The Friends of Pleasant Bay, Inc. is a nonprofit organization working dedicated to the preservation of one of Cape Cod’s most stunning recreational resources. “...work dedicated to the preservation of one of Cape Cod’s most stunning recreational resources.”

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Friends supported preparation of the Bay’s first Resource Management Plan in 1998. Regular updates to the Resource Management Plan are now coordinated by the Pleasant Bay Resource Management Alliance. This intergovernmental organization allows the Towns of Brewster, Chatham, Harwich, and Orleans to focus on Bay issues together. The Alliance’s activities encompass policy development, public information, and scientific research. Supported by memberships and donations, the Friends provides financial support to many projects and local groups. Educational Grants allow students to explore Pleasant Bay through experiential science, art, and humanities projects. Scientific Grants support research on wildlife and coastal processes. Other Grants provide financial support to local Land Trusts for their Land Preservation Acquisitions on and near the Bay. In 2017 FOPB Received the Outstanding Organization Award from the American Fisheries Society (organized in 1870) and its Southern New England Chapter for “work dedicated to the preservation of one of Cape Cod’s most stunning recreational resources.”

Welcome to Pleasant Bay
This estuary is a stunning recreational resource that is available to everyone. We hope you use it wisely and learn to love and protect it. The only cost for its use is an obligation to treat it well.

The Friends of Pleasant Bay (FOPB) was organized in 1985 with the mission to “preserve and enhance the natural, visual, and historic resources of Pleasant Bay.” The organization focuses on both the Bay, Cape Cod’s largest estuary, and its entire watershed.

In 1987 the Friends successfully achieved designation of the Bay as a Massachusetts Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Funding by the Friends supported preparation of the Bay’s first Resource Management Plan in 1998. Regular updates to the Resource Management Plan are now coordinated by the Pleasant Bay Resource Management Alliance. This intergovernmental organization allows the Towns of Brewster, Chatham, Harwich, and Orleans to focus on Bay issues together. The Alliance’s activities encompass policy development, public information, and scientific research. Supported by memberships and donations, the Friends provides financial support to many projects and local groups. Educational Grants allow students to explore Pleasant Bay through experiential science, art, and humanities projects. Scientific Grants support research on wildlife and coastal processes. Other Grants provide financial support to local Land Trusts for their Land Preservation Acquisitions on and near the Bay.

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Public Beaches

Pleasant Bay Public Beaches are small and without Life Guards. Parking is limited and some are accessible only by foot or boat.

Orleans: Kents Point (walk in) B1
Orleans: Paw Wah Point (walk in) B2
Orleans: South Orleans Beach B3
Harwich: Head of the Bay Beach B4
Chatham: Jackknife Beach B5
Chatham Light Beach B6

Boat Access Only Beaches

Orleans: Sampson Island B7
Orleans: Hog Island B8
Orleans: Eelmins Point B9
Orleans: Nauset Beach B10
Orleans: Little Sipsons Island B11
Harwich: Strong Island B12,13
Harwich: North Beach B14
Harwich: North Beach Island B15

Public Launching Ramps

Parking is limited and conditions vary at Launching Ramps and Town Landings.

Orleans: River Road L1
Orleans: Portanimicut Road L2
Orleans: Quanset Pond L3
Harwich: Round Cove L4
Chatham: Crows Pond L5
Chatham: Ryders Cove L6

Town Landings

Orleans: Meeting House Pond T1
Harwich: Barley Neck T2
Orleans: Lonnis Pond T3
Orleans: Arey's Pond T4
Orleans: South Orleans Beach T5
Chatham: Jackknife Harbor T6
Chatham: Strong Island Landing T7
Chatham: Cotchipinicut T8
Chatham: Scituate T9
Chatham: Cow Yard T10

Fuel Docks

Orleans: Nauset Marine East F1 (Meeting House Pond)
Chatham: Ryder’s Cove Boat Yard F2
Chatham: Fish Pier F3

Local Knowledge for Mariner

- Mariners of all kinds navigate Pleasant Bay, from commercial and recreational fisherman to sailors, kayakers, stand up paddle boarders, and rowers. Please be respectful of your fellow boaters.
- There are marked No Wake Zones in ponds, coves, channels and rivers. Compliance is enforced. There is also a 150 foot State Regulated No Wake Zone along the entire shoreline of the bay/estuary and around mooring fields and swimming areas. Power boats should use extreme caution close to shore and in mooring areas. Always watch for swimmers.
- Muddy Creek is open to paddling, but tidal currents are strong at the Rt. 28 bridge. Power boats are prohibited in Muddy Creek.
- Personal Water Craft (PWC) are prohibited in any part of Pleasant Bay by both Federal Law and State approved Local Laws.
- It is illegal to discharge untreated or treated vessel sewage from Type I or II Marine Sanitation Devices in the Federal Pleasant Bay/Chatham Harbor No Discharge Area (NDA). Use Pumpout Services.
- The channel from Chatham Light to Meeting House Pond is marked by buoys numbered south to north. It is important to always follow buoy locations, as these channels are subject to change.
- Nauset Beach is always shifting, with constant changes to ocean entrances. Boaters should always be aware of changing channels and conditions.
- Surf conditions at the ocean entrances can be severe. All vessels should heed the Rough Bar Warning at the Chatham Coast Guard Station - a quick flashing yellow light which indicates strong wind conditions (two feet or more). A red light at the Harbormaster’s office at the Chatham Fish Pier also indicates High Surf.
- Tides in Pleasant Bay do not follow a typical six hour cycle. Mariners should take special care to calculate the tides before venturing out. Areas may become dry before “dead low.”
- Shellfishing requires a licence. Contact town Harbormasters for regulations. Do not disturb marked private shellfish grants.

Conservation Areas

Orleans: Whites Lane
Harwich: Hensons Way
Kents Point
Frost Fish Lane
Peck Property
Arey’s Lane
Paw Wah Point
Namequoit Road
John Kenrick Woods
Namequoit Road
Twinings Pond
Quanset Road
Meadow Bog
Quanset Road

The Colonial Ordinances of 1641-47 permit fishing, flowing and navigation in the “private tidelands” of the intertidal area between the high and low tide lines. Please respect private property and do not trespass.

Safety on Land & Water

- Always wear a life jacket when boating. Canoes and kayaks are required to wear life jackets between September 15th and May 15th by Massachusetts State Law.
- Keep off the fragile ecosystems of salt marshes, sand dunes and coastal bluffs.
- Keep clear of areas restricted for nesting birds.
- Keep clear of seals on land or water.
- Before shellfishing, obtain a permit and always check for possible contamination and area closings.
- Avoid Poison Ivy and always check for Ticks.