

# Sippewissett Association

## Newsletter

### It's Hurricane Season!

By Maureen Conte, Ph.D.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Hurricane of 1938, a powerful Category 3 hurricane that made landfall across central Long Island, NY and central Connecticut.

According to NOAA records, the 1938 hurricane produced storm tides of 18 to 25 feet from New London to Cape Cod. Providence was submerged under a 20-foot storm tide and parts of Falmouth and New Bedford were submerged under 8 feet of water. More than 15 inches of rain fell in the Connecticut River Valley, resulting in some of the worst flooding ever recorded there. Across southern New England, 564 people died and 1,700 were injured. More than 2,600 fishing vessels were destroyed and 3,350 were damaged.

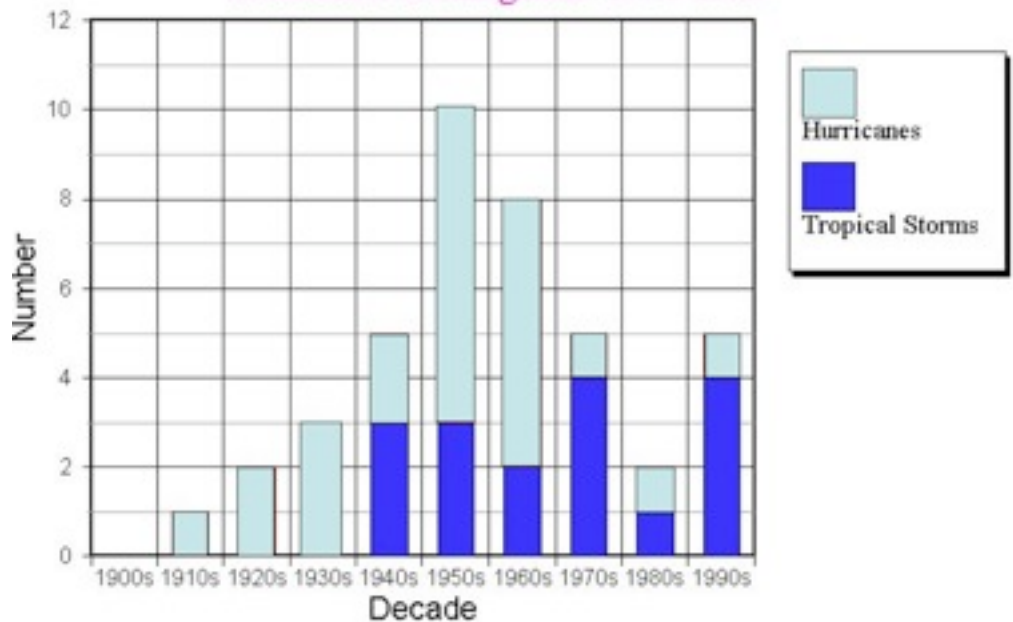
Since 1900, 25 hurricanes and 18 tropical storms have hit southern New England. Seven of these hurricanes making landfall were Category 2 or 3 storms, which bring sustained winds of more than 100 mph, gusts of more than 150 mph and

extreme rainfall. Tropical systems have primarily affected New England in August and September, but they have hit as early as June and as late as October.

The summer of 1954 was the most destructive hurricane season in our history. Hurricanes Carol and Edna, both Category 3 storms, struck just 11 days apart: Carol on August 31st, and Edna on Sep-

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**TROPICAL CYCLONE FREQUENCY**  
Southern New England: 1900-1999



*The mission of the Sippewissett Association is to: protect and foster the mutual benefit and interests of landowners of the Sippewissett region of the Town of Falmouth, Massachusetts; to promote and encourage cooperation among such landowners in order to ensure that the future development of said region shall be in keeping with its general residential zoning restrictions and to take whatever action or actions may be necessary to this end; and to protect and prevent the misuse of public and common areas in the Sippewissett region.*

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## HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

