
Casco Bay Currents Spring 2021

Thu, Apr 8, 2021 at 11:28 AM

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



Spring 2021



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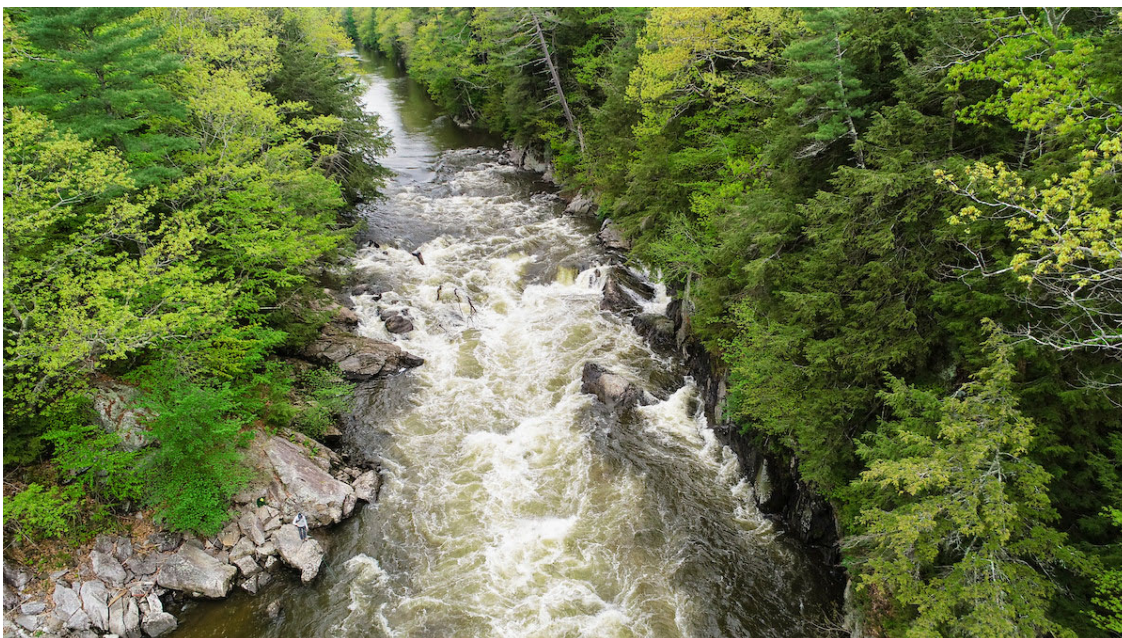


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Welcome,

**to the Spring 2021 edition of *Casco Bay Currents*, the newsletter
for Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP).**

You are receiving this quarterly email newsletter because you signed up for our newsletters in the past. If you wish to unsubscribe, please click the link at the bottom of the newsletter.



Aerial View of the Presumpscot River, Portland
@Jerry and Marcy Monkman/[EcoPhotography](#)

Be A Fish Ambassador! And Other Cool Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer with the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust (PRLT) to help conserve, steward, and provide public access to local lands and clean water for current and future generations to enjoy. Please contact Toby Jacobs, Stewardship and Outreach Manager at toby@prlt.org with any additional questions.



1. Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality monitoring volunteers attend a training led by Maine DEP and then collect water samples and data every other Saturday morning from mid-May through mid-September. Sign up as a [Water Quality Monitoring Volunteer here](#) or email toby@prlt.org for more

information.

2. Fish Migration Ambassadors

Thousands of visitors come to see the fish migration at Mill Brook Preserve in Westbrook. As a result, PRLT is starting a new fish migration ambassador program. Ambassadors will engage with visitors at two fish viewing pools. No prior skills are needed and PRLT will provide training. Volunteer shifts will be late May to mid-June and hours are flexible. Sign up as an [Ambassador here](#) or email toby@prlt.org for more information.

3. Fish Count Volunteers

Mill Brook supports the largest migratory fish run in Casco Bay, as alewife travel from the ocean to Highland Lake. Research on this run is ongoing, and it is important to have accurate data to learn more. You can support these efforts by becoming a Fish Count volunteer. Volunteers count fish at the Highland Lake Dam in Westbrook for 30 minutes at a time. [Click here to sign up](#), or email toby@prlt.org for more information.

