

About the

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership



Our History

In 1990, Casco Bay was designated an "estuary of national significance" and included in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program, which protects nationally significant estuaries threatened by pollution, development or overuse.

As a result of that designation, the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) was formed with the mission of preserving the ecological integrity of Casco Bay and ensuring compatible human uses of the Bay's resources through public stewardship and effective management.

The partnership includes local, state and federal government organizations, nonprofits, local businesses, citizens, universities and more.

Our Work

CBEP supports projects to conserve and restore habitat, manage stormwater, monitor water quality, reduce toxic contamination, and promote active stewardship. We assist our partners and communities by:

- Providing financial support
- Catalyzing project development and implementation
- Collecting scientific data and supporting environmental monitoring
- Providing technical support and assistance
- Informing decision- and policy-makers
- Producing reports and publications
- Facilitating communication and coordination
- Encouraging citizen involvement and awareness

The Watershed

The Casco Bay watershed comprises 986 square miles, stretching from the mountains near Bethel to the coastal waters of Phippsburg and Cape Elizabeth. Home to nearly 20 percent of Maine's population, the watershed contains 42 municipalities, including some of the state's largest and fastest-growing towns.

The watershed contains major lakes, including Sebago Lake — the state's second largest — and the source of drinking water for many area residents. Also within the watershed are several significant river systems, including the Presumpscot, Stroudwater, Royal, and Fore.

Casco Bay is dotted with roughly 785 islands, islets, and exposed ledges. Nationally recognized for its diversity, the Bay supports an astounding 850 species of marine life, and contains about 8,200 acres of eelgrass beds.



The work of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership is guided by the Casco Bay Plan, which identifies five key goals for watershed protection:

1. Minimize pollution loading from stormwater and CSOs
2. Open and protect shellfish beds and swimming beaches
3. Protect and restore habitat
4. Reduce toxic pollution
5. Promote responsible stewardship

Our Partners

Collaboration is central to all of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership's efforts. It helps reduce conflicts, avoid redundancy, and reduce the cost of environmental protection. A board of local stakeholders - drawn from state and municipal governments, the private sector, nonprofit organizations and citizen stewards - relies on the best available data to guide management decisions throughout the 986 square miles of the Casco Bay watershed.

Some of our partners are:

State, Federal Agencies

Maine State Planning Office
Maine Department of Conservation
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Maine Department of Marine Resources
Maine Sea Grant
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Municipalities

City of Portland
City of South Portland
City of Westbrook
Town of Brunswick
Town of Scarborough
Town of Windham
And the other 36 municipalities in the watershed

Nonprofit Organizations

Casco Bay Island Development Association
Coastal Enterprises Institute
Friends of Casco Bay
Friends of the Presumpscot River
Gulf of Maine Council
Lakes Environmental Association
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
New Meadows River Watershed Project
Presumpscot River Watch

Business and Public Sector

Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District
Greater Portland Council of Governments
Maine Marine Trade Association
Portland Water District

Educational Institutions

Bates College
Bowdoin College
Casco Bay area K-12 schools
Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine

Protecting & restoring the ecological integrity of the Casco Bay watershed



The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership works to preserve the ecological integrity of Casco Bay and to ensure compatible human uses of the Bay's resources, through public stewardship and effective management.