- Purchase supplies needed to protect your property (5/8" plywood and nails). Have flashlights, radios and batteries, water containers and food items on hand that do not need refrigeration.
- Know locations of your gas and water and electricity main panel shutoffs.
- If you own a portable generator, be sure it is properly hooked into the power supply. An improperly installed generator may damage the main power supply or injure electrical workers trying to restore power.
- Check with town hall to see if you are in an evacuation zone. Make arrangements if you wish to stay with relatives or friends if you must evacuate. You only need to evacuate to a location that can withstand the expected winds and is not subject to flooding. Remember, evacuation off-cape will be extremely limited by bridge capacity—you don't want to be caught in a traffic jam!
- Know your evacuation routes and shelter locations (only a few shelters accept pets so make arrangements for them now). Remember—the rise time of the surge can occur within an hour and may restrict evacuation routes.
- If your home is subject to flooding, know your elevation and give yourself a margin of safety. Ensure hazardous materials and valuables are stored or can quickly be relocated well above flood elevations.

### IF YOU HAVE A BOAT

- Ensure your lines are in good condition, the chain between your pennant and the mooring is strong and not rusted out, that your vessel is as watertight as possible, and that you have all necessary gear on board to properly tie down your vessel. You will lose precious time if you have to rush around searching for gear. You may not be able to pull your boat out and your only alternative will be to tie it down.
- Have a plan worked out with the marina so that when the time comes there is no confusion whether to tie up or pull your boat out of the water.
- Take pictures and make a written description of your boat for insurance purposes.

### WHEN A STORM APPROACHES

- Tune in the NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radio for updates
- Remember most tropical storms approaching New England accelerate rapidly. Heavy rain and wind can make outdoor preparations dangerous more than 12 hours before the storm.
- Store up potable water (1 gallon per person for drinking and sanitation each day).
- Board up windows on open-facing sides of your home. (Do not use masking tape to secure windows, it will not help.) Complete outside preparations before the onset of storm-force winds (39 to 73 mph). When you are done, check with your neighbors to see if they need assistance.
- If you have a boat, when you are through securing your vessel, help others. It only takes one poorly tied boat to destroy a dock.
- If you must evacuate, turn off gas, water and electricity before you leave. Upon returning, do not turn on any services until their safety has been confirmed.
- Never step outside during the passage of the calm conditions of the eye.

#### **FEMA's New Flood Zone Maps**

These flood zone maps are the basis for insurance liability (cancellation/ radically raised premiums). They can be found on the town website: <http://www.falmouthmass.us/deppage.php?number=507> or request a FEMA flood map from Jim Fox: [jim@jimfoxrealtor.com](mailto:jim@jimfoxrealtor.com)



*A 17-foot storm tide surging over Gunning Point Beach and Pond during Hurricane Carol in 1954 (photo by Janice Adams). The inset shows the beach from approximately the same location where Janice took her photo.*

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tember 11th. Carol's storm surge of 15 to 20 feet in Buzzards Bay was particularly devastating, with many homes and boats damaged or destroyed. Storm surges from hurricanes have caused more damage and casualties in the United States than flooding, winds and hurricane-induced tornadoes combined.

Since Carol and Edna in 1954, no major hurricanes have struck our region. Unfortunately, this type of calm period can lead to a false sense of security. Throughout the 1980s building boom, hurricane activity in our area was particularly quiet. Then Hurricane Bob struck in 1991, bringing a storm

surge of 10 to 15 feet into Buzzards Bay. Although Bob was only a Category 1 hurricane, there were widespread power outages and property damage across the Cape and in Falmouth.

With the memory of last year's Superstorm Sandy and its devastating storm surge fresh in our minds, preparing for the next "big one" has taken higher priority. The question for Sippewissett residents is not IF a Category 3 hurricane will strike us, but WHEN? This August or September?

Now is an excellent time to make your own preparations.

