

Friends of Casco Bay Board Meeting
Tuesday, October 16, 2018
Minutes of Board Meeting
Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland

Present: Malcom Poole, President, Derek Pelletier, Vice President, Pat Ianni, Clerk, Peter LeBourdais, Sandy Marsters, Seb Milardo, Joan Benoit Samuelson, Ann Thayer, Lori Thayer

Absent: AJ Curran, Bud Higgins, Althea Bennett McGirr, Tollef Olsen, Jack Thomas

Staff: Cathy Ramsdell, Mary Cerullo, Ivy Frignoca, Mike Doan, Will Everitt

Welcome – Malcolm Poole, *President*

Malcolm announced that the Executive Committee will have a dinner meeting at the Cumberland Club on October 23rd. He asked everyone to share any articles of special interest on climate change with Cathy and Malcolm, noting that Climate Change is in our Strategic Plan. Documents for our meetings and other background Board materials are posted on a Board portal on our website.

A Minute for the Bay

Seb commented that the water is rising. Erosion on the islands is evident. Cathy asked that he join Water Reporter and post images of high water from the same location from time to time.

Board Consent Package (minutes and financials): *Action Item:* Approved.

Conflict of Interest Forms: All Board members who were present have returned their forms to Cathy.

Gift Acceptance Policy: *Action Item:* Adoption of policy was approved.

Will explained that this is an important tool, not only as we begin a major campaign, but because a nonprofit should have a policy for planned giving, i.e., anything donated to us that requires more work than simply writing a check. We will create a simpler, donor-friendly handout from this ten-page document.

Funding Monitoring for the Bay —Consideration of Campaign Resolution – Round Table Discussion –
Cathy Ramsdell, *Executive Director*

Action item: Motion to un-table the Campaign resolution discussion was seconded and passed.

In the process of preparing *A Changing Casco Bay* report, we realized three things: we have answered the question “What are the challenged areas of the Bay?”; we were not learning new information from our Citizen Stewards Water Quality Monitoring efforts; and we could not answer “How are water quality conditions changing over time?” This led Mike, other staff, and other scientists to assess what relevant data would be the most useful to collect and what equipment could provide statistically-significant information. All agreed we needed continuous data, hence the launch of the Continuous Monitoring Station in Yarmouth in 2016.

We realized during Strategic Planning that the best way we could expand our data was to place Continuous Monitoring Stations in two more places (the “business end” of the Harbor near Portland, and in Harpswell to capture the influence of the Kennebec). In the process of operating our first Station, we learned that we needed to have redundancy in our equipment to swap out the equipment in the water with clean re-calibrated units, and to have an extra data sonde available to assess a problem elsewhere in the Bay. We need newer equipment to replace our aging 20-year-old YSI sondes, as the model we have used for many years will no longer be serviced by the manufacturer.

Having three Continuous Monitoring Stations will provide a diversity of data ranging from Portland to the eastern Bay. One proposed station site is at the end of the dock at Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), where there is secured access and a safe, stable platform. GMRI is eager to explore partnerships using our equipment and data in the future. The other proposed location is somewhere in Harpswell, preferably Cundys

Harbor. Cathy and Will will meet with Ann and Peter LeBourdais to explore with whom we might talk in Harpswell. We are looking for a pier or other infrastructure that remains in the water in all year.

We are planning a campaign to raise a spendable fund that we can use for operating this effort for ten years. It will fund equipment, including redundant equipment, maintenance, insurance policies, staff and travel time to maintain the stations, download and analyze data, and create data products and stories around the data to use for advocacy and communications. A ten year data set will allow us to do statistical analyses that will stand up to scientific scrutiny, while discerning trends due to climate change from the “noise” of normal daily and seasonal variations.

Cathy, Mike, and Ivy expressed their enthusiasm for this campaign. Cathy summed up the sentiment of staff and other researchers we have consulted about the value of collecting long-term, continuous data, “This is such a right thing to do! We know we have to upgrade the sondes in our current program. It is work we are continuing to do, fills in data gaps that other groups aren’t, and provides us with an incredibly cost-effect way to get data (compared to buoy systems) with good resolution and accuracy.”

The goal for the Campaign is to raise \$1.5 million over 36 months. Cathy and Malcolm foresee a quiet phase until we reach 80-90% of our goal. Then the campaign will go public, perhaps at the time we celebrate the organization’s 30th anniversary in the spring of 2020.

Sandy: Timely, exciting; we aren’t the only ones noticing higher tides, challenges to fisheries, red tides in Florida. Closing the gaps in continuous monitoring is the way to go.

Question about taking away funding for our regular work—We found in past campaigns that a campaign stimulates other giving. We have found that invested funds from other campaigns are still growing and are spendable. This spendable fund also will relieve the budget line for operations generally and should allow for an increase in staff capacity in science and communications.

Question about diverting staff from our regular work—We decided not to hire a campaign consultant to run the campaign, as it would take us almost as much time as running the campaign ourselves, and it is very expensive. We will do this at a pace we can handle.

Joanie: Explore partners in this campaign. It’s important to hit our goal for the credibility of the organization.

Action item: Approved: The Board of Directors of Friends of Casco Bay resolves to raise, over a 36-month period, \$1.5 million as a spendable fund for science, to be used for establishing and then operating and maintaining over a ten-year period, a water quality monitoring network of three Continuous Monitoring Stations in Casco Bay, in order to deepen the understanding within our communities of the science behind a changing Casco Bay and explore ways to respond and adapt. (See Resolution included in Board package.)

