



Casco Bay Currents: Summer 2015

Mon, Nov 16, 2015 at 4:51 PM



Summer 2015

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Welcome to the electronic edition of the *Casco Bay Currents*, the newsletter for the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP)!

Casco Bay Currents was published in paper form in the early years of the Partnership. This revived, electronic version is geared toward showcasing the efforts of people and partners in protecting the health of Casco Bay. It is an avenue to tell others about activities and accomplishments on behalf of Casco Bay, and to learn about how members of the regional community are contributing to the health of the Bay.

We welcome content ideas and submissions. Please send suggestions for feature stories, short updates, and listings for upcoming events (one paragraph) to cbep@usm.maine.edu.



Casco Bay Plan Update

CBEP is working with partners to revise the *Casco Bay Plan*, adopted in 1996 and updated in 2004, which established priority focus areas for the work of CBEP and partner organizations in Casco Bay. The current *Plan* focuses on five overarching issues, which were identified through extensive research and public involvement, that were identified as critical for protecting and restoring Casco Bay. The 2006 *Plan* update process reaffirmed CBEP's belief that the *Plan* should continually evolve and be periodically revisited to address the changing needs of Casco Bay's environment and the development of new technologies and information.

Once again, the time has come to update the plan. In order to do this CBEP has been holding working group discussions as part of a planning effort to determine priorities, strategies, and actions in



Feature Story: USM Media Students Create Casco Bay Stories

Casco Bay Stories, a project launched by CBEP in 2014, is focused on gathering engaging stories about what makes Casco Bay special and why a healthy bay is important to the people who live and visit here. In doing so, we encourage people to reflect on how the Bay has shaped their lives and how it has changed over time. Stories focus on Casco Bay and its watershed, which includes the lakes and rivers that eventually empty into the Bay. [To view the new Casco Bay Stories videos click here.](#)

During their final semester in the USM Communications and Media Studies program, graduating seniors work in small teams to produce documentary films for local non-profits. This hands-on capstone project provides the students the opportunity to use the skills they learned throughout their college career. After researching, planning, working closely with organizations, and executing the production, the films are showcased at the end of the semester.

This spring, a group of seniors selected CBEP as a partner for their capstone project. Graduating seniors Joseph Kendrick, Weston Masi, Jenna Palladino, and Grace Waldron created their own Casco Bay Stories by interviewing and engaging with some of the people who

the development of the new *Casco Bay Plan*.

Click on the links below for the notes from those initial discussions:

[Habitat Working Group](#)

[Living Organisms Working Group](#)

[Water Quality Working Group](#)

[Climate/Resilience Working Group](#)

[Community/People/Land Use Working Group](#)

[Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee \(STAC\)](#)

To view the original *Casco Bay Plan* or the 2006 *Casco Bay Plan* update:

[1996 Casco Bay Plan](#)

[2006 Casco Bay Plan Update.](#)

work, live, and play in Casco Bay. The students chose to focus on Casco Bay island history, the Portland Water District, Portland Harbor Fish Market, and the Cliff Island ACE program. CBEP Director Curtis Bohlen and Island Institute Fellow Erin Love were also interviewed. The four stories will be released throughout the summer on the Casco Bay Stories [website](#).

Partner Spotlight: Casco Bay Monitoring Station at SMCC



Left to right: Marc Edmond, Shawn Shellito, and Joe Salisbury from UNH. Location: Southern Maine Community College, South Portland Photo: Curtis Bohlen, CBEP

On April 23 this spring, a team of scientists led by Dr. Joseph Salisbury of the University of New Hampshire installed sophisticated pH sensors from a wharf at the Southern Maine Community College in South Portland, as part of a regional study of coastal and ocean acidification coordinated through the Northeast Coastal Acidification Network. In addition to pH, the sensors will continuously log carbon dioxide, conductivity, temperature, and dissolved oxygen levels at this fixed location and integrate the data with other stations located in estuaries in the Gulf of Maine. The study is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership,



Casco Bay Naturalist on Long Island

This summer, the **Island Institute** is supporting a Casco Bay Naturalist intern. Hattie Train, this year's intern, is a senior at Cheverus High School and native Long Islander. Throughout the summer she will be learning about the ecology of Long Island, Maine, and will provide weekly environmental programming to the public. In the fall she will be attending the University of Maine with plans to study marine science.

and together with the historical nutrient and water quality data gathered by Friends of Casco Bay, will help assess the threat of coastal acidification in Casco Bay while providing a baseline data set of current conditions.

Partner Spotlight: Friends of the Presumpscot River Release New Study



Alewife swimming up Mill Brook to spawn in Highland Lake (2014)

Photo: Matt Craig, CBEP

Friends of the Presumpscot River (FOPR) recently commissioned a study by economist and FOPR board member Dr. Rachel Bouvier that looks at the economic impacts of restoring native migratory fish, such as alewife, blueback herring, and shad, to Maine's rivers and streams. Among the report's key findings: enhanced property values, increased tourism revenue, and a greater sense of civic pride associated with restored fish runs. The report, *The Economic Value of a Restored Fishery on the Presumpscot River*, is available online at FOPR's [website](#), and summarizes studies from around Maine that highlight the values associated with river restoration that don't always make headlines, but translate into real economic benefits for nearby towns and cities.



CBEP Welcomes New Intern

Rachael Sclafani is interning with CBEP this summer through the EPA's Region 1 Ocean and Coastal Protection Unit. Rachael, an undergraduate at Dickinson College, is double majoring in biology and environmental science. The Long Island, New York native has been awarded an EPA-GRO (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Greater Research Opportunities) fellowship grant for environmental research which she will use to assess the health of salt marshes. The grant, given to only 34 students nationwide each year, awards students \$50,000 over two academic years and will give her the opportunity to conduct research outside the classroom.

News:



Portland Stormwater Fee

The newly approved stormwater service charge is set to begin January 2016, in order to allow Portland residents adequate time to prepare for the fees. All tax payer and non-tax payer properties with 400 or more square feet impervious surfaces, such as rooftops and parking lots, are responsible for the charges, including government properties. However, all islands except for Peaks Island are exempt from the charges due to the limited stormwater and sewer services provided. Public roads, sidewalks, and railroads are also exempt from the fees.

Along with the new charges come changes to the way that stormwater is billed and collected. The City of Portland will be handling collection and billing directly, rather than the Portland Water District, which will continue to bill for water and wastewater. Both residential and commercial properties will pay the same rate of \$6.00 per 1,200 square feet of impervious surface. Those who implement management practices that reduce stormwater runoff can earn credits that will reduce their bills.



Maine's Wildlife Action Plan Revision

Photo: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Following a nearly year-long effort to inventory, assess, and prioritize threats facing Maine's non-game, non-threatened/endangered wildlife, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW), is nearing completion of the *State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)* revision. CBEP staff Matt Craig has been an active participant in the process, particularly the Marine/Coastal working committee, which has helped to illustrate shared habitat priorities at a both a Statewide and a Casco Bay scale. The revision expands focus on coastal and marine SGCNs, identifies habitat stressors, and points to priority actions to enhance SGCNs and their habitats, including diadromous fish.

The SWAP must be completed by October 1, 2015, and IFW is seeking final public comments this summer. Interested parties can find current information about Maine's Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCNs) on the plan's [website](#).

Upcoming Events

July 17, 2015

Maine Beaches Conference

7:30 am - 5:00 pm

Southern Maine
Community College, South
Portland

September 12, 2015

Portland GreenFest

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Monument Square,
Portland

October 13, 2015

State of the Bay 2015

Double Tree Hotel, South
Portland



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