

Anna McCaffrey

From: Francie Shaw <shawfrancie@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 16, 2023 9:49 PM
To: BOH@chilmarkma.gov
Subject: permit for Quitsa Trust

Anne,
Here is the letter I wish to distribute to the BOH members.
Francie Shaw

To the Chilmark Board of Health,

First, let me introduce myself. I am a co-owner of 25 Chockers Lane. I have been summering on Menemsha and Quitsa Pond for 76 years. I came with my siblings and my parents Ned and Alice Ryerson. Then I came with my own children and many cousins as well. Now I come with my grandchildren and even more cousins. I am grateful to this place for what it has given me.

Now, I ask you to imagine the beautiful blue waters of Menemsha Pond. Unlike most of the unique salt ponds of the Vineyard, where pollution periodically closes any use of the water, our water has stayed relatively clean, watched over by the town. There, enterprising young Chilmark people have created badly needed new jobs with their oyster businesses. There are clams to dig and sell, fish to catch and eat. Oystercatchers bob their comic heads, wildlife abounds in and out of the water. Children learn to swim on its sandy beaches. The salt spray feels clean and bracing. We all have a duty to maintain this special place as well as we can. That is what the Town of Chilmark does with its water quality and other laws.

Now there is a request for exclusions from those laws. The buyers want to put in a septic system where there is not the legal space to do so. The buyers argue that they ask only for a few feet this way, that way and the other way. They believe their septic system can be within close proximity

to an existing water supply safely. They bought the property knowing its history and its geography. They knew they would need variances. They believe others may have gotten such and therefore they are owed this but nothing is owed above what is owed to all of us - a healthy Pond. While there may have been questionable allowances in the past that is not permission for more. In fact, it is the best reason to stick to the law. We do not uphold our job and protect the environment by repeating mistakes from the past. The town worked hard, with many experts, on making these laws, to protect the water for the future of all of us.

And we all know that future includes a rising sea level, so we must be extra vigilant.

I think a lot about that future. E coli travels fast. How many more Menemsha Oysters may we eat? Will small children still be learning to swim on Short Beach and delighting in the hermit crabs they pick from the water?

I hope you will do all you can to protect this resource that belongs to all of us. Future generations depend on you.

Respectfully,
Francie Shaw
also, co-owners,
Susan Moon
Nora Ryerson