Photo: Jerry Monkman, [ecophotography.com](#)

Grants & Other Resources

Maine Geological Survey has released the 2nd edition of the "[Maine Coastal Property Owner's Guide to Erosion, Flooding, and Other Hazards](#)." This edition provides new information to help educate coastal property owners about Maine's coastline; hazards such as sea level rise, flooding and erosion; and potential mitigation and adaptation strategies to deal with those hazards.

ME Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry & Maine Coastal Program: [Coastal Communities Grant Program](#), deadline 4/15.

This competitive grant program provides funds to towns and regional organizations for projects in the areas of public access, water quality improvement, storm hazard resiliency, and marine-related economic development.

ME Department of Environmental Protection: [Grants for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Projects Watershed-Based Plan Development](#), deadline 4/28.

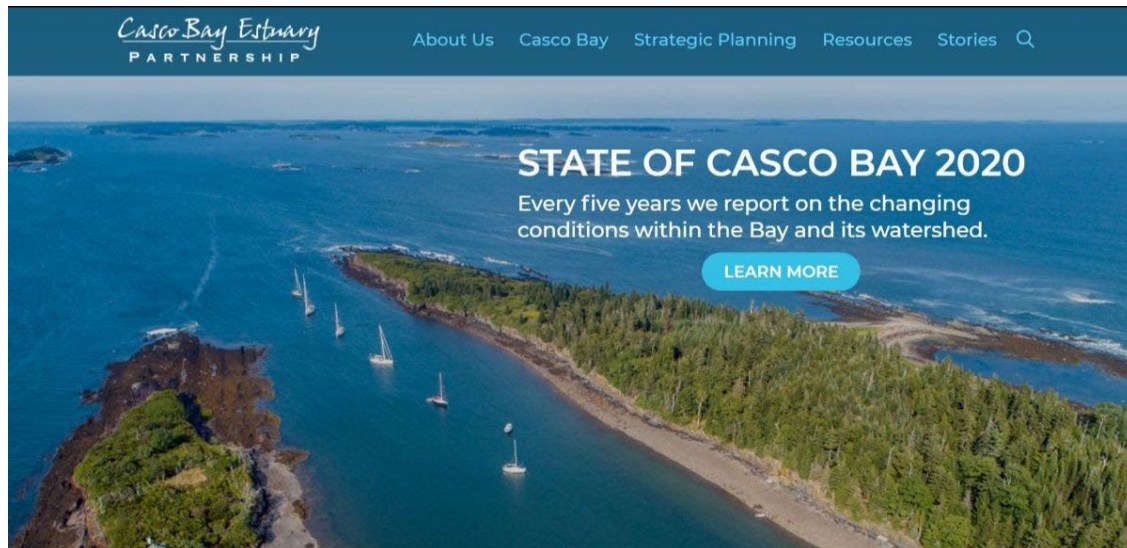
Maine DEP is seeking applications for projects to help communities develop watershed-based plans to restore nonpoint source (NPS) impaired water bodies or to protect water bodies threatened by NPS pollution. Grants will be for watersheds named on DEP's Nonpoint Source Priority Watersheds Lists.

ME Coastal Program: [Shore and Harbor Planning Grants](#), deadline 5/3.

This program provides funding to promote sound waterfront planning, harbor management, and balanced development of shore and harbor areas to improve marine infrastructure and ensure access to the shore. Grants of up to \$30,000 are available for municipal and regional projects in coastal towns.

US EPA: [Environmental Justice Small Grants Program](#), deadline 5/7.

These grants support community-driven projects designed to engage, educate, and empower communities to better understand local environmental and public health issues and develop strategies for addressing those issues, building consensus in the community, and setting community priorities. *To promote equitable accessibility to EPA grant funding and to assist small entities, approximately half of the total available funding under this announcement is intended to be reserved for small non-profit organizations as defined in the announcement.



Check out CBEP's new and improved [website](#)

[Meet CBEP Intern Zachary May](#)



Welcome to CBEP's newest intern and world traveler, Zachary May!

Zach will be assisting CBEP with projects related to environmental monitoring and nutrient management in Casco Bay, including investigation of monitoring of nutrient loading from freshwater sources.

He is a first-year Ph.D. student under Maine EPSCoR's [Maine-eDNA](#) program. Environmental DNA is a conservation tool in which scientists can count fish and other animals by collecting a small sample of water. Environmental DNA fingerprinting can reveal species of fish that were recently in the water, and resulting data can show where, when and how species and groups of organisms have interacted with each other and their coastal habitats.

