



# Cape Cod Blue Economy

## January – June 2023

### Activity Report

*Water as our way of Life* is a trademarked phrase.

Fonts and Big Blue logo by Carol McLeod Design for the Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation, Inc. Photography by Big Tree, Salty Broad Studios, and Cape Cod Community College.



## About the Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation, Inc.

The **Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation, Inc.** was established in 2017 to provide support for the Cape Cod Blue Economy Project. Launched in 2015 by the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, the Blue Economy Project is a regional initiative to promote and sustain a maritime-focused economy on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Plymouth.

The mission of the Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation is to grow the region's economy in a sustainable and balanced way, focusing on protecting and promoting our water and coastal resources.

The Cape Cod region is driven by the water that surrounds us, steeped in maritime tradition and dedicated to innovation. We are a modern water-based economy that connects people to their environment, inspires learning, and exports our knowledge to the world.

The Blue Economy is the fulcrum that balances our economic and environmental health, creates a new regional identity focused on pride in our water and coastal resources, and supports a more balanced and sustainable year-around economy for its residents.

## Board of Directors

Eugene Curry, Curry Law—President & Clerk

Scott Vandersall, Cape Cod Five—Treasurer

Steven Tom, independent industry expert

John Pappalardo, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance

Jon Hagenstein, Beacon Marine Construction

Alisa Magnotta, Housing Assistance Corporation





## Inside the Activity Report

Included are brief round-ups of WaterWORKS and the Big Blue Conference; formation of organization partners; and a look at Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation's current website and social media presence.

Looking forward, the report addresses the future of the board of directors; need for an Implementation Plan review; and operational modifications such as introducing annual sponsorships.

*Throughout the remainder of this report, Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation will be referred to as "CCBEF".*



## Foundation Staff

Following the accomplishments of Leslie-Ann McGee and Bert Jackson, CEO of the Cape Cod Chamber and CCBEF Paul Niedzwiecki appointed Katy Acheson as the Chamber's Economic Development Director with the intention of dedicating a significant portion of her time toward running CCBEF with direct support from the board of directors.

With staff resources dedicated to CCBEF, the foundation is beginning to experience new growth. The best evidence of this progress is in the success of WaterWORKS and the Big Blue Conference, both detailed in this report.

Throughout organizing these two blue economy events, CCBEF staff have made connections and built relationships with other blue economy organizations, such as other chambers of commerce along the coast, Mass Maritime Academy, and the New England Aquarium. Building bonds with organizations promoting similar missions will allow CCBEF to do greater work and position itself as the center of a "blue economy corridor" across the Northeastern Atlantic coast.



## Programs & Events

CCBEF was founded around the Cape Cod Blue Economy Project. The Project was organized into 8 “Blue Action Items”: Innovation, Financial Support, Environmental Education, Workforce Development, Peer Networks, Regulations and Permitting, Access to Water and Infrastructure, and Marketing and Awareness.

Although interrupted by the 2020 pandemic and change in leadership, from 2017 to 2021 CCBEF produced **Expedition Blue** under the Marketing and Awareness action item, and **WaterWORKS** Career Day under the Workforce Development action item. Both initiatives involved multiple collaborative partners.

In 2023, CCBEF brought WaterWORKS back after a three-year hiatus and hosted the first **Big Blue Conference**.



Waypoints are part of **Expedition Blue**, the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce’s initiative to build a sense of pride and identity in our water economy, and to encourage responsible blue economy entrepreneurship and employment. Waypoints were funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Seaport Economic Council.



## WaterWORKS 2023

*Cape-Region Blue Economy Career Day*

**WaterWORKS** is a hands-on career showcase connecting high school students to blue economy and STEM career opportunities in our region. At WaterWORKS, college-bound, certificate-bound, and workforce-bound high school students experienced first-hand the many blue economy jobs and career paths available to them through demonstrations, exhibits, interactive displays, and hands-on activities.



The **Big Blue Conference** is the Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation's first conference curated to spark conversations and inspire actions relevant to the vitality of Cape Cod and the surrounding blue economy.



