About the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) 2010 (Fact Sheet)

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership

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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.

As a result of that designation, the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) was formed with the mission of preserving the ecological integrity of Casco Bay and ensuring compatible human uses of the Bay's resources through public stewardship and effective management.

The partnership includes local, state and federal government organizations, nonprofits, local businesses, citizens, universities and more.

Our Work

CBEP supports projects to conserve and restore habitat, manage stormwater, monitor water quality, reduce toxic contamination, and promote active stewardship. We assist 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, which identifies five key goals for watershed protection:

1. Minimize pollution loading from stormwater and CSOs
2. Open and protect shellfish beds and swimming beaches
3. Protect and restore habitat
4. Reduce toxic pollution
5. Promote responsible stewardship
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 986 square miles of the Casco Bay watershed.

Some of our partners are:

**State, Federal Agencies**
- Maine State Planning Office
- Maine Department of Conservation
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
- Maine Department of Marine Resources
- Maine Sea Grant
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Nonprofit Organizations**
- Casco Bay Island Development Association
- Coastal Enterprises Institute
- Friends of Casco Bay
- Friends of the Presumpscot River
- Gulf of Maine Council
- Lakes Environmental Association
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust
- New Meadows River Watershed Project
- Presumpscot River Watch

**Municipalities**
- City of Portland
- City of South Portland
- City of Westbrook
- Town of Brunswick
- Town of Scarborough
- Town of Windham
- And the other 36 municipalities in the watershed

**Business and Public Sector**
- Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Greater Portland Council of Governments
- Maine Marine Trade Association
- Portland Water District

**Educational Institutions**
- Bates College
- Bowdoin College
- Casco Bay area K-12 schools
- Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine

**Protecting & restoring the ecological integrity of the Casco Bay watershed**

The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership works to preserve the ecological integrity of Casco Bay and to ensure compatible human uses of the Bay’s resources, through public stewardship and effective management.