

Truro's drinking water is pumped mostly by private wells from an aquifer not far below ground level. This water supply is limited and susceptible to contamination from human activities that occur just above the aquifer. Private septic systems and cesspools are the largest sources of human caused contaminations, which vary in their chemical compositions and concentrations from location to location within Truro. Many of those chemicals and concentrations have known or potential harmful consequences to human health.

There is a growing body of reputable data and science documenting the causes, conditions and human health consequences of drinking water contamination. We need more public awareness of the causes and dangers of contaminated water, so that our town's water can be better protected and remain sustainable. There are no fences underground and protecting our fragile drinking water aquifer must be a collective effort.

[Docs for Truro Safe Water](#) is a voluntary group of medical practitioners and scientists who share these concerns and are collaborating to compile, understand and communicate the science involved. We are apolitical and will not advocate for any position other than one based on our scientific evidence. Our intent and commitment are to broaden public engagement and to enable knowledge-based decisions, especially those that lead to town-wide mitigation efforts that forestall or reduce contamination and support a sustainable supply of safe water.

Affiliates

Robert H. Brown, MD, DPhil

Bob is the leading researcher in ALS at UMass Medical in Worcester and lives in Truro when he's not at his lab or treating patients. at UMass Medical in Worcester. Presently he is busy with a Phase II clinical trial but firmly believes in the benefit of applying science to decision-making. He received his MD from Harvard and DPhil from Oxford. Bob's wife Elaine is also active in Town as a member of the Climate Action Truro citizens group and is researching bacteria in Truro ponds in her spare time.

Brian E. Boyle, Ph.D.

Brian was an electrical engineer specializing in operations research with a career as an information technology entrepreneur. With a PhD in Operations Research from MIT, Brian has lived near Corn Hill Beach for 35 years. He chairs the Truro Energy Committee and is a Trustee of the Truro Conservation Trust. He developed the first Accessory Dwelling Unit in Truro in 2017 to rent to the local work force.

Christopher W. Clark, Ph.D.

Chris was born on the Cape and raised in Wellfleet and Truro. He recently retired from his faculty and research positions at Cornell and returned to live full-time in Truro. Chris is a bio-engineer with acknowledged expertise in marine mammals, acoustics and scientific conservation. He currently chairs the Truro Local Comprehensive Planning Committee and serves on the Executive Board and Board of Directors of the Center for Coastal Studies.

Ronald R. Fichtner, Ph.D.

Ron is a retired mathematician and epidemiologist, having served at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, primarily in infectious disease programs with emphases on evaluation, disease surveillance and public policy formulation. PhD in mathematics/functional analysis from Emory University. Ron lives in North Truro and is a member of the boards of directors of the Truro Historical Society and the Truro Part-Time Resident Taxpayers' Association, and past board member of Outer Cape Health Services.

Mary Pearl, Ph.D.

Mary is currently the dean of Macaulay Honors College, one of 25 units of the City University of New York, also a professor of Biology at Brooklyn College. As the former president of the Wildlife Trust (aka Ecohealth Alliance) for 15 years, she was a pioneer in the establishment of the field of conservation medicine, exploring the relationship of climate and land use change to disease emergence in wildlife, livestock, and humans. She served on the faculty of the New York Times Institute for Environmental Journalists. Her bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees are all from Yale University.

Frederick W. Ruyman, MD

Formerly Chief of Gastroenterology at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, and a clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School, Fred moved to Truro full time and now practices at Cape Cod Hospital. Fred lives just off Pilgrim Pond in North Truro, where he has a vantage point on surface water eutrofication (loss of dissolved oxygen in water) due to groundwater contamination. Fred is very concerned about the increase in cancers he has observed since practicing on the Cape.

Robert E. Simpson, Jr., MPH, DSW

Rob is currently president of The Difference Leadership Group. His current work is in strengthening the role that executive leaders play in supporting organizational resilience. For 10 years, 2006-2016, Rob served as President & CEO of the Brattleboro Retreat, ranked by Modern Healthcare magazine as number 12 on its 2016 list of largest behavioral health providers. His masters degree in Public Health is from Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health and his doctoral degree is from the University of Utah.

Current Projects in Progress

Private Wells and Truro Safe Water

This paper reviews and presents a compilation of 75 years of research on private well water and its safety. It has been undertaken by the Docs for Truro Safe Water as a means of highlighting the science available to residents and Town decision makers who must consider drinking water safety in a variety of settings. Consideration has been given to circumstances particular to Truro and the Outer Cape, as well as to research that has appeared in the most recent two decades. **Status: Peer Review**

Down Gradient Nitrate in Pamet Harbor

Members are evaluating data provided by the Center for Coastal Studies from a study on nitrate levels at three sites in the Pamet River drainage area. Data collected at the “Inner Pamet Harbor” site during 2006-2019 by suggest an increasing trend in nitrate levels. The Pamet River drainage area was noted as a problem area in the 2018 Water Resources Management report prepared for the town by Weston & Sampson. **Status: Data Analysis**