Baykeeper Updates and Discussion—Ivy Frignoca, Casco Baykeeper

Aquaculture considerations

Ivy gave an overview of the strategic approach that Friends of Casco Bay plans to take to address aquaculture lease issues. Our number one issue is Water Quality—not aesthetics or other issues with regard to aquaculture. We will focus, in particular, on issues around sanitation, marine debris, understanding the scientific rationale (if there is one) behind current standards on the size and duration of aquaculture leases, and planning around competing uses of the Bay.

Ivy explained that we are not looking at individual leases, but at the issue as a whole. Ivy is going to attend lease training and attend hearings on oysters, mussels, scallops, and algae growing so we can understand from the inside the issues and whether they seem comprehensive.

There are currently three ways to get an aquaculture lease:

1. **LPA (limited purpose aquaculture)** lease for a small area, for one year, needs permission from the town harbormaster

2. **Experimental** lease, three years, does not require harbormaster to review
3. **Long-term Aquaculture** lease of up to 100 acres for up to 20 years. Will Sedlack, Ivy's legal extern, researched legislative records to determine the scientific thinking behind establishing the limit of up to 100 acres. He found zero scientific rationale behind that designation.

We have a laser focus on Water Quality, so what are we concerned about?

1. **Sanitation:** Most of the boats operating in lease areas do not have heads. People pee and poop on or near their aquaculture sites. Ivy checked the statutes and found that the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) has adopted the National Sanitation Program, which prohibits the practice Ivy described as “disgusting and illegal.” She gave two choices to DMR: doing education for lease holders, or have us comment on every single lease proposal in Casco Bay.
2. **Marine Debris:** With this explosion in aquaculture, there are many people who do not have a background of working on the sea. We are concerned about the amount of plastics and other marine debris that may get into the water. There are no good regulations on marine debris. Ivy will meet with Sebastian Belle, Executive Director of the Maine Aquaculture Association, to discuss how the industry can come up with best practices for dealing with marine debris.
3. **Need for planning that recognizes and accommodates many uses:** Is a 40-acre lease worse than smaller ten-acre leases with 4 different owners in 4 different locations? Towns have very little say about where leases are sited, except for LPAs. How best to do, or at least encourage, marine spatial planning? Chebeague Island has done this, but elsewhere planning is being done piecemeal. We need to get people together to plan, whether voluntarily, with DMR leading, or perhaps by legislative directive.

We are looking at a number of issues related to aquaculture, such as: What is the carrying capacity of a lease area? What is the relationship between oysters and eelgrass? At what level will phytoplankton be affected? We will keep trying to identify the questions to ask and find those who can answer them.

Dredge fishing is happening in New Meadows. This fishing technique churns up sediments and extracts quahogs. We would like to see it banned across Casco Bay.

MS4 Permit discussion

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)'s draft MS4 permit for stormwater pollution is likely to be rejected by the EPA, as it is not legal as it is written. The MS4 permit (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) must describe in the clear, specific, and measureable terms how municipalities must address each of the six MS4 requirements. Ivy initially contacted the EPA to express her concerns about the draft permit language, which she explained in several letters to DEP. Each successive version of the draft permit became weaker, not more stringent. Ivy has warned DEP: If you issue the permit as currently drafted, we will appeal to the Board of Environmental Protection. DEP should go back to the drawing board.

Community Engagement Committee Report and Discussion—Sandy Marsters, Committee Chair

Sandy remarked that the Community Engagement Committee is where much of the exchange of ideas for the campaign will happen. Rather than creating another committee, this group will engage with the effort. Please attend these meetings at GMRI on the first Monday of the month, 5 pm-6:30 pm.

The Wild & Scenic Film Festival has sold out earlier than ever before. If you have friends interested in volunteering, contact Sarah Lyman at slyman@cascobay.org. Raffle donations are still welcome, but they need to be in the office by October 24.

Executive Director Update—Cathy Ramsdell, Executive Director

Please check out the map of our seasonal spatial sampling around the Bay on our website. The data are posted shortly after we complete our sampling, so it is a great way to showcase our up-to-date science work.

Many more materials than just the board meeting materials are on our Board-only website portal. The portal has shifted the whole way we organize the Board package. Sarah Lyman helped Cathy post materials, including historic agendas and minutes, as well as talking points for the Board, such as the transition in the water quality monitoring program.

Ivy recruited a new volunteer to look at air emission issues around cruise ships. Malcom Burson, recently retired from Conservation Law Foundation, worked with DEP for many years. He will talk with DEP about updating their cruise ship report from 2009, especially important in light of the increase in cruise ship visits since then.

Ivy, Mike, and Cathy are going to the RARGOM scientific meeting next week. The annual scientific meeting of the Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine will focus on climate change and what are people seeing in the Gulf of Maine at large.

Cathy discussed upcoming 2019 events that we want to host, including a series of short talks (Casco Bay Matters) this winter, donors and members appreciation in the spring, and a boat launch party for the new pumpout boat. Looking further ahead, we hope to celebrate our 30th anniversary at Ocean Gateway on April 29 or 30, 2020.

Malcolm suggested getting together post-election to talk about the recent climate change report or other issues to follow in the new political scene.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 pm.