## WaterWORKS 2023

Cape-Region Blue Economy Career Day

On March 14, 2023, the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, CCBEF, Cape Cod Community College, Cape Cod Regional STEM Network, and the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance co-hosted 45 blue economy/STEM businesses and approximately 320 (out of 400 registered) junior and senior high school students for a career day, with featured speaker Sarah Oktay from the Center for Coastal Studies.

WaterWORKS was sponsored by SouthCoast Wind, Steamship Authority, Cape Cod Five, Housing Assistance Corporation, MassHire Cape & Islands Workforce Board, AVANGRID, Beacon Marine Construction, Vineyard Wind, Horsley Witten Group, and the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association.

CCBEF is currently in discussions with Cape Cod Community College to move WaterWORKS to late fall or early winter for greater student impact and to avoid CCBEF crowding two signature events into the spring of each year.



On May 2nd and 3rd the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, CCBEF, Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce, and Plymouth Foundation with support from Avangrid hosted our first blue economy conference at Mass Maritime Academy.

The Big Blue Conference was curated to spark conversations and inspire actions relevant to the vitality of Cape Cod and the surrounding blue economy. From presenters, sponsors, and panelists, Big Blue's 150 attendees heard from 29 different individuals across two days.

The conference was sponsored by AVANGRID, BankFive, Vineyard Wind, New England Aquarium, Steamship Authority, SouthCoast Wind, Cooperative Bank of Cape Cod, Kandy Korner, Eldredge & Bourne, A.R.C., and Cape Cod Community College.

Discussions at the 2024 Big Blue Conference will focus on electrification. With electric buses, ferries, and passenger airplanes all on the horizon, in addition to proposed microgrids forming and offshore wind farms rising, it makes sense to highlight the trend and how "going electric" impacts our regional economy and the environment.

*Big Blue, It's Electric*



## Developing Partnerships

Organizational partnerships have emerged organically as CCBEF is seen as an active foundation across the region.

In preparation for the Big Blue Conference, the Cape Cod Chamber hired **Pierce-Cote** under a 12-month contract on behalf of CCBEF for PR and marketing direction. As a result of their work, Pierce-Cote arranged several media members to attend and cover the Big Blue Conference.

CCBEF was approached as an internship partner for **MassHire Career Center**. One or two individuals, if matched with CCBEF, will work with Katy in the office for 5 weeks over the summer for up to 25 hours per week. Interns are paid by MassHire Career Center. Interns would work under the tutelage of **Sundae Social Marketing** and **Pierce-Cote** to develop a first full draft of a CCBEF marketing plan, including updated Profiles in Blue.

The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, CCBEF, **EforAll Cape Cod**, and **Love Live Local** applied for the **Mass Growth Capital Corp Small Business Technical Assistant** grant together. If funded, CCBEF will receive \$7,500 toward the next WaterWORKS and the Big Blue Conference. Grant proposal stipulates that WaterWORKS would include an “entrepreneurs” breakfast to coincide with students’ morning assembly. Entrepreneurs would have the same opportunity as students to speak with exhibitors. The grant proposal also stipulates that winners of the EforAll Cape Cod’s Blue Economy Pitch Contest will display their business ideas as exhibits at the Big Blue Conference.



## Future of the Board

In November of this year, 5 out of the 6 existing CCBEF directors’ terms end. The existing board should 1) express if he/she wishes to remain on the board or move to an “advisory committee”, 2) nominate potential candidates for board of directors by making introductions to Katy or the CCBEF President Gene Curry, and 3) express if someone from his/her organization should take his/her place on the CCBEF board of directors.

Next steps include creating a list of potential future board members and list of blue economy advisors. CCBEF executive board members and Cape Cod Chamber staff will then review all nominees and propose a short list of candidates. Each candidate should submit a resume and a vote will be held by the existing CCBEF board.

New and existing CCBEF board members will be welcomed by an in-person CCBEF Board orientation and celebration in November 2023.



