

Members of the Falmouth Select Board will attend and participate in the following meeting:

AGENDA
Falmouth Rights of Nature Implementation Collaborative
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
Falmouth Public Library
Hermann Room
300 Main Street, MA 02540
6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

Hosted by: Falmouth Climate Action Network (FalCAN)

Event Details:

- **Date:** Tuesday, September 15
- **Networking Period:** 6:15 PM
- **Panel Discussion:** 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
- **Location:** Hermann Room, [Falmouth Public Library](#) (Main Branch)
- **Hospitality:** Light refreshments will be provided

FALMOUTH RIGHTS OF NATURE IMPLEMENTATION COLLABORATIVE

A REGIONAL WORKING GROUP FOR MUNICIPAL INNOVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

OPPORTUNITY

- Falmouth has the opportunity to become a statewide model for municipal Rights of Nature implementation by demonstrating how RON principles and Article 97 protections can be translated into practical, collaborative action that benefits both communities and the ecosystems upon which they depend.
- In 2024, the Town of Falmouth Selectboard unanimously adopted the Rights of Nature Resolution, recognizing the rights of ecosystems and directing that these principles guide municipal decision-making. Massachusetts also provides constitutional protection for conservation lands and natural resources through Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution
- Together, these legal and policy frameworks present a unique opportunity: to explore how municipalities can translate and innovate rights of nature values into practical governance, planning, conservation, and community decision-making.

PURPOSE

- The Falmouth Rights of Nature Implementation Collaborative is a proposed interdisciplinary working group that will convene legal, environmental, municipal, scientific, Tribal, nonprofit, and community leaders to identify practical strategies for implementing RON principles at the local level.
- The Collaborative will serve as a forum for shared learning, legal and policy analysis, and the development of implementation tools that municipalities can use to strengthen environmental stewardship while operating within existing legal authority.

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Identify opportunities to integrate Rights of Nature and Article 97 principles into Municipal decision-making.
- Develop practical guidance, model policies, and implementation tools for local governments.
- Identify pilot projects in Falmouth
- Foster collaboration among municipal officials, conservation organizations, legal professionals, scientists, educators, and community stakeholders.
- Create a scalable model that may inform other Massachusetts communities.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Municipal planning, zoning, conservation, land use and natural resource protection.
- Climate resilience and nature-based solutions, watershed and coastal ecosystem stewardship.
- Policy, governance, community education and public engagement

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

- The Collaborative seeks participation from individuals with expertise or interest in:
 - Municipal governance and planning, Environmental/Municipal/Earth Law, Conservation and Land Trusts, Climate resilience, Scientific research, Wampanoag Tribal Leadership.
- Initial Convening: The first meeting will bring together invited participants to:
 - Explore shared goals and opportunities and identify priority implementation projects;
 - Establish working groups and develop a roadmap for future collaboration.

CONVENED BY: Dr. Elizabeth Gladfelter, Michelle J. Morris, Esq, Geralyn Schad & Mike Fogarty

Implementing Rights of Nature & Climate Resilience in Falmouth

From Resolution to Action:

A Community Panel Discussion & Action Forum

Hosted By FalCAN & Moderated by Lyn Schad



Dr. Elizabeth Gladfelter



Rev. Nell Fields



Dr. Heather Goldstone



David Wheeden



Rep. Tom Moakley



Michelle J. Morris, Esq.



Jed Cornock



Dr. Michael Fogarty

Falmouth Recognizes the Rights of Nature.

The Falmouth Select Board unanimously adopted a Rights of Nature Resolution in 2024.

Falmouth has committed to putting those rights into action.

Falmouth has the authority to protect the natural systems on which our community depends.

By doing so Falmouth advances its constitutional obligation to protect a clean and healthy environment for present and future generations.

The next step is implementation.

Join us for an interactive evening exploring how Rights of Nature can strengthen local decision-making, environmental protection, and climate resilience in Falmouth.

Following a panel discussion, facilitated focus groups will help to identify priorities, opportunities, and actions for moving this work forward.

Tuesday 9/15/26 Falmouth Main Library Hermann Room 6:30-8:30pm



RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING CAPE COD RIGHTS OF NATURE

Whereas, the communities of Cape Cod owe their centuries of existence to their natural setting: the miles of coastline, the natural aquifer, the climate-moderating Gulf Stream, the surface waters, and the abundance of the land and sea. From the earliest residents, the Wampanoag and Nauset, through today's, the Cape's people are deeply attached to this life- and spirit-sustaining land, understand their dependency upon the environment, and work collaboratively to protect it.

Whereas, despite these efforts, local terrestrial and aquatic species are in decline, and habitats are being fragmented and destroyed. The Cape's community of life is being destroyed. Residents mourn the loss and are united in their determination to stop it.

Whereas, the Massachusetts state constitution establishes in Article 97 that the people have a right to a clean and healthy environment, but that right is too often ignored or sacrificed to current political exigencies and societal needs. Consequently, the Cape's people are calling upon their local governments to recognize their constitutional right by better protecting the environment.

Whereas, in this time of global climate disruption and environmental collapse, the call for stronger environmental protection is world-wide; and one major response has been the mass adoption of legal enactments recognizing that humanity is a part of Nature, is responsible for Nature's care, and should recognize Nature -- the entire, inter-dependent community of life on Earth -- as having the right to exist, persist, regenerate, and be restored.

Whereas, this understanding of our human relationship to Nature, long shared by Earth's first peoples, has been incorporated into federal, state, and local laws around the world, including here on Cape Cod; and it is supported by a rapidly growing number of institutions, religious groups, and political leaders both locally and globally.

Whereas, supporting this movement and aligning local law and policy with the understanding that Nature must be respected as an entity with rights will help protect Cape Cod and will assist in effectuation of our constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment.

NOW, THEREFOR, THE SELECT BOARD OF FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS HEREBY:

RECOGNIZES the rights of Nature on Cape Cod; and

RESOLVES to effectuate those rights to the full extent of its authority in order to protect the welfare of life on Cape Cod and thereby effectuate our constitutionally guaranteed right to a clean and healthy environment and thereby protect our own and our children's and descendant's welfare.

Dated: April 22, 2024

Signed: Nancy Robbins Taylor
Nancy Robbins Taylor, Chair
Falmouth Select Board