying water models. (Available [here](#) and [here](#)). The availability of future water supply is dependent on the size of the lens and the ability to recharge the lens. Topography, soil type, vegetation cover, and underlying geology influence how much water infiltrates and recharges aquifers. We can intentionally recharge aquifers through addressing stormwater and wastewater within the resource area. Also, as noted above, Truro and Provincetown are exploring new well sites in the Pamet and Chequessett groundwater flow lenses.

Both towns are protecting the resource through land-use and public health regulations as noted above and Provincetown and Truro are working together to understand sustainable yields and manage water supply.

Provincetown is investigating additional sources of supply to meet operational flexibility of its water system. The development of Public Water Supply wells requires a complex hydrogeological investigation because the flow rates are higher. These evaluations require identifying the impacts to wetland resource areas, and groundwater sources. Since the flow rates are much lower, construction of new private wells requires permitting through the Truro Health Department.



The six groundwater lenses that make up the Cape Cod Sole Source Aquifer

What is the Town of Truro doing to protect groundwater?

The Town of Truro ensures that private wells and the recharge area of Public Water Supply wells are protected through development of appropriate local regulations and enforcement of State regulations such as Title 5, the Wetlands Protection Act, and the Massachusetts drinking water regulations. There are defined and mapped wellhead protection areas that control the land uses within 100 to 400 feet from the well. For example, a private well has a 100-foot protective radius and there are limitations to the locations of septic systems within this 100-foot radius. For a public well, the protective inner layer is called the Zone 1 and can extend to 400 feet from the well. Only activity related to water supply can occur in a Public Zone 1.

The recharge areas of Public Water Supply wells are known as Zone 2. Truro's Zoning By-Laws (Sect 30.4) reinforce the state requirements for the protection of Zone 2 areas. Things like junkyards, landfills, commercial laundry, airports, etc. are prohibited. Many other uses are permitted with conditions so that they operate safely. For example, secondary containment is required for storage of potentially hazardous materials like fuel oil and gasoline. Under Title 5, septic systems must meet nitrogen loading requirements and Truro's Board of Health regulations are even more stringent requiring advanced treatment in certain situations. Similarly, the Conservation Commission administers the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and Rivers Protection Act. Any work within 100 feet of a wetland, including clearing, filling, grading, building or "altering"- broadly defined - will require a permit. Any work within 200 feet of a river or perennial stream also requires review by the Conservation Commission. Vernal pools are also within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

For more information on Zone 1 and 2, click [here](#).

For more information on the Truro Conservation Commission, click [here](#).

For Truro Board of Health regulations, article 6, local Title 5 regulations, click [here](#).

For Integrated Water Resources Management Plan, Phase 1, section 6, buildout analysis, click [here](#).

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts further helps to protect groundwater by permitting only new wells, whether private or public, that do not have adverse effects on surrounding wetland resources. Investigations into new public water supply wells require extensive groundwater modeling by engineers and hydrogeologists as part of the evaluation and approval process.

As required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Provincetown owns and controls the area in Truro within a 400-foot protective radius around Provincetown's Public Water Supply wells also known as Zone 1. The Zone 2 or surrounding recharge area around these wells is owned by and is located within the Town of Truro. The entire area is protected through zoning and state requirements.



Salt water marsh at Pilgrim Springs Trail

WALSH PROPERTY

How does studying water sources at the Walsh Property benefit the greater community?

The Walsh Property Recommendations (R) approved by voters at the 2023 Special Town Meeting (held in 2024) represent opportunities for meeting water needs and protecting water resources. The **recommendations** include:

- “Servicing the property by a future water supply” (R15).
- “For all development on the property, utilizing an advanced wastewater treatment system to limit nitrogen loading. The system could be designed to include capacity to serve adjacent public buildings and homes” (R16).

The Walsh Property may be an appropriate location for a water storage tank that would help increase water pressure, benefiting all Truro and Provincetown residents on the waterline, presently and in the future. Further, better water pressure is needed to ensure adequate water flow from our hydrants used for fire suppression.

It is important to note that most of our municipal buildings, including the Community Center, the Library, the Public Safety Facility, and the Truro Central School are on the Provincetown Water System.



Photo of a water tower



Walsh property street sign

Water service to the Walsh Property, whether via Public Water Supply or Provincetown Water System, will serve to meet the (R7) Walsh Property Recommendations listed under “In order to maximize the impact of development in addressing community needs for affordable housing and other compatible uses...”, as well as “Providing non-residential space that could include daycare, meeting space, community kitchen, or similar community-oriented use. This could include ancillary outdoor space for public use/ recreation such as a park or playground” (R8) and “Providing approximately four acres for public recreational purposes that may include multi-use athletic fields and/or community outdoor event space. Actual use will be determined by the Town” (R10) all of which benefit the greater community.

WATER STORAGE TANK

What is going on with the Truro Water Storage Tank?

A new water storage tank is needed in North Truro to provide sufficient water volume and pressure to the public water system. Since the ground elevations in North Truro are significantly higher than those in Provincetown or Beach Point, water pressure is reduced unless a pump station and storage tank are added. No official water storage tank site has been selected, and Provincetown and Truro will work collaboratively to determine the best location. The new water storage tank would ensure the necessary water volume and pressure needed for both domestic and fire protection needs in the area. The construction of a new water storage tank would increase water pressure for those connected to the public water system and fire hydrants along the waterline. Funding options, including the availability of grants, will be investigated as part of the storage tank project.