

Casco Bay Currents Summer 2023

Mon, Jul 24, 2023 at 9:37 AM



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

Summer 2023



Welcome,

to the Summer 2023 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.

Staff Scientist Search Reopened: Come Work on Behalf of Casco Bay!



We're hiring! The Catherine E. Cutler Institute at the University of Southern Maine is pleased to announce an opening for a full-time Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) **Staff Scientist** to join our dynamic team.

Here is the job description and follow **this link** to apply. All required materials must be submitted by **August 6, 2023**.

Meet Jessica Brunacini!

Dr. Jessica Brunacini joined the Maine Sea Grant team as a Coastal Community Resilience Extension Associate in February 2023. This is a new position that was made possible through a



partnership with Casco Bay Estuary Partnership.

Jessica's work focuses on supporting Maine's coastal communities as they plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change. Specifically, she helps to identify equitable approaches for engaging with underserved and underrepresented communities and directs attention to the social dimensions of building



coastal resilience, with a focus on the needs of socially vulnerable groups. Jessica holds a Ph.D. in Community Sustainability / Environmental Science & Policy from Michigan State University.

Learn how Jessica engaged two southern Maine coastal communities in a "Photovoice" project, an engagement method that is used to explore community knowledge, experience, perceptions, and aspirations. In a Zoom workshop on August 10, Jessica will reflect on her project and share thoughts on ways community groups can apply the same methods to capture the interest of their audience.

Learn more and register here.

Spring 2023 Habitat Protection Fund Awards



Photo: Presumpscot River at the Rivermeadow Natural Conservation project site. Credit: Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) has announced its spring 2023 Habitat Protection Fund awards. With this Fund, CBEP strategically supports local conservation partners in permanently protecting aquatic habitats in the Casco Bay watershed. Funds often serve as seed money for larger grant proposals, and typically pay for early project costs such as appraisals, surveys, and legal fees.

- Cape Elizabeth Land Trust was awarded \$7,000 for acquisition of a 15-acre parcel straddling the Trout Brook watershed and the Scarborough Marsh Focus Area of Ecological Significance.
- CBEP awarded Presumpscot Regional Land Trust (PRLT) \$25,000 for costs associated with the Rivermeadow Nature Conservation Project, which aims to conserve 44 acres near downtown Westbrook, including 3,300 feet of shoreline on the Presumpscot River.
- PRLT was awarded an additional \$10,000 toward the Trout Run
 Conservation Project, which will protect 30 acres in Gorham, including 3,500 feet of stream frontage in the Little River watershed.
- Royal River Conservation Trust was awarded \$25,000 toward acquisition of a conservation easement on a parcel in New Gloucester with significant aquatic habitat values in the Royal River watershed.
- CBEP awarded **Scarborough Land Trust** \$10,000 in support of early project costs for a 17-acre parcel with aquatic habitat values in the Stroudwater River watershed.
- Western Foothills Land Trust was awarded \$20,000 for costs associated with acquisition of over 1,200 acres in Harrison and Waterford, including 170 acres of mapped wetlands and 10,500 feet of frontage on the

Crooked River.

Congratulations to each organization and thank you for your continued efforts to protect the aquatic habitats of the Casco Bay watershed!

River Restoration in the Casco Bay Watershed



A couple of dam removal efforts are currently underway in the watershed. The **Edes Falls Dam** on the Crooked River currently blocks fish passage during low water periods, and Trout Unlimited Sebago Chapter, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Lakes Environmental Association and other partners including CBEP are engaged in planning

discussions to remove most of the dam next year. The Crooked River runs nearly 60 miles and is home to a population of landlocked Atlantic Salmon, and over 90% of their spawning habitat is in Sebago Lake, upstream of the dam. The river is also home to wild brook trout.

Earlier this summer, a coalition of partners removed three dams impeding **Frost Gully Brook**, a tributary to Harraseeket River and Casco Bay in Freeport. Two dams were on property owned by key project partner Freeport Conservation Trust (FCT). "For decades these dams have no longer served any purpose" states Carrie Kinne, Executive Director of FCT, "and the removal of these dams will improve the brook's overall health and connectivity."

"Brook trout will soon be able to move when and where they choose throughout Frost Gully Brook." stated stream restoration specialist and Freeport resident Alex Abbot. The newly free-flowing freshwater environment will decrease stream water temperatures and allow for the free flow of nutrients as well as stream-dwelling vertebrates and invertebrates throughout the watershed.