## SIPPEWISSETT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting was held at the Cape Codder Clubhouse on June 22, 2013. The minutes for the 2012 annual meeting were approved. Karl Audenaerde presented the proposed FY2013 budget, with a proposal to increase dues to \$30. That motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made to fund donations of \$1,400 as follows: \$350 to the Buzzards Bay Coalition; \$350 to the 300 Committee; \$250 to the Association to Preserve Cape Cod; \$200 to Falmouth Associations Concerned with Estuaries and Salt Ponds; and \$250 to Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries. This motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made to fund the 2013 water quality testing program, which will be paid for during FY2014, in the amount of approximately \$800. This passed unanimously.

Maureen Conte presented the **BayWatchers Update**: The Buzzards Bay Coalition's BayWatcher water quality testing program is now in its second decade. BBC provides equipment and training, SA funds the testing and provides volunteers to collect water samples. Donations targeted to this program can be made through the SA membership form.

**Plover Update**, presented by Nancy McDonald: This year there were a pair of plovers with chicks at Saconnessett, and two pairs with chicks at Black Beach. One pair came to Wood Neck but disappeared, probably as a result of crows.

**Phragmites Update** (Peter Waasdorp for Richard Payne): A plan had been approved to treat Wood Neck, Gunning and Flume Ponds. However, an abutter of Wood Neck Pond objected to the intended use of herbicides, so treatment of that pond is on hold. Treatment of the other ponds will go forward during the week of September 16, weather permitting, starting with Gunning Point Pond.

**Gunning Point Right-of-Way Resolution** presented by Michael Eder: Thanks were given to Hartley and Rosemary Hoskins who initiated and paid

for the Gunning Point survey that has been and will continue to be instrumental to the settlement of ROW issues along the coastline.

Hartley offered thanks to Langley Keyes for deeding a key piece of property to SPABSI. This action has allowed community access to the water for Sippowisset residents as well as to the whole community. Michael indicated the town will change its maps to the SPABSI ownership. Interfering groins and stairs are being adjusted through Conservation Commission reviews to allow public access to these lands.

**FACES Update** (Chris Neill, board president): FACES supports Falmouth's plan to introduce filtration through activated charcoal at Long Pond, which will reduce but not totally eliminate the need for chlorination, the treatment currently used.

The Comprehensive Water Resources Plan calls for limited sewerage plus exploration and potential use of alternative technologies to clean up Falmouth's estuaries. FACES supports this approach and urges SA members to support the plan.

**Falmouth Friendly Lawn Program**: Chris reported that lawn fertilizer is responsible for only 10–15% of the total nitrogen problem. Falmouth passed a bylaw restricting the use of lawn fertilizer, however the Attorney General ruled that the Department of Agricultural Resources holds the right to regulate fertilizer use and thus the bylaw was ruled invalid.

When asked whether nitrogen-loaded water is attenuated as the water travels (thus the nitrogen problem can be resolved by addressing only the houses near the water), Chris responded that treatment must be started in densely populated areas, but the problem can't be solved without addressing the whole watershed. Nitrogen-loaded water will eventually reach the shore.

**Guest speaker: Mark Rasmussen, President, Buzzards Bay Coalition**. A summary of his report on the state of the bay is on page 5.

### 2013 Board and Officers

#### Officers for a one-year term

President: Peter Waasdorp  
Treasurer: Karl Audenaerde  
Secretary (vacant)

#### For a 3-year term effective 2013

Susan Cohan  
Bob Skilton  
Judy Yost  
Michael Eder

#### Continuing on the Board

Merle Mizell  
Deborah Gove  
Karl Audenaerde  
Maureen Conte  
Arthur Gaines  
Nancy McDonald

# The State of the Bay

*Delivered by Mark Rasmussen, President, Buzzards Bay Coalition, at the SA 2013 Annual Meeting*

*Edited by Mary Fran Buckley*

The Buzzards Bay Coalition (BBC) was officially incorporated in July 1987 as a nonprofit organization with a board of private citizens who are concerned with the health and future of the bay, from Westport to Woods Hole. The organization now has 8,000 members.