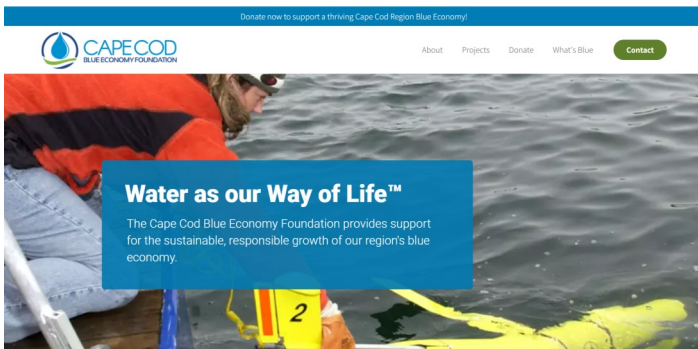


## Digital Presence

CCBEF currently maintains two separate websites: [bluecapecod.org](http://bluecapecod.org) and [expeditionblue.org](http://expeditionblue.org). Annual costs are over \$3,000 combined and paid for by the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce. Analytics on both sites are low, with the average user staying on the site for 1min 15secs on [bluecapecod.org](http://bluecapecod.org) and 48secs on [expeditionblue.org](http://expeditionblue.org) (averages taken over 90 day period).

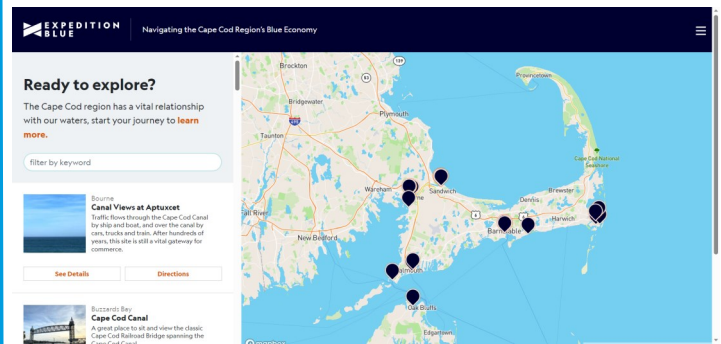
Both sites remain mostly unchanged since launching. A rejuvenation is overdue.

To increase visitors to both sites, CCBEF plans on updating both sites. Moving forward, both sites will focus on unique audiences to further distinguish the two entities. The goal is to make “Expedition Blue” a visitor-focused, multi-organization project and “Blue Cape Cod” home to CCBEF’s work in education and economic development .



The site [bluecapecod.org](http://bluecapecod.org) will be updated to serve academic and business-focused users. The site will build on the momentum created by CCBEF events like WaterWORKS. CCBEF also proposes changing the URL to [capecodblueeconomy.org](http://capecodblueeconomy.org).

@capecodblueeconomy has 432 Instagram followers.



Expedition Blue Waypoints across Cape Cod and the Islands are marked with metal etched signage that includes specific URLs that point to [expeditionblue.org](http://expeditionblue.org). Updates will maintain these URLs but feature more co-branding with the Cape Cod Chamber. Overall, the site updates will lean heavily on “visitor” experiences and an introduction to the Cape Cod Blue Economy.

@expedition\_blue has 154 Instagram followers and 799 Facebook followers,.



## Looking Forward

CCBEF is ready to evolve. Coming out of a highly focused grant-driven phase, CCBEF is now entering into a wider field of possibilities as an epicenter for Blue Economy initiatives along the northeast coastline of the United States. Now is a great time to make strategic changes.

**Annual Sponsorship Model:** Proposal to adopt an annual sponsorship model instead of event-to-event. Develop benefits and launch in lead-up to a digital relaunch. AVANGRID, SouthCoast Wind, Vineyard Wind, Steamship Authority, Cape Cod Community College, and MassHire have all sponsored both CCBEF events over the past six months. Bundling sponsorships between these events yielded greater investment from individual organizations and stronger professional relationships.

**Fiscal Year Start Adjustment:** Proposal to adjust CCBEF fiscal year from January 1st through December 31st to July 1st through June 30th. The July fiscal year aligns with the Cape Cod Chamber's fiscal schedule. Change in fiscal year would benefit chamber staff responsible for financial upkeep. This process requires assistance from financial experts.

**Brand Architecture:** CCBEF's overall branding can be updated by Carol McLeod Design, who created the Big Blue Conference logo. Updates to the brand will help others identify events and programs as CCBEF through custom fonts, color palette, and updated iconography using some existing design concepts.

**Implementation Plan Review:** To best move our mission forward, the CCBEF board and Cape Cod Chamber staff will hold an implementation plan review session to determine successes, missed opportunities, and future possibilities.



*Water as Our Way of Life*