



Sound Waves

A Monthly Newsletter from Save Our Sound

JUNE 2026

Alliance News & Notes



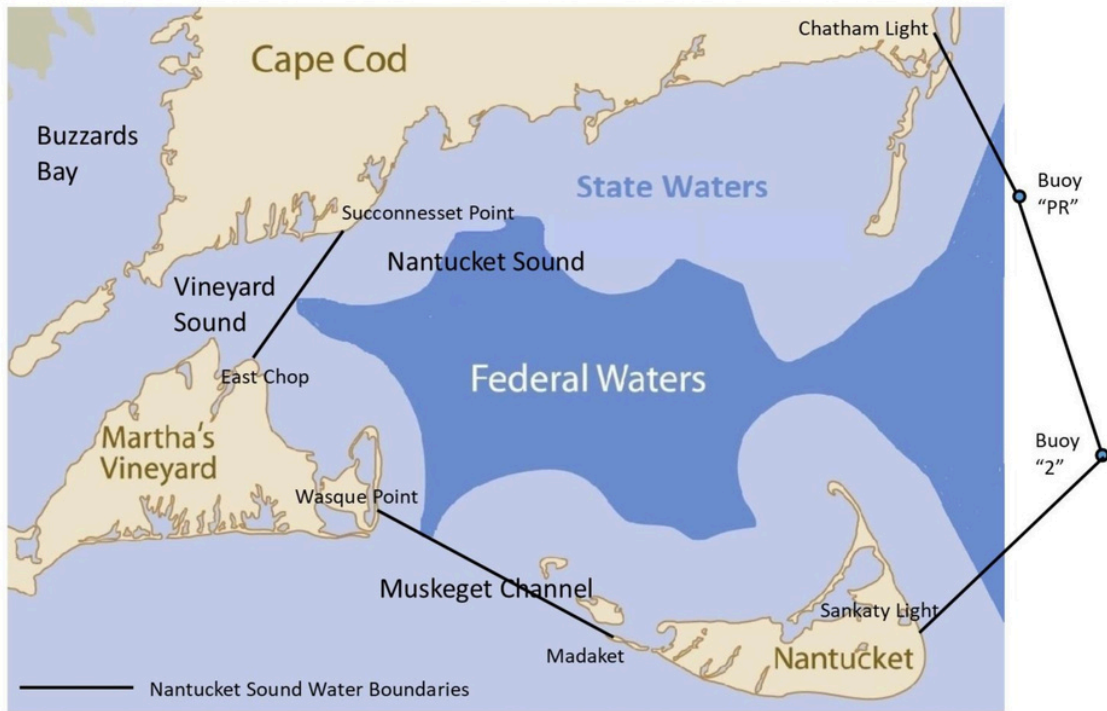
Recently, several longtime supporters of the Alliance shared with us a collection of local newspaper and magazine articles from the early 1980s discussing Nantucket Sound and the debate over who controls its waters. Written by voices including longtime conservationist **Mark H. Robinson** and author **George Foy**, the articles explored issues such as resource management, fishing rights, offshore development, and the complicated question of jurisdiction in Nantucket Sound.

Well, here we are in 2026...more than forty years later...and many of the same questions remain relevant today.

One fact that surprises many people is that Nantucket Sound is divided between state and federal waters. In simple terms, the waters extending roughly three miles from the shores of Cape Cod and the Islands are controlled by the **Commonwealth of Massachusetts**. Beyond that boundary, jurisdiction belongs to the **federal government**.

This division stems largely from the landmark 1975 Supreme Court case *United States v. Maine*, which addressed ownership and control of offshore submerged lands and coastal waters. While the case involved multiple Atlantic coast states, it helped

NANTUCKET SOUND BOUNDARIES



Nantucket Sound: A line drawn from Chatham Light to latitude 41°36.1' N longitude 69°51.1' W. (Pollack Rip Entrance Lighted Horn Buoy "PR"); thence to latitude 41°26.0' N. longitude 69°46.2' W. (Great Round Shoal Channel Lighted Buoy "2"); thence to Sankaty Head Light. (USCG—Chart 13237 37th Edition); A line

clarify where state authority ended and federal authority began in offshore waters, including in Nantucket Sound.

Why does this matter? Because protections, permitting authority, resource management, and decisions about development differ depending on whether waters fall under state or federal jurisdiction. The result is that Nantucket Sound, despite functioning as one interconnected ecosystem, is managed through a divided system of state and federal oversight.

For decades, the Alliance has advocated for protecting the Sound in its entirety—not as separate pieces divided by jurisdictional lines, but as one historically, culturally, and environmentally significant body of water. Fish, marine mammals, tides, water quality, and coastal ecosystems do not recognize political boundaries on a map.

This is one reason why **National Historic Landmark** (NHL) designation remains so important. An NHL designation, the highest level of historic protection, would recognize Nantucket Sound as a nationally significant and unified historic landscape deserving of long-term stewardship and protection.

