

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.

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.

## Our Work

CBEP assists 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 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 connection to Casco Bay*
4. *Mobilize collective knowledge and resources to support Casco Bay*

## 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 Casco Bay watershed.

Some of our partners (not an exhaustive list!):

### State, Federal Agencies

Maine Geological Survey  
Maine DACF  
Maine Department of Environmental Protection  
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife  
Maine Department of Marine Resources  
Maine Department of Transportation  
Maine Sea Grant  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NERACOOS  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

### Municipalities

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

### Citizens

### Nongovernmental Organizations

Casco Bay Island Development Association  
Friends of Casco Bay  
Friends of the Presumpscot River  
Gulf of Maine Council  
Gulf of Maine Research Institute  
Island Institute  
Maine Coast Heritage Trust  
Maine Rivers  
New Meadows Watershed Partnership  
Presumpscot River Watch  
Regional land trusts  
Royal River Alliance  
The Nature Conservancy

### Business and Public Sector

Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Greater Portland Council of Governments  
Long Creek Watershed Management District  
Midcoast Economic Development District  
Portland Water District  
Waterfront Alliance

### Educational Institutions

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

*Protecting & 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.