Among its major successes, BBC includes oil spill prevention, land protection (now 7,000 acres), the BayWatchers water quality monitoring, and local advocacy. Its programs aim to: restore clean water through water quality monitoring; protect watershed lands; and engage the community through educational programs.

The state of the bay has been declining overall, mainly due to nitrogen pollution from septic systems. Unfortunately, the public seems increasingly disconnected from the bay and its issues. In a poll from September 2012, one-third of the respondents said they didn't use the bay at all, one-third said they did so fewer than 10 times a year. Only 30% believe that septic systems are a major problem (although in Falmouth that number is 80%), and four of 10 people are "not familiar" with the nitrogen pollution problem. Finally, 74% believe that the bay's health is "good."

In the Sippewissett area, the Bay-Watchers water quality monitoring continues at Gunning Point and Flume Ponds, thanks to volunteers and support from the Sippewissett Association. So far the data have been stable over the years and there is no immediate cause for concern.

Quissett Harbor, however, is showing signs of nutrient-related decline. Nitrogen inputs must be reduced to fully restore the harbor. MEP estimates that there needs to be a 22% reduction in the locally control-



*Topographical map of Buzzards Bay, showing the bay's 432-square-mile watershed, twice the size of the bay itself (from the Buzzards Bay Coalition website).*

lable amount of nitrogen currently reaching the harbor. This is roughly equivalent to the removal of 40 regular septic systems, or 62 acres of residential lawn. More realistically, the better way to think of this is to have 80 homes (roughly half of all houses) install nitrogen-reducing septic systems that remove at least 50% of the nitrogen in their discharge.

In 1978, the EPA recognized nitrogen pollution from septic systems as an imminent threat to the health of Cape Cod's waters. This was part of a required regional Action Plan, which is an essential tool for managing a timely and cost-effective clean up. However, the EPA has failed to regulate septic systems and storm-water and wastewater treatment plants on the Cape. The EPA also has failed to approve the Action Plan. BBC, with the Conservation Law Foundation, has taken legal action against the EPA on these two issues. [On Friday, August 23, a federal judge dismissed all but one claim in these two lawsuits; see the *Cape Cod Times*, August 24, page one.]

In January 2013, Massachusetts approved \$3.35 million for the development of a regional wastewater management plan to reduce

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*(State of the Bay, continued from page 5)*

nutrient pollution of Cape Cod waterways to meet state and federal water quality standards. This is a critical first step in ensuring clean water for Cape Cod.

Protection of the 432-square-mile Buzzards Bay watershed (twice the size of the bay itself) is also essential to ensure clean water. The Buzzards Bay Coalition utilizes a bay-focused watershed protection strategy to conserve critical lands and restore damaged rivers and wetlands; so far it has protected nearly 5,000 acres of watershed land.

In the Sippewissett area, a 3+ year project is underway to control phragmites infestations in Gunning Point Pond and Flume Pond. Treatment with glyphosate will begin the week of September 16. Phragmites will be cut down in the winter, with dead material removed from Gunning Point (this can't be done at Flume Pond due to the difficult access). BBC land stewards will monitor each site to catch any return of phragmites. The total cost for this project is about \$55,000; all but \$2,500 has been raised so far.

The health of Buzzards Bay has an impact on all of us who live in its watershed and count on its clean water. Learn more by heading out and discovering its beauty. Go to [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org), click on Find Your Adventure under Discover Your Bay. BBC has information on more than 100 walks and 50 beaches to explore. Enjoy!

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## How Can I Help?

- Become a member of the Buzzards Bay Coalition. Information is on the website, [www.savebuzzardsbay.org](http://www.savebuzzardsbay.org).
- Become a BayWatcher volunteer
- Participate in the annual Swim Buzzards Bay and the Watershed Ride (Sunday, October 6)
- Sign up for *The Bay Buzz*, the Coalition's free monthly e-newsletter and stay up-to-date on important issues
- Make a financial contribution to support the Coalition's work to help save Buzzards Bay

**The Sippewissett Association**

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