

WATER SUPPLY

# Sharp Divide Emerges Over New Truro Well Sites

*Modeling finds 3 promising sites — including the center of the Walsh property*

BY PAUL BENSON · JAN 14, 2026

PROVINCETOWN — A conflict between the leaders of Provincetown and Truro that emerged last summer over the siting of new wellfields for Provincetown's municipal water system has grown more intense now that the preliminary results of a hydrogeology study are in.



**722,000± sq. ft. or 16.57± acres**

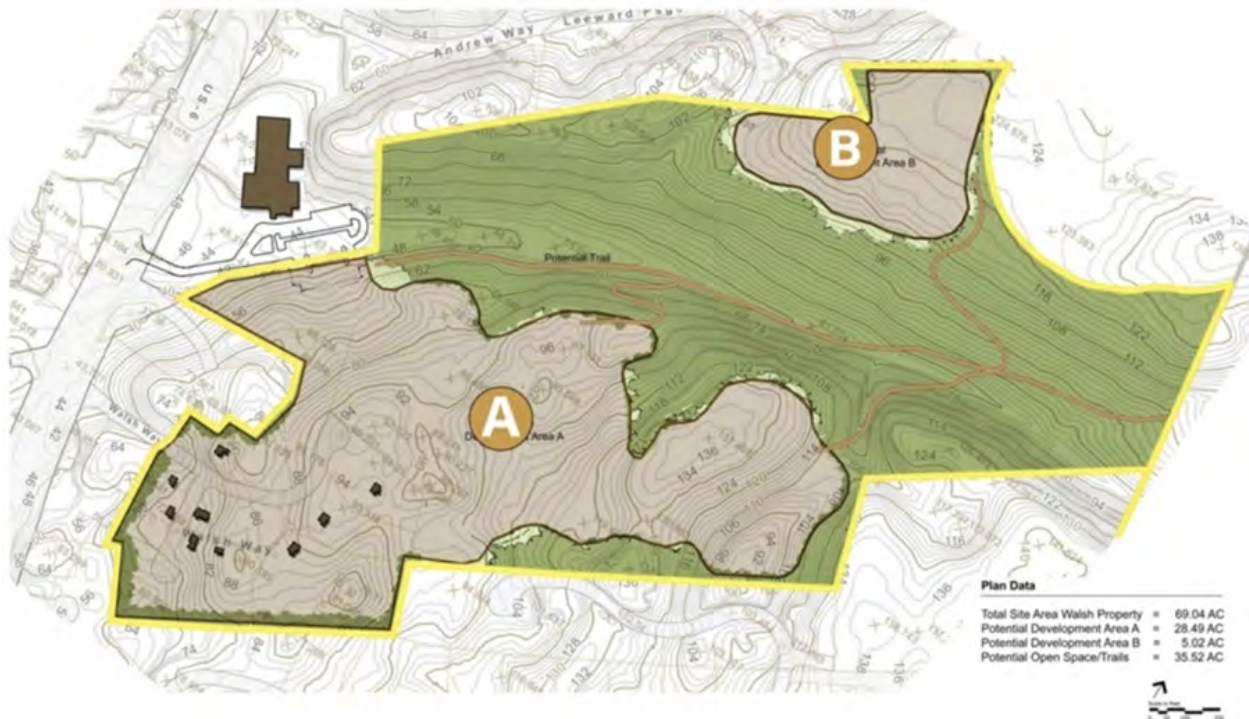
This map produced by Provincetown Town Planner Thaddeus Soulé shows how the 11.5-acre protection district around a new public well would limit the developable part of the Walsh property. (Image courtesy Town of Provincetown)

Those results — which were prepared by scientists at Apex Companies, the contractor that has been helping the towns develop a regional watershed management plan — found only three promising locations in the Pamet Lens that could support the withdrawal of up to 350,000 gallons per day in summer without negatively affecting existing public wellfields at North Union Field and South Hollow Road.

One of those locations is near the center of the main “developable area” of the 70-acre town-owned Walsh property that was identified by Truro’s consultants Tighe & Bond [in 2022](#). The 28.5-acre developable area was included in the “moderate density subdistrict” of the Walsh zoning overlay that Truro voters approved last May — but siting a public well in that area would require a 400-foot radius around the well, keeping 11.5 acres completely free of any development.

According to a map created by Provincetown Town Planner Thaddeus Soulé, siting a well in that spot would leave 16.6 acres, or about 58 percent, of Tighe & Bond’s “developable area” intact for Truro’s housing plans.

Whether that is an acceptable tradeoff to secure a new well is at the heart of the dispute between the two towns.



This 2022 assessment of developable land by Truro’s contractors Tighe & Bond includes an “A” marker that is very close to the spot where hydrogeologists from Apex Companies modeled a potential well last fall. (Image courtesy Town of Truro)

Truro’s three members on the seven-member Provincetown Water and Sewer Board — vice chair Courtney Warren, Truro Board of Health chair Tracey Rose, and Truro Select Board member Nancy Medoff — had argued against including the Walsh property in the Apex groundwater modeling study last summer and fall.

