
News from Casco Bay Estuary Partnership

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Casco Bay Currents, an email newsletter of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership

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Winter 2017



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Welcome

To the electronic edition of *Casco Bay Currents*, the newsletter for the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP).

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New Casco Bay Stories



Leland Merrill, Widgery Wharf. Photo by Justin Levesque.

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership and the Waterfront Alliance would like to announce a series of audio/visual stories, called *Wharfside*, that illuminate the many facets of Portland Harbor's working waterfront. Learn about the Coast Guard staff in charge of keeping the lights burning at 22 lighthouses in Maine,

spend a day on the water with SailMaine instructors and students on Casco Bay, meet a 92 year-old resident of Portland who has worked on Widgey Wharf for the past 66 years, and other stories of Portland Harbor's working waterfront.

Wharfside stories were produced by Galen Koch, and photography is by Justin Levesque and Jenny Rebecca Nelson. You can find all the Wharfside stories on the [Wharfside site](#) and soon on the [Casco Bay Stories site](#).

Partner Profile: Friends of Casco Bay "Nitrogen Nabbing" Project

CBEP awarded the Friends of Casco Bay (FOCB) a Community Grant in 2016 to launch a "Nitrogen Nabbing" public education and volunteer monitoring effort. Conducted in partnership with the Maine DEP and City of South Portland, the program aimed at educating people about the role of excess nitrogen in the acidification of our coastal waters.



This water sampling "flash mob" helped FOCB and Maine DEP better understand nitrogen levels in Portland Harbor. On a rainy day in July 2016, 97 volunteers braved the weather and hung out over docks or trudged through mud to collect jars of seawater. These water samples were analyzed for total nitrogen.

Part of the rationale for launching this effort was to inform and refine DEP's model for nitrogen inputs as it develops nitrogen standards. One of the lessons learned was that large amounts of nitrogen enter the Bay through small urban streams and brooks.

You can learn more about this project on the FOCB website [here](#).

2017 Community Grants Announced

CBEP announced its 2017 Casco Bay Community Grant awards. Six grant awards were made, for a total of \$10,000, for projects in Brunswick, Chebeague Island, Harpswell, Phippsburg and Portland. Through the Casco Bay Community Grants program, CBEP seeks to encourage new partnerships and innovative projects that engage communities with Casco Bay and its watershed, and that are tied in with the *2016 Casco Bay Plan*.

The following 2017 Community Grant awards were made:

- **Brunswick Junior High School**, *Connect Casco Bay*: A seventh-grade team will engage in a four-week expeditionary learning unit to help students understand the fragility of Casco Bay and their duty to care for it.
- **Chebeague Island Community Association (CICA)**, *Chebeague Island Aquaculture Festival*: A one-day festival on the island will educate community members about aquaculture farms in the community, as well as raise awareness of the importance of quality to these operations.
- **Friends School of Portland**, *Intergenerational Investigation of the Casco Bay Watershed*: Students will learn about and test water quality, and interview seniors about their connection to Casco Bay.
- **Harpswell Heritage Land Trust**, *Engaging Youth with a Junior Ranger*

Program: An initiative to engage local youth and families with Harpswell's coastal environment.

- **Kennebec Estuary Land Trust**, *Community Conservation of a Phippsburg Clam Flat:* This project will bring together community partners to educate students about important natural resources and actions they can take to improve these resources.
- **Maine Coast Fishermen's Association**, *Climate Change through the Eyes of Shellfish Harvesters:* A video will explore how environmental changes have impacted the Harpswell shellfishing industry.



Otter Brook, Harpswell. CBEP provided funding to the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust in 2016 to help protect the Otter Brook corridor, a vital wildlife travel corridor that drains into important marine habitat for fisheries and waterfowl.

The CBEP 2017 Habitat Protection Fund will be announced shortly.

CBEP will be offering grants from \$500 to \$10,000 per project to support the permanent protection of targeted habitats in the Casco Bay Watershed. Currently, a total of \$25,000 is available for the 2017 grant round. Check the **CBEP website** over the next few weeks for that announcement.

Sediment Assessment Report Completed



Since 1991, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership has sponsored a monitoring program to track the concentrations of certain pollutants in sediments throughout Casco Bay to answer the following questions:

- What are the concentrations of chemicals in Casco Bay sediments?
- Are chemical concentrations in sediment high enough to harm marine life?
- How have chemical concentrations in sediment in the Bay changed over time?

The completed fact sheet and report present and interpret the results from sediment monitoring conducted from 1991 through 2011, the most recent year for which data are available. **The sediment data show that concentrations for legacy pollutants tend to be declining throughout the Bay.**

CBEP's sediment monitoring program was associated with one of CBEP's priorities for watershed protection in the original Casco Bay Plan (1996; revised in 2006): to reduce toxic pollution to the Bay. Based, in part, on these monitoring results, CBEP's most recent Casco Bay Plan (2016) shifts priority from some of the legacy pollutants (e.g. DDT and PCBs) to ongoing and emerging sources of chemicals to the Bay (e.g. stormwater and nutrients).

You can find the full Sediment Assessment Fact Sheet on our website [here](#) and

the full report will be available soon on our website.



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