

# CONCERNED CITIZENS OF TRURO

January 2020

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## THE CLOVERLEAF COMPLEX FACT SHEET 2 VITAL INFORMATION TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

**The clock is ticking** to approve plans to build the “Cloverleaf” affordable housing project – a privately-owned complex - at the intersection of Highland Rd and Route 6 on town-owned land..

The plan puts **70 bedrooms in 11 buildings on less than 4 acres** of land using a **traditional septic system**.

- **Housing that is affordable for Truro folks is much needed.**
- **But this density of use requires an advanced nitrate-reducing septic system.**
- **The developer is seeking a waiver from the Truro Board of Health regulations in order to avoid installing and operating this necessary septic system.**

Truro's waste water regulations require that the sewage and waste water output for a **complex of this size be spread out evenly over 16 acres of land**, not over less than 4 acres. The purpose of Truro's waste water regulations is to **prevent the pollution of our shared aquifer - and our town's and our own only source of drinking water.**

The developer **does not want to properly treat this sewage and waste water to reduce toxic nitrate levels because of the cost, projected to be \$150,000 in a multi-8-figure project.**

**But the cost to area residents, the environment and our shared aquifer is much greater, now and for generations to come.**

### What's The Problem?

In a word: **NITRATES**. The State's EPA sets maximum levels at **10 mg/L and Truro sets a safe level at 5 mg/L**. The Cape Cod Commission estimates the nitrogen loading from the Cloverleaf complex will be **19 mg/l – almost twice the EPA's limit and four times Truro's accepted safe level.**

### So What?

**Nitrate levels above 10 mg/L are a serious matter.** Even 5mg/l - Truro's standard – is deeply concerning. But 10mg/l can be lethal to newborns and infants and will almost certainly increase rates of cancer, neural tube birth defects and thyroid disease in the entire affected region.

### Who Will Be Affected?

The ground water beneath the Cloverleaf parcel flows toward the west and southwest of the Cloverleaf site, including Pond Village, already designated an **area of critical interest** by Weston & Sampson.\*\* This designation was based on elevated nitrate levels detected in **Pond Village, among the highest in Truro.** (over, please →)

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\*\* See their *Integrated Water Resources Management Plan, Phase I* for Truro (October, 2014), posted on Truro's website. Please see Figure 4.3. <https://www.truro-ma.gov/water-resources-oversight-committee/pages/truro-phase-i-iwrmp>

We already know that:

- The Town's nitrate tests from 2010 showed the average nitrate level measured in wells in **Pond Village and parts of Shearwater were 40% higher than the town-wide average.**
- Voluntary sampling of 40 % homes in Pond Village in 2013 and 2016 indicated that at least one third now have drinking water with **nitrate levels at or above 3mg/L.** Some homes have drinking water with **nitrate levels above 9 mg/L.**
- If not properly treated, Cloverleaf waste water with 19 mg/l of nitrate could plausibly cause nitrate levels in Pond Village and other nearby areas **to soon exceed 10 mg/L and to rise steadily thereafter,** given that nitrate levels are already elevated.
- **Water has no property boundaries** - and flows where it will.

### What Can WE Do?

As a "40B" project, the Truro Zoning Board of Appeals - with input from the Board of Health and Conservation Commission - will decide whether to grant the developer's permit.

**We can demand that the ZBA deny the permit to develop the Cloverleaf project until and unless the developer chooses a method certain to keep water safe. The developer must EITHER**

- **install the necessary septic system to reduce nitrate discharge to safe levels OR**
- **Reduce the number of units to conform to the natural leaching capacity of a 4-acre site**

### What Can YOU Do?

Let your voice be heard. **Call on the ZBA to permit affordable housing without putting residents, neighbors and the environment in harm's way.** Here are ways to do that while public discussion is still open.

- **ATTEND** the coming **ZBA MEETING** - possibly the last - on the CLOVERLEAF Project  
**January 16 | Town Hall | 5:30 PM**  
<https://www.truro-ma.gov/zoning-board-of-appeals>
- **CALL OR WRITE ZBA Members** to express your views before January 16, 2020  

<b>Arthur Hultin</b>	<b>John Thornley</b>	<b>John Dundas</b>	
<b>Fred Todd</b>	<b>Chris Lucy</b>	<b>Darrell Shedd</b>	<b>Heidi Townsend</b>
- **EMAIL OR WRITE SELECT BOARD Members to express your views** and ask for your comments to be read into the record.  

<b>Jan Worthington</b> <a href="mailto:jworthington@truro-ma.gov">jworthington@truro-ma.gov</a>	<b>Bob Weinstein</b> <a href="mailto:rweinstein@truro-ma.gov">rweinstein@truro-ma.gov</a>
<b>Kristen Reed</b> <a href="mailto:kreed@truro-ma.gov">kreed@truro-ma.gov</a>	<b>Sue Areson</b> <a href="mailto:sareson@truro-ma.gov">sareson@truro-ma.gov</a>
- **Inform Neighbors And Friends** - tell everyone you know that our water quality is at risk.
- **Contact Us** at [ccotruro@gmail.com](mailto:ccotruro@gmail.com)
- **Support environmentally responsible affordable housing!**

Thank You.