Truro’s DPW Director Jarrod Cabral, Health and Conservation Agent Emily Beebe, and Town Manager Kelly Clark [also](#) told the water and sewer board that siting a public well and an 11.5-acre protection district on the Walsh property should not be studied because it would unacceptably limit the town’s plans for new housing there.

Provincetown Water Commissioner Cody Salisbury and DPW Director Jim Vincent both stressed that the Walsh property could be one of the only good sites remaining in Truro for a new well, and on Oct. 9 the board put the matter to a vote, with Provincetown’s four members endorsing the modeling of the Walsh property while Truro’s three members voted against it.

Of 22 public and private sites north of the Pamet River that Apex identified in December, only three were ultimately deemed viable by hydrogeologists Ann Marie Petricca and Lauren Thistle: the Walsh property, a privately owned parcel at 40 Long Nook Road, and a parcel owned by Truro at 75 Higgins Hollow Road, also known as Site C-5.

Of those three sites, the Long Nook Road location and Site C-5 actually had a greater potential to be able to pump more than 350,000 gallons per day without negatively affecting other existing wellfields, the Apex study found.

The town does not own the Long Nook Road parcel, however, and Site C-5 is completely surrounded by Cape Cod National Seashore property, which means access to the site would have to be negotiated.

Petricca and Thistle also identified 11 potential well sites south of the Pamet River on the Chequessett Lens of groundwater that South Truro shares with Wellfleet. Of those sites, only one, a town-owned parcel designated 0 Prince Valley Road, appeared likely to be viable — and it would cost about \$5 to \$7 million more than the Pamet Lens sites to develop because it is more than three miles away from the current southernmost point of the water system at Truro Central School.

Provincetown's water system currently serves all of Provincetown and 536 accounts in North Truro, mostly along Shore Road but also including the police and fire station and the 43 apartments being built at the Cloverleaf project.

Another factor in the dispute between the two towns is that Truro's select board has requested 9,900 gallons per day of water service, or the equivalent of 90 bedrooms, for a Phase 1 development at the Walsh Property — a request that Provincetown's water and sewer board has endorsed but that Provincetown's select board still has not.

## **A Growing Rift**

Truro's select board hasn't yet discussed the Apex groundwater study in open session — but on Dec. 16 the board went into executive session to discuss “the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property” including the Walsh property and Site C-5, along with two other town-owned parcels.



This map of potential new wellfields in Truro shows six sites on the Pamet Lens that were modeled in detail (only one of the two North Truro Air Force Base sites on the map was modeled), along with a seventh site on the Chequessett Lens in South Truro. The Highland Road, North Truro Air Force Base, and Quail Ridge sites were found to be largely unsuitable because wells there would negatively affect other existing wellfields or be likely to draw in salt water. (Image courtesy Town of Provincetown)

After that session, the board released a letter that said that “placing a well on the Walsh property will preclude the town from developing the property as envisioned and approved by the voters of Truro” and would be illegal under a 1952 state law that limits the area from which Provincetown’s water system can draw.

The board also cited a 2010 Intermunicipal Agreement between the two towns that says any new well must be outside the zone of contribution of the North Union Field wells, which the Walsh property is not.

“Truro is pursuing the development of its own water sources, independent of the Provincetown Water System,” the letter concludes. “This action will ensure our community vision is implemented regardless of whether Truro’s request for a water allocation from Provincetown is approved.”

At a water and sewer board meeting on Jan. 8 and a Provincetown Select Board meeting on Jan. 12, Vincent said that Truro’s letter contained “a number of inaccuracies and misleading statements.”

“Protecting water supplies for future generations was one of the core planning principles of the Walsh committee” that Truro voters approved at town meeting, Vincent said.

All four of the potential well sites that Apex identified would require a rewrite of the 1952 law, he said, and if Truro hoped to build an independent water system it should also want to preserve “one of the only two or three sites we have left” that can produce large volumes of water.

“We believe that Truro can succeed at developing affordable housing on this property and protect the water resource” on the Walsh property, Vincent concluded.

The water and sewer board voted to formally discuss Truro’s letter at its next meeting on Feb. 12, while Provincetown’s select board thought that a joint meeting of select boards was needed.

The conversation between the two towns “has gone kind of sideways, and I don’t know the reason why,” select board member Leslie Sandberg said. The scientists at Apex should give a public presentation to the two boards that could ensure a shared set of facts, she said.

“People sometimes see this as a Provincetown-versus-Truro issue,” said select board member Austin Miller, but the two boards “are largely aligned in our focus on housing, environmental issues, and access to critical resources.

“At the end of the day, we have the same values,” Miller said. “I would like to think that if we were operating from the same set of facts, we would come to the same conclusions.”

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FILED UNDER: ENVIRONMENT, FEATURED, NEWS, PROVINCETOWN, TOWNS

About Paul Benson



Paul Benson is news editor at the Provincetown Independent. He has previously worked as a forest ranger, bartender, tour guide, and deckhand.