Zach's thesis is aimed at understanding the strengths of eDNA methods compared to more traditional surveys such as fish seining, trawling, and acoustic surveys. As part of this work, Zach is working with Dr. Rachel Lasley-Rasher of USM and the [Gulf of Maine Research Institute \(GMRI\)](#) on the Casco Bay Aquatic Systems Survey (CBASS) to survey fish, zooplankton, and water quality across twelve sites in Casco Bay.

Zach graduated with a Bachelor of Science from University of New England in 2012. As a student, he worked as a fisheries observer in Alaska's Bering Sea

and the Gulf of Alaska collecting data for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Marine Fisheries Service. Zach went on to obtain a Master of Science in Ecology and Natural Resources from St. Cloud State University.

2021 Casco Bay Community Grant Awards



Photo: Students collecting photo evidence of macroinvertebrates (A 2018 Community Grant project carried out by [Lakes Environmental Association](#)).

CBEP's Community Grants Program supports new partnerships and innovative projects that engage communities with Casco Bay and its watershed. Supporting new and existing partnerships centered on protecting our coastal resources has a ripple effect throughout Casco Bay.

The 2021 projects:

Cape Elizabeth Land Trust (CELT), "*Picture Posts for Community-Focused Climate Change Education.*" CELT staff, working with Cape Elizabeth schools, the Town of Cape Elizabeth Conservation Committee, and other volunteers, will create and install four "picture posts," at Pond Cove, Spurwink Marsh, and other locations. Picture posts are simple installations where citizen scientists with a camera or smartphone monitor and document changes in local ecosystems, particularly as it pertains to climate change impacts. According to Philip Mathieu, CELT's Education Coordinator, the project will "create opportunities for community members to learn about local ecosystems, participate in citizen science, and examine the material effects of climate change." CELT will provide a project template for other communities interested

in starting a picture post project.

Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (HHLT), "*Pocket Naturalist Guide to the Harpswell Intertidal Zone*." HHLT will create and produce a Pocket Naturalist Guide that is specific to Harpswell's intertidal organisms and habitats. Julia McLeod, HHLT Outreach Director, states, "Pocket Naturalist guides are easy to stick in your back pocket when embarking on a shoreline adventure. Given their visual nature, they are great for children. Having these guides as a resource would encourage people of all ages to connect with and learn about Harpswell's marine organisms and intertidal habitats." HHLT will share species lists and a free copy of the guide with educators from around the Casco Bay region. New illustrations of species, created by HHLT, will be available for other organizations, thus making it less expensive to create a similar guide.

Town of Harpswell Conservation Commission, "*Preparing Citizens for the Impact of Sea Level Rise on Private Roads*." Planning and preparing for sea level rise is a complex and engineering challenge for most private road owners. The conservation commission, with support from Harpswell Heritage Land Trust and private road associations, will organize and host an interactive webinar that will be recorded and posted on the Town website, and will be available to other Casco Bay communities. The project's objective is to present practical information that can be used to inform residents on private roads in Harpswell and other communities about what they can do to prepare their road to be resilient to rising tides and storm surge, including detailed information on road preparation, replacement of culverts and information on funding opportunities as they become available.

Congratulations to all organizations!

SAVE THE DATE
Casco Bay Coastal Academy:
It All Begins with Habitat (Virtual Workshop)



Photo: Katrina Van Dusen, Freeport Conservation Trust

WHAT: Find out how **Beginning with Habitat** can support your town's conservation goals by providing the most comprehensive information on the location and quality of waters, wetlands, plant and animal habitats, and large unfragmented landscapes statewide. Learn about their conservation tools available to you and how to search in their online map viewer and database.

Presenters: Amanda Cross, Program Coordinator, and Michelle Warner, Cartographer, Beginning with Habitat, Maine Division of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

WHO: Conservation commission members, planning board members, other municipal board members, municipal staff, interested citizens

WHEN: Thursday, May 6, 3:00— 4:30 p.m.

WHERE: Via Zoom - Stay Tuned for Registration Information through e-news and on the CBEP [website](#)

FMI: Contact: victoria.boundy@maine.edu



CBEP and Partner Events

- **Month of April: Virtual Urban Runoff 5K** (link to register). Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District.
- **April 14 and April 29, 4:00-6:00 PM: Spring YardScaping: Healthy Lawncare Made Easy Webinars.** Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District.
- **May 20, 25, and 27: 31st Annual Nonpoint Source Conference** (virtual). Coordinated by NEIWPC in partnership with member states and EPA.

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