The conversations taking place today about Nantucket Sound are, in many ways, part of a much longer story—one that has unfolded across generations of fishermen, conservationists, scientists, tribal communities, and coastal residents who have understood the Sound's importance and worked to protect it and its traditional uses.

Since 2002, the Alliance has remained committed to safeguarding Nantucket Sound as one unified and nationally significant body of water. Today, that effort is supported by a broad and growing coalition of nearly 100 stakeholder organizations from across the Cape and Islands and beyond, including municipalities, tribal entities, environmental groups, chambers of commerce, preservation organizations, businesses, and community leaders.

During last month's **ACONS (A Celebration of Nantucket Sound)** webinar, conservationist **Mark Robinson** noted that the Alliance represents one of the region's largest conservation efforts focused on protecting a single natural resource: Nantucket Sound itself. That shared commitment continues to strengthen our work and reflects a growing recognition that the Sound's ecological, cultural, historic, and economic importance deserves lasting stewardship and protection for generations to come.

Warmly,

Audra Parker

President & CEO

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



If you missed our recent **ACONS (A Celebration of Nantucket Sound)** webinar with longtime conservation leader **Mark H. Robinson** of **The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts**, we strongly encourage you to watch the recording.

In ***A History and A Future for Land Conservation on Cape Cod***, Mark delivered a fascinating and visually engaging presentation exploring how generations of conservation efforts helped shape the Cape we know today. Through remarkable historic images, photographs, and stories from decades on the front lines of preservation, he traced the evolution of land conservation across the region while also examining the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The webinar offered a deeper understanding of the landscapes, shorelines, and open spaces that define Cape Cod and the Islands—and why protecting them remains so important for future generations.

If you call the Cape and Islands home, or simply love this special place, this is a presentation well worth watching. You can watch recordings of all past ACONS webinars any time **on our website** or **YouTube channel**.



*This month, we put a spotlight on **John Jenkins**, a long-time supporter of the Alliance. John is a multi-award-winning journalist, author, publisher, and entrepreneur. With a specialty in partisans and power, he is the author of *The Partisan: The Life of William Rehnquist*, and **Summer of '71 (available on June 30th)**. He has written hundreds of features for major magazines in the U.S. and abroad, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *GQ*, and *The Washington Monthly*. A 4-time recipient of the American Bar Association's Gavel Award Certificate of Merit, he is the founder of *Law Street Media*, one of the most widely visited and highly engaged law-and-policy sites on the web. Prior to starting *Law Street*, Jenkins served for 15 years as President & Publisher of *CQ Press*, the leading political science textbook and reference publishers. Currently, he co-leads the predictive-AI start-up *PoliScio Analytics*, which he co-founded in 2022. Visit him at **JohnaJenkins.com** and **Summerof71.com***

1. What does Nantucket Sound mean to you?

Nantucket Sound is our Grand Canyon—a beautiful, pristine place that should always remain so.

I first visited Martha's Vineyard and Chappaquiddick Island forty-five years ago, and I was just gob-smacked. Such natural beauty. Particularly, at that time, on Chappaquiddick. From the Edgartown ferry, a sandy, unpaved road out to the beach on Nantucket Sound. My wife, Susan, and I went back every summer for many years. For someone like me, growing up in Washington, D.C. and being familiar only with the bustling ocean resorts of Maryland and Delaware, the beauty of a shoreline like this was new, and remarkable. And it was important, to me, to always keep it that way.

When we were able to buy a beach place of our own, we chose a wonderful house in Eastham, previously an artist's retreat, which has been our family's summer home for 30 years. Our place is between Cape Cod Bay and the Atlantic. We're less than a mile from Orleans, and it's just a few more miles down to Chatham, which, of course, is right on Nantucket Sound.

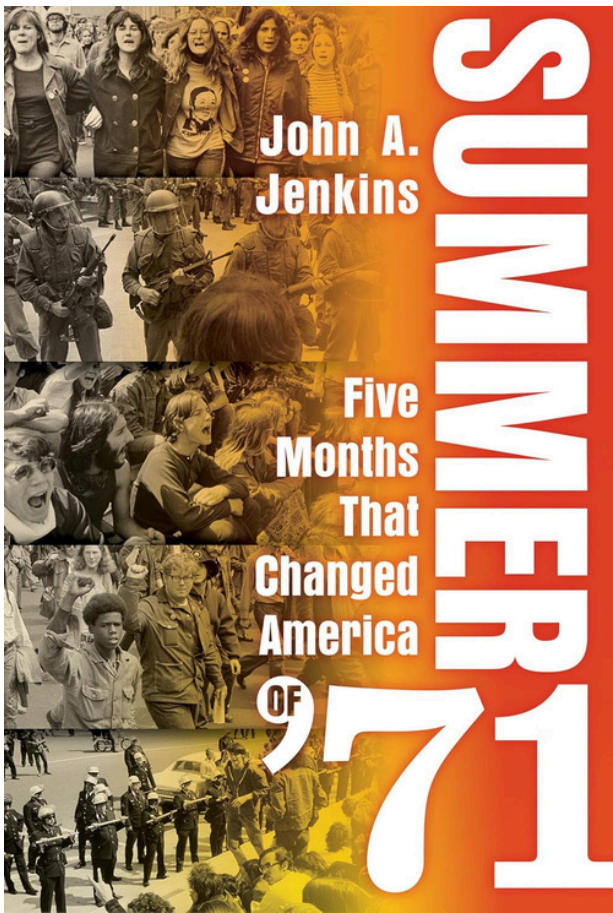
My most vivid recollection of Nantucket Sound is being on the nearly deserted beach at Monomoy Island on a summer afternoon some years ago and suddenly hearing screams – yes, screams -- as people ran toward the surf. At first, I thought it was someone in distress. Susan and I and our two young children ran down to the shoreline. But it turned out the screams were from a crowd watching a humpback whale that was slowly cruising just offshore...no more than 100 feet away. Her huge jaws filled with slithering fish that she was feasting on. She made multiple passes up and down the beach. Once, she rolled on to her side and looked directly at all of us gawkers with her huge eye. I mean, how many times in one lifetime do you get to have an experience like that?

