

Friends of Casco Bay

Strategic Plan 2018-2022

Our Mission

Friends of Casco Bay's mission is to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay.

Our Vision

Our vision for Friends of Casco Bay in 2022 is to facilitate a greater awareness in our community that clean marine water in Casco Bay is essential habitat and is fundamental to the quality of life in the Casco Bay region. The Bay is a source of inspiration and is an economic engine in our region. As threats from the effects of climate change increase, Friends is tracking how water conditions in the Bay are changing, and we are communicating that to the public in ways that build awareness and engagement.

Community engagement is of paramount importance. We are fostering a sense of shared ownership of Casco Bay and a sense of shared responsibility that we all need to take care of this special resource. We are educating residents, policy experts, decision makers, businesses, and users of the Bay, on the science of clean marine water, and we are influential in mobilizing them to support policies that keep Casco Bay blue.

The staff is advancing our science by collecting data using advanced technology as well as volunteer citizen engagement. Our scientific findings are shared in substantive and understandable ways that generate energy for action, advocacy, volunteering, and funding. We foster volunteer engagement by providing meaningful ways volunteers can readily engage in citizen science efforts to collect data and observations and share what they are seeing.

We are taking advantage of the longevity and experience of our professional staff to achieve incremental yet significant progress in Friends of Casco Bay's work each year during this five-year Strategic Plan. The deepening and expansion of our baykeeping and community engagement efforts will lead to cleaner, healthier waters. We help communities around the Bay decrease pollution—including excess nitrogen, stormwater runoff, sewage overflows, plastics and marine debris, and pesticide and fertilizer pollution. Our new pumpout boat is engaging record numbers of boaters in keeping sewage out of the Bay.

Global policies, economic influences, pollutants, and the effects of climate change including ocean acidification and sea level rise, continue to affect the overall health of the Bay. We shine a light on the impacts of these issues and support local, state, and national policies to affect positive change.

Friends of Casco Bay is leveraging science, advocacy, and community engagement to expand our membership. Our volunteers are inspired to become donors—and vice versa. We continue our strong relationships with long-time supporters, as we recruit many new donors from every community around the Bay.

We continue to have a strong and resilient balance sheet. We operate out of offices that provide ample room for our science and collaborative work. We have clear and adaptable routes of succession for leadership on our board and staff.

Our Purpose

Friends of Casco Bay serves the Bay, as well as communities and organizations throughout the watershed, to protect the health of Casco Bay by advocating for improvements in water quality. We are stewards of the Bay and strong advocates for its protection. We provide science-based information about conditions in the Bay, and we strive to make complex topics, in science, policy, and advocacy, understandable and well-communicated. We offer meaningful ways members of our community can get involved in helping to improve the health of the Bay.

Our Values

Friends of Casco Bay values clean marine water. A healthy Casco Bay is integral to the quality of all life in the region. Our work is based on science and objective facts. We value working with our community as we foster shared ownership and responsibility for the Bay. We conduct our work ethically, with credibility, honesty, and integrity. We are proactive and pragmatic, striving for positive outcomes. We adjust and adapt as appropriate in changing circumstances.

Initiatives 2018-2022

Friends of Casco Bay's focus is on monitoring water quality in the Bay and engaging our community, to raise awareness of changing conditions as we promote a sense of shared value and ownership of the Bay.

Friends of Casco Bay's programs are built to engage and influence. Our community—including residents, decision makers, resource harvesters, businesses, and our members—needs to understand how conditions in the Bay are changing. We will continue to grow and evolve our efforts to communicate more effectively and interact with our supporters and the general public, through events, online communications, and media outreach.

We will translate data, science, and policy implications into understandable formats for the public, using videos, infographics, and narratives, on various media platforms. We will inspire community members to champion policies and behaviors that support clean marine water, reduce pollution, and improve the health of the Bay. We will provide low-threshold, meaningful ways for volunteers to get involved—from collecting data and observations on conditions in the Bay to coastal cleanups, storm drain stenciling events, and calls to action on regulatory issues—and experience hands-on ways to improve and protect this special resource. Our supporters and volunteers will be more representative of our overall community, and through targeted, strategic communications, we will engage younger volunteers.

We will continue our collaborative, work-with approach to advocacy to build and maintain support for clean water initiatives and policies at the local, state, and national levels.

We will identify goals for a fundraising campaign to support our science efforts, including a network of monitoring stations. We will craft an inspiring case statement to support our capital needs and support our efforts to communicate, in compelling and understandable ways, the changing conditions in the Bay.

We will continue to grow our annual operating budget modestly, focusing on increasing and deepening support from our individual donors and local businesses. Our fundraising is mission-focused and based on this strategic plan and our annual operating plans. Our fundraising efforts are donor centered, building relationships with our supporters over time.

We will locate and move to new office space that meets the needs of the organization.

We will address leadership succession needs, with regard to our board and senior staff, with focus and clarity on the attributes that will advance the organization and the goals of this plan.

We will seek collaborative partnerships that may help us improve and protect the health of the Bay.

Tracking Our Progress

The following metrics—specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound—are being tracked over the next five years to help monitor progress on our strategic goals.

- Water quality conditions and trends, including (and not limited to) nitrogen, color, acidification, temperature
- Community engagement and baykeeping events: programs, communications, calls to action; recognitions and awards
- Volunteer metrics, including numbers of volunteers, by project/program, hours, data collected, observations recorded
- Scientific data collection, including the diversity of the types of sampling efforts employed; parameters measured; numbers of data points, collection events, sites sampled
- Advocacy events, policy goals and achievements, including ordinances and laws passed, bad laws defeated, comments and improvements made on Clean Water Act permits
- Online communications metrics, including website visits, social media engagements, and email open rates
- Attendance numbers and attendee evaluations of our events, including our speaking engagements, annual meeting, annual film festival, house parties, other events
- Financial and development metrics, including revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities, numbers of donors by category (individual, corporate, foundation, government, nonprofit), fees for service (pumpouts, workshops), giving pyramids, and financial and fundraising trends
- Current collaborations, alliances, and partnerships

Closing Summation

Casco Bay belongs to all of us. We are building connections, connecting the dots, and working with our community to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay.

