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## PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### Drinking Water Forum in Plymouth Draws Crowd and Tough Questions

- *Residents from across Southeastern Massachusetts air concerns about the underground aquifer, forests, and public health*
- *Speakers urge audience to get involved in municipal government to protect land and waters*

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**Plymouth, Massachusetts, March 28, 2024** Over 100 people came out on March 27 to fill the room at the Plymouth Public Library to hear from experts at the [Open Forum: Protecting Our Land and Waters](#). The Open Forum was co-hosted by [Community Land & Water Coalition](#) (CLWC) and [Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance](#) (SEMPBA), two local groups working to protect land and water resources in the region. Additional people attended the Forum virtually.

Residents came from towns across the region, including Plymouth, Carver, Plympton, Wareham and Hanson, to voice their concerns about contaminated drinking water, ponds too polluted to swim in part of the year, and the impacts of the massive sand and gravel removal operations visible everywhere.

"The Forum was an overwhelming success," said Meg Sheehan, an environmental lawyer and one of the event organizers. "We heard from a wide range of people on many topics. They all made it very clear they are concerned, and they should be. CLWC's mission is to educate and empower everyday people to get involved at the local level to protect our land and water. This means holding select boards, planning boards and zoning boards accountable for what is happening. There are too many violations of our bylaws that are damaging our environment and contaminating our water," said Sheehan, a speaker at the event.

The Forum offered the audience the chance to speak out and ask questions. Plymouth residents raised concerns about lack of water conservation, use of road salt, and over-development that is changing the town's character, and interest in learning how sand mining threatens the aquifer, and what they could do about it. The Forum's message was that residents should attend local meetings, reach out to their neighbors, consider forming action teams to work on issues of concern and use local bylaws, the political process and the ballot box to make changes.

Melissa Ferretti, Chairwoman and President of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, spoke about the gradual disappearance of the Tribe's Great Lot, a reservation deeded to the Tribe in 1857, and the people's connection to the natural world since time immemorial. Ferretti spoke about the Tribe's efforts to reclaim some of its tribal lands through land purchase and conservation. A member of Plymouth's Clear Pond Watershed Association said the Pond's unprecedented cyanobacteria contamination the last four years needs a solution.

Frank Mand, Vice President of SEMPBA, emphasized the abundance of rare plants and animals that make the region's Atlantic Coastal Pine Barrens unique. He emphasized that clean water and open space are critical to the survival of wildlife and biodiversity.

A resident of Carver's Cranberry Village on Federal Road asked if the sand mining permits issued to AD Makepeace and Read Custom Soils for earth removal in the area are "rubber stamps." He raised concerns about displaced wildlife, emissions of sand into the neighborhood and loss of forests.

Wareham resident Kathy Pappalardo spoke about a grassroots campaign that defeated a rezoning proposal for a casino in that town. She urged the crowd to "get involved," "don't give up," and "talk to your neighbors." Pappalardo emphasized that water unites us all across the Sole Source Aquifer and that we can work together.

The Zoom recording [can be found on YouTube](#).

The slide presentation [can be found on our website](#).

#### More information:

[Community Land and Water Coalition website](#)  
[Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance Website](#)  
[Sand Wars in Cranberry Country and 10 minute video](#)



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