2. What are your favorite spots to visit around Nantucket Sound?

For beaches, it's Chappaquiddick and Monomoy Island. And, of course, we love all our Outer Cape towns for everything they offer, from Chatham up to Provincetown. Even though Chatham is the only one of those directly on the Sound, if any of them can be despoiled, then all are at risk. We love them all.

3. You're new book *Summer of '71* is being released this month. Congratulations! It focuses on a pivotal period in American history. What drew you to those five months in particular?

Thank you for asking about the book. I am really excited to see this hit the bookstores on June 30, and there is already a lot of advance buzz happening around it. True, that summer marked a pivotal point in American history.



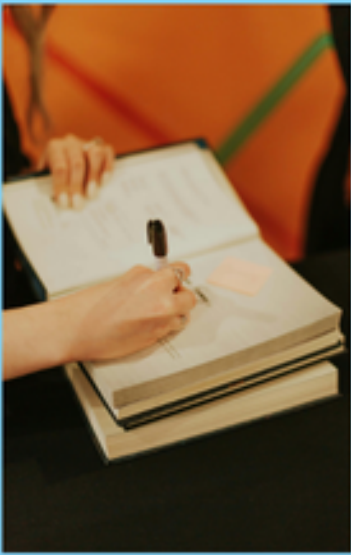
When I began work on the book in the middle of 2023, I intended it to be more akin to a memoir of a young journalist. I was just starting my journalistic career in the summer of 1971. And although I was the youngest, most inexperienced reporter in the big daily newsroom, I was thrown into the maelstrom of the Nixon Administration when the president froze wages and prices to stop runaway inflation. It was a huge story for a business publisher like ours, and Nixon chose August 15 to do it – when all of official Washington was on vacation. I was one of the few reporters remaining in the newsroom, and I was sent to the White House to cover events. That’s how my career started. An amazing number of important things happened that summer in Washington – Pentagon Papers, Roe v. Wade, Attica – and I covered a lot of them. That, in itself, is a good story to tell.

4. Of all the major events that you cover in the book, what was the most surprising story you uncovered while researching the period?

Well, there are a lot to choose from. But, in terms of things I uncovered: it turns out that President Lyndon Johnson was a conspiracy theorist. Johnson was in Dallas with John F. Kennedy on the day the president was assassinated. LBJ established the Warren Commission and endorsed its findings. But when it came to JFK’s assassination, LBJ believed there was a deeper conspiracy. He had a theory. That’s in the book.

5. Many of the issues you explore in *Summer of '71* still resonate today. Did writing this book change how you see the current moment?

It gave me confidence in our resilient democracy. Researching that earlier era, I began thinking more about the heroes who were fearless in the face of long odds. *Summer of '71* has some real heroes. And I think when history looks back, we will similarly have heroes from today.



Available June 30th
Click to Pre-Order Your Copy Today!
**BOOK TALK & SIGNING EVENTS ON
CAPE COD & CAMBRIDGE:**

July 7: Sandwich Public Library, Sandwich	6:30pm
July 15: East End Books, Provincetown	6:00pm
July 16: Sea Howl Bookshop, Orleans	5:00pm
July 21: Harvard Bookstore, Cambridge	7:00pm

6. What do you do in your spare time? Currently, you reside in DC. What are your ties to Cape Cod? How often do you get back?

The Cape is my base of operations from June through October, with regular trips back to New York and Washington. I love summers on the Cape. When I am not writing or helping to run **PoliScio Analytics**, the company I co-founded, I am deeply involved as a board member on four non-profits...two in DC, two in New York. I am a huge fan of live theatre and serve as a trustee of **Town Hall**, the historic Broadway venue founded a century ago by suffragists. As a board member of the Armory Foundation in Washington Heights, I bring students from our Armory College Prep program to Broadway shows. We also use live theatre to help them tell their stories to the colleges and universities that they're applying to. The results are nothing but rewarding.



**Before Watergate, five
turbulent months
would transform the
US for years to come.**



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