The Frost Gully Dam restoration project has required the partnership of organizations and individuals including Freeport Conservation Trust, Merrymeeting Bay Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Maine Water Company, US Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, Casco Bay Estuary

Partnership, and stream restoration specialist Alex Abbott.

Read more about the Frost Gully Dam project here.

Photo: Freeport Conservation Trust

Partner Trainings & Other Events

Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) Offerings

Coastal Flooding Meetups - Gulf of Maine Research Institute

Join experts from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and your municipality to learn about sea level rise and contribute your own observational data. GMRI is hosting several meetups in August across multiple coastal communities

- Tuesday, August 1, 2023 South Portland Coastal Meetup: Coastal Cruise (South Portland residents only)
- Tuesday, August 1, 2023 Late Night Coastal Flooding Meetup
- Thursday, August 3, 2023 Low Tide Coastal Meetup: Kettle Cove
- Monday, August 7, 2023 South Portland Coastal Meetup: Willard Beach (South Portland residents only)
- Tuesday, August 29, 2023 South Portland Coastal Meetup: Mill Creek Greenbelt (South Portland residents only)

Check here for more information and to register.

Science at Sunrise: Mussel Bed Mapping Community Science Project

Date: Friday, August 24 Time: 6am - 8am Location: Any beach in the Gulf of Maine

Mussel beds are retreating deeper into the ocean and you can help keep track of them. Just head out to the coast, see if you can find any mussels, take a picture (even if you don't see mussels), and send them to GMRI using **this form. FMI**.

Spot the Difference: The Bering Sea and the Gulf of Maine Date: Tuesday, August 8 Time: 5:30pm - 7:30pm Location: GMRI, 350 Commercial Street, Portland

In their newest **Sea State Series**, GMRI will take a deeper look at the Gulf of Maine ecosystem, its global connections, and our efforts with partners and stakeholders to understand both.

Register here.

Wells Reserve Coastal Training Program Offerings

Photovoice: Engaging Communities through Photos, Narratives, and Discussion, with Dr. Jessica Brunacini
Date/Time: Thursday, August 10, 12 noon - 1:30pm over Zoom
To register and learn more: Register here
Organizer: Coastal Training Program at Wells Reserve

Learn how Jessica engaged two southern Maine coastal communities in a Photovoice project that explored the question, "When it comes to [this place], what do you care about most?" Jessica will reflect on her project and share thoughts on ways community groups can apply the same methods to capture the interest of their audience. Pre-course work: 30 minutes

Risk Communication with NOAA Office for Coastal Management Date/Time: Wednesday, September 13, 9am - 4pm Place: Wells Reserve To register and learn more: Register here Organizer: Coastal Training Program at Wells Reserve

This training provides insights into how and why people respond to risk, and helps participants develop new skills to better connect with a variety of audiences. Learn how and why people respond to risk, and develop new skills to better connect with a variety of audiences.

And mark your calendar for these other trainings organized by the Wells Reserve this fall. Learn more and register here:

- Writing Effective Survey Questions, Tuesday, October 10, 2023, 9:00am 11:00am
- Crucial Conversations for Community Resilience, Thursday, October 19, 2023, 10:00am 12:00pm
- Virtual Facilitation Essentials, Tuesday, October 31, 2023, 1:00pm 3:30pm

CoastWise: Rethinking Tidal Crossings



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Approach for tidal crossing design, is available. The CoastWise Approach was developed for road owners, municipal staff, engineers, and other people interested in helping to replace

tidal road culverts and bridges with safe, climate-resilient crossings.

Tidal wetlands provide many benefits, including coastal storm and flood protection and fish and wildlife habitat. To deliver these benefits, tidal wetlands must remain resilient to sea level rise. Yet about 90% of Maine's tidal road crossings are tidal restrictions, meaning they impede tidal flow. When tidal flow is squeezed and accelerated through undersized culverts and bridges, it puts tidal wetlands at risk, and can also lead to increased flooding, higher maintenance costs, and interrupted access to emergency services.

The manual, developed with input from over 30 organizations, provides a voluntary set of best practices and decision-making tools for designing safe, cost-effective, ecologically supportive, and climate-resilient tidal crossings.

CoastWise training programs on the use of this manual will roll out next year.

For information about the CoastWise Program, please contact Maine Coastal Program Director Kathleen Leyden or CBEP Habitat Program Manager Matt Craig or visit the CoastWise webpage.



We had a "clam" good time with the Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group, Manomet Fisheries, and a host of harvesters at the 2023 Yarmouth Clam Festival. Our clam hod float won Most Original award and highlighted the importance of our wild clam fisheries in Casco Bay.

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