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## **Freshwater Pond Citizen Science Monitoring Program Seeks Volunteers**

*New summer water monitoring program will supplement town and county programs*

Friends of Chatham Waterways announces volunteer opportunities to help monitor freshwater ponds in Chatham by boat, supplementing ongoing local scientific data-gathering programs. In partnership with the town of Chatham, FCW volunteers are needed for the new summer water monitoring program for six ponds: Schoolhouse, White, Goose, Stillwater, Emery, and Lovers Lake.

**The Role:** Citizen scientists will measure water clarity twice monthly (June through September) using a Secchi Disk. Additional observations of weather and extent of aquatic plants on pond surfaces will be noted. Each session will take roughly 30 minutes. Training is provided in early June.

**Requirements:** Access to a canoe, rowboat or small craft, use of a life vest (PFD), personal comfort and stability while working on the water, and availability for 30 minutes of monitoring twice each month.

**Why This Program Matters:** Long-term monitoring is essential for assessing and maintaining the health of our freshwater ecosystems. Much like Chatham's 27-year coastal water nutrient monitoring effort, this program will provide consistent, year-over-year data to supplement county and town programs. Using Secchi Disks allows for real-time assessment of water clarity, a key indicator of overall pond health. Fluctuations in clarity can signal issues ranging from construction runoff to nutrient loading from septic systems and fertilizers. By identifying these changes early, we can better manage risks such as harmful cyanobacteria blooms and oxygen depletion, ensuring the continued recovery and protection of our local ponds. Likewise, improved water clarity in our ponds can signal that mitigation from sewerage and/or tighter controls on fertilizer use, have been beneficial to the ecosystem.

To learn more, please reach out to Sue at [pondstudy@chathamwaterways.org](mailto:pondstudy@chathamwaterways.org)