

Re: proposed bylaw amendment by Edgartown Planning Board for Cape Pogue DCPC



Robert Strayton <robstrayton@comcast.net>  
To: Adam Turner  
Cc: Dan Doyle

[Reply](#) [Reply All](#) [Forward](#) [...](#)  
Tue 3/2/2021 2:11 PM

Mr. Turner & Members of the Commission,

I am writing you today regarding efforts by the Town of Edgartown to ban anchoring in Cape Pogue (Poge) Bay.

As a resident of Chappaquiddick and one who enjoys the waters of Cape Pogue Bay, I would like to go on the record with this challenging decision.

I agree that Cape Pogue Bay is a critical shellfish habitat and those succulent bay scallops are one of the absolute treasures of living on our remarkable little island. Obviously the preservation of that recourse is imperative.

I also recognize that actually being able to “police” anchoring in Cape Pogue Bay would be extremely challenging, and costly.

While I have seen an increase in boat traffic and especially anchoring near the Gut in Cape Pogue, it seems some of the statements are wildly exaggerated. I have never, at any time, seen anywhere near 400 boats in Cape Pogue Bay, never mind anchored in that area. I am not sure where that number came from but it is wildly exaggerated. I doubt I have ever seen 100 boats in there. Nor, quite frankly, have I ever seen anyone ever defecate on the beach. I have seen dogs defecate, and some were fairly large dogs. I would surmise that the alleged human waste was, in fact, canine.

I, and many of my neighbors, enjoy spending an afternoon anchored or rafted-up in Cape Pogue Bay. I also know that we all respect Cape Pogue Bay and appreciate the importance of this body of water to our home. That said, we rarely, if ever anchor in the immediate vicinity of the "Gut." The currents in that area make swimming a challenge for many, at the very least, and hazardous in a worst case scenario.

That said, I, and my neighbors, would be extremely disappointed to lose access to one of our very special bodies of water, and believe that denial alone presents some challenges. I would not advocate for a complete moratorium on anchoring in Cape Pogue Bay, but would instead offer some manageable and concrete steps we could take to help mitigate the current situation.

I would propose a solution that might help to alleviate not only crowding in Cape Pogue Bay, but more importantly could serve to minimize the negative impacts on that environment.

I would propose one be required to obtain an anchoring permit. As part of the permit process, there would be educational materials provided to permit holders about value of the Cape Poge Bay habitat, including shellfish, anadromous species and wildfowl, and why everyone must work to protect and preserve this important resource. I believe the permits could be obtained, like a shellfish permit, at the Edgartown Selectman's office. Personally I would prefer these permits be obtained free of charge, with a signature agreeing to abide by the rules for anchoring, such as not anchoring in eel grass beds. Continued violation resulting in a revocation of the permit and possibly fines.

Secondarily, we could designate specific anchorages within Cape Poge Bay that would limit the specific areas within the bay where one could anchor. Those areas to be determined based upon minimizing environmental impacts.

An alternative to specified anchorages, or in conjunction with specified anchorages, could be to install moorings in a designated area. Those moorings could have a daytime use only restriction, though I do suspect some fishermen might find them useful, so perhaps like an oversand permit, use could be allowed overnight for active fishing?

As I said, this is a complicated issue, and while I am all for preserving and protecting our environment, in Cape Poge Bay, on Chappaquiddick and across Martha's Vineyard, I also know that Cape Poge Bay is one of the most important areas to those of us that call Chappy home, and to be deprived of our home waters, to be deprived of our use and enjoyment of this special place due to neglect, or a lack of understanding by others is unfair, unjust and would be a slippery slope.

If this is simply an attempt by wealthy landowners on North Neck or at Cape Poge to limit access and deprive the public of its legal right to access state waters, that is utterly unacceptable.

There are plenty of examples around the country for designated anchorages and mooring fields for use of day-trippers to a given area. Florida in particular, but many areas in the Caribbean limit anchoring and provide moorings to protect coral reefs and other special marine habitats. While protecting Cape Poge Bay is important, it is not simply a playground for the rich and famous, and to deny the public the use of this important fishery and this calm, protected body of water is to do a disservice to the people you are elected to serve.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of not simply the environmental issues, but the concerns of all the stakeholders and myriad of uses present today in Cape Poge Bay.

Most sincerely yours,  
Robert H. Strayton  
307 Chappaquiddick Road  
Edgartown, MA 02539.

