

# Recent Accomplishments



Through collaboration with its partners, the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) mobilizes collective action to strengthen the Bay's ecological and economic vitality, fostering a shared commitment to Casco Bay. It focuses scientific expertise and financial resources on helping watershed communities address regional challenges such as water pollution, habitat degradation and adaptation to climate change. Casco Bay is one of 28 "estuaries of national significance" designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Dr. Curtis Bohlen, Director: "The following CBEP accomplishments highlight the commitment of our many partners to ensuring the long-term health of Casco Bay."

## Protect, Restore and Enhance Key Habitats that Sustain Ecological Health

### **Land Conservation and Habitat Protection**

CBEP continues to provide **Habitat Protection Fund** grants in support of permanent land conservation in the region. CBEP funding is targeted at sites with significant wildlife habitat and a strong connection to the health of aquatic ecosystems. In the past five years, CBEP invested \$142,950 in support of land conservation efforts, facilitating protection of 2,696 acres of habitat, for an average cost of only \$53 per protected acre.

CBEP funds represent a small fraction of total project costs, but are nevertheless key in facilitating land conservation. For example, in 2016 CBEP provided seed funding to the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust to create a new 68-acre Otter Brook Preserve, which contains valuable wetland and upland habitat for a variety of species and drains into important marine habitat for shell and other fisheries as well as wading birds and water fowl.

## Reduce Nutrient Pollution and its Impacts, including Coastal Acidification

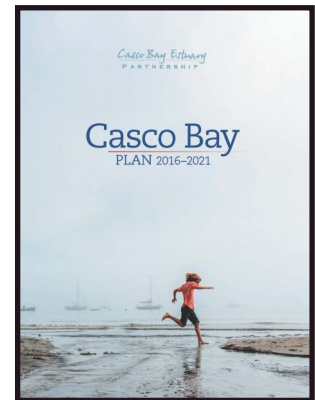
### **Casco Bay Nutrient Council and Advisory Network**

Nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus are essential for plant growth. But when too many nutrients enter rivers, streams and Casco Bay, they fuel the growth of algae blooms and create conditions that are harmful for fish, shellfish and other marine organisms. Nutrient pollution is likely to increase in the coming decades with population growth, changes in land use, and the impacts of climate change.

In order to address this rising threat, CBEP has convened a **Nutrient Council** to evaluate management options for limiting nutrients to Casco Bay. The Council includes representatives from local, regional and state government, universities, and non-profits. This body of scientists and policy-makers will continue to learn about how nutrients affect the Bay, and will study the costs and potential benefits of different approaches to limit nutrients entering the Bay.

The work of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership is guided by the *Casco Bay Plan 2016-2021*, which outlines the following goals:

1. *Protect, restore and enhance key habitats that sustain ecological health*
2. *Reduce nutrient pollution and its impacts, including coastal acidification*
3. *Foster resilient communities and their connections to Casco Bay*
4. *Mobilize collective knowledge and resources to support Casco Bay*



Otter Brook Preserve, Harpswell



Green Algae Mat

Mary Ann Nahf Photo

ME Dept. of Marine Resources Photo

# Foster Resilient Communities and their Connections to Casco Bay

## Community Grants Program

The goal of the Casco Bay Community Grants program is to encourage new partnerships and innovative projects that engage communities with Casco Bay and its watershed, and that are tied in with the goals of the Casco Bay Plan.

In the last two years, CBEP has awarded thirteen small grants to land trusts, schools, water quality organizations, municipal committees, business alliances, and community associations. CBEP funding has leveraged other sources to support:

- Experiential programs in schools;
- Local festivals focused on water quality and habitat issues;
- Educational partnerships between schools, municipalities and community groups;
- Multimedia stories;
- Citizen science and volunteer projects;
- and other innovative initiatives.

## Mobilize Collective Knowledge and Resources to Support Casco Bay

### Casco Bay Stories—“Wharfside”

**Wharfside** is a new collection of audiovisual stories from Portland Harbor’s working waterfront. The Wharfside collection includes interviews with Portland Tugboat operators, the owner of Widgery Wharf, Coast Guard staff that maintains Maine lighthouses, a deckhand on the Peaks Island ferry, and many others. The series inspires us to reflect on the value of the working harbor to our region’s economy, environment and sustainable future.

The Wharfside series was funded by Waterfront Alliance and CBEP. The stories were all produced by Galen Koch, with photography by Justin Levesque and Jenny Rebecca Nelson. You can find the stories at [www.wharfside.org](http://www.wharfside.org).

This series is the newest of CBEP’s “Casco Bay Stories,” interviews with people about what makes Casco Bay special and clean water important. The narratives encourage people to reflect on how the Bay has shaped their lives and how it has changed over time.

Look for more Casco Bay Stories in the future!



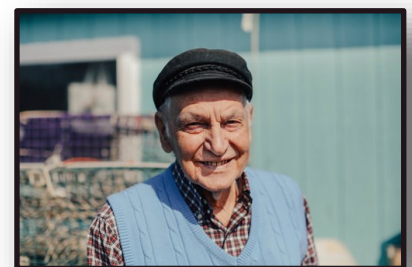
Royal River Alliance poster

Royal River Alliance event celebrating World Fish Migration Day. A 2016 Community Grant recipient



Jenny Rebecca Nelson Photo

Portland Tugboat



Justin Levesque Photo

Leland Merrill, Widgery Wharf, Portland

*Protecting and restoring the ecological integrity of the Casco Bay watershed*



The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership works to protect and restore the water quality and fish and wildlife habitat of the Casco Bay ecosystem, while ensuring compatible human uses.