



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2023 Casco Bay Community Grant Awards Announced

Portland, ME – Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) has announced its 2023 Casco Bay Community Grants awards. The 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 positive ripple effect throughout Casco Bay. CBEP awarded \$30,000 to nine recipients, for the following projects throughout the Casco Bay Watershed:

Cape Elizabeth Land Trust (CELT), *“Place-Based Middle School Unit on Birds: Migration, Adaptation, Impacts of Climate Change.”* Students will learn about the importance of proper land stewardship via Next Generation Science Standards curriculum, fieldwork, data collection, hosting nature walks with families, and culminating with a 3-D project. Outdoor activities will take place at the CELT property at Turkey Hill Farm.

Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District (CCSWCD), *“Raising Brook Trout in the Classroom.”* The grant will support the expansion of the TroutKids program, by purchasing materials for students to raise brook trout in the classroom and funding to train teacher and coordinate the field trip release of trout in local waterways.

Town of Cumberland Sustainability Committee (SSC), *“Low-Impact Landscaping for the Health of Casco Bay: Targeted Outreach and Education for Cumberland Neighborhoods.”* Funding will help the SSC promote their “Lawns Gone Wild” workshops on sustainable landscaping and to develop educational online content on reducing nutrient pollution.

Falmouth Land Trust (FLT), *“Nature Backpacks: Fostering the Exploration and Protection of the Casco Bay Watershed.”* FLT will work with Falmouth Memorial Library staff to develop three themed nature backpacks focused on aquatic habitat, wildlife, and plants. These backpacks filled with exploration supplies will be available to library patrons for free, to help get more kids and families outside.

Gorham Middle School, *“Gorham Middle School Community Habitat Monitoring.”* Funds will support the purchase of two monitoring stations that 7th grade students will use on public trails around Gorham Middle School. Students monitor the health of a local pond and the spread of invasive Japanese knotweed and this equipment will allow local citizens to monitor how these sites change over time.

Lakes Environmental Association, *“Woodland Owner Appreciation Day.”* The goal of this outdoor event is to engage with forestland owners and connect them to natural resource professionals around the benefits of maintaining their land in a forested state. The event is held in a working forest under conservation easement in the Sebago Lake Watershed and includes educational walks on a variety of topics with many conservation organizations.

Loon Echo Land Trust (LELT), "*Community-Led Open Space Planning in the Lake Region of Maine.*"

Funding will support a community-led open space planning process in Bridgton as well as the pursuit of open space conservation and planning opportunities in the Town of Casco. LELT hopes to develop a replicable model for community-led open space planning for other Lake Region communities.

Maine Mammals of Maine (MMoME), "*Municipal Outreach and Education about Seal Strandings.*"

The project goal is to increase community and municipal education around seals and seal strandings, which were elevated in Casco Bay during the summer of 2022. Funding will support personnel community engagement and the distribution of educational signage.

Yarmouth Community Services, "*Royal River Park Wetland Naturalization.*"

The Town of Yarmouth will be working with community volunteers to install native plantings at Royal River Park, a park that receives an estimated 30,000 visits annually. The grant will also support interpretive signage on the value of wetlands and native plantings in improving water quality in the Royal River and Casco Bay.

To find out more about the work of CBEP and its partners to protect and restore Casco Bay, go to cascobayestuary.org.

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