

Friends of Casco Bay Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 16, 2019
Gulf of Maine Research Institute
Commercial Street, Portland

Present: Pat Ianni, David Kaufman, Peter LeBourdais, Althea Bennett McGirr, Seb Milardo, Tollef Olsen, Derek Pelletier, Ann Thayer, Lori Thayer, Jack Thomas

Absent: AJ Curran, Bud Higgins, Sandy Marsters, Malcolm Poole, Joan Benoit Samuelson

Staff: Mary Cerullo, Mike Doan, Ivy Frignoca, Sarah Lyman, Cathy Ramsdell

Welcome – *Jack Thomas, Past President sitting in for Malcolm Poole*

Jack sent congratulations to Joanie, whose time for the Boston Marathon was 3:04. That was just 29 minutes longer than her record-breaking winning time 40 years earlier! “I don’t think I could drive that fast,” commented Jack.

On a sad note, Jack shared our collective condolences to Sandy, who lost his Mary while on their Caribbean cruise, one of their favorite places to be.

A Minute for the Bay

Tollef saw a golden eagle (a little bald eagle?) hanging around South Portland.

Ann was part of an intrepid birding trip aboard the Casco Bay Mail Boat Run on Sunday, organized by Cathy. They saw 44 species of birds, which included 106 loons, many in groups of 5 to 8 birds. At one point, an “asylum” of 31 loons did a synchronized dive.

Jack announced that his dock is in, a sure sign of spring.

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

Jack commented that it was great to see that we ended FY19 with a positive cash flow.

A Casco Bay Matters debrief—*Seb Milardo, Committee Chair, and Cathy Ramsdell, Executive Director*

The first event, in Portland, had 105 attendees. South Portland’s event went well, too, with 125 people there. Brunswick’s event, the last of the three, drew 160 people, with standing room only. Peter said the response was positive. All agreed we need to move to a bigger place next time. Lots of good questions followed all the presentations. Some of our professional partners joined in the discussion during Q&A’s, illustrating our many connections in the community.

We exceeded our goal for attendance, attracting many people who did not know us before. Of the 385 people who attended the three events, 309 signed in; of those, 97 (25%) were new to us. Water Reporter signups increased after each event.

Cathy summarized the staff debrief:

Doing three events spread out was exhausting. Perhaps we would consider doing two events closer together next time. If we hosted one at the Abromson Center at USM Portland, we could combine South Portland and Portland audiences. We would consider a high school auditorium in Freeport or Brunswick for the other venue. Cathy emphasized that we need to view Casco Bay Matters as an opportunity to share something newsworthy, something that will be of interest and import to the general public. The topic would not need to have a call to action necessarily, although 89 people told us that they contacted their legislators about the climate change bill.

Organizing this series took some effort, but now that we have templated it, it should be easier to organize next time. Postcards were sent to those for whom we only had snail mail addresses. Seb commented on the importance of this kind of outreach. “You can read about what we are doing, but it changes the dynamics entirely when you see the people who are out there doing the work.”

Community Engagement Committee

Seb and Cathy reported on the April 1 meeting highlights:

Pumpout Boat Launch Party is Monday, June 10, 5-7 PM, at Portland Yacht Services. Invite your friends. We will have an invitation soon.

The boat naming contest ended yesterday (April 15). 380 suggestions were posted. There were 168 submission events by 149 individuals, from four countries. Those who participated in the contest were required to provide their full contact information. 35 were new to us. In response to a media release, South Portland Sentry followed up with an interview and a news article about the contest. The new pumpout boat will be sea trialed tomorrow. The name will be revealed at the Launch Party.

Annual fund letters will be coming to Board members to pen notes around in early May.

Friends Appreciation Celebration and Members Annual Meeting, Tues., April 30, 5-8 PM

Cathy explained that the purpose of the event is to recognize ALL our partners, not just our Water Quality Monitors as was the case in the past. It is a great opportunity to introduce friends to the organization.

Cathy reviewed the program for the annual meeting and choreography of the evening. For those who can arrive early, Cathy and Will will do a mini-workshop to help with the Board’s ambassadorial function of greeting and thanking attendees during the reception.

During the event, Cathy will do a brief introduction and turn things over to Malcolm Poole to conduct the required annual meeting. Then Cathy will do an overview of our work and shifts in our programs and then direct participants to the four corners of the room where staff members will talk informally about aspects of our work:

Ivy Frignoca will discuss Baykeeping, focusing on ocean acidification.

Sarah Lyman will describe our newest volunteer effort, Water Reporter, and solicit signups.

Mike Doan will show off the equipment and data from the Continuous Monitoring Station.

Mary Cerullo will discuss BayScaping and encourage people to host neighborhood socials.

There will be a cash bar, heavy hors d’oeuvres, and more time to talk with Board members.

You as an Ambassador for the Bay: Data Graphics and Other Resources on Our Website: Staff presentation and discussion – Sarah Lyman, Community Engagement Coordinator, and Mike Doan, Research Associate

Sarah explained that you all are the ambassadors for the organization, and the website is in large part a tool to help you in that function. The website is a great starting point for conversations to build relationships for the organization. She reviewed ways to quickly access popular pages:

Board resources: At the very bottom of every page, you will see a link to Board resources. Log in using the password “saltwater1”. In addition to current meeting agendas and supporting materials, this portal has extensive background information about past Board meetings, actions, and responsibilities.

To return to the homepage, click on our logo; it always goes back to our homepage.

Get to know us. Read our stories. This is the place to find information about our most recent events/stories.

How to help. Be a Water Reporter describes our newest volunteer effort for those looking for volunteer opportunities.

Search bar—a great place to track down any information you need about the organization.

If there is anything that isn't working for you or you wish were on there, let us know—Cathy, Sarah, or Will.

Sarah handed out business cards on Water Reporter.

Mike demonstrated how to get to the Continuous Monitoring Station data via the menu bar: *Our Work/Science/ Continuous Monitoring Station*.

Mike discussed how you can use the data on this site, displayed as monthly means. Each data point (mean) is the average of about 730 measurements. At the end of every month, graphs are updated with the preceding month's data.

The top 7 parameters listed are actually measured; the bottom 3 parameters Mike calculates using some of the measurements above.

With only about 3 years of data, it is too early to talk about trends, but it is interesting to compare years and seasons.

Suggestions: Use the icon of the cage of science as a key to finding the data from the home page.

"Cliff notes" could expand on interpretation of the data. What are good levels, what are worrisome levels? What is normal and when? For example, Mike explained that:

- Salinity in the Bay is generally about 30 parts per thousand (ppt). It dips a bit in late spring because of the influx of snow melt, lowering salinity. On a daily basis, you can observe when there are large rain events.
- When Dissolved Oxygen (DO) falls below 5.5 mg/L (5.5 milligrams of oxygen dissolved in one liter of seawater), fish and other marine life can become stressed. (Our levels are normally much higher.)
- pH (acidity) in Casco Bay is normally about 8.
- An omega aragonite level of "1" means that the water is saturated with calcium carbonate. For about half of the year, the level in Casco Bay is below what shellfish need for optimal shell growth.

We will look at best ways to add those to the website to help frame "normality."

Baykeeper Update—Ivy Frignoca, Casco Baykeeper

Ivy said the caliber of science we are doing now has elevated the scientific community's respect for this organization. More researchers want to work with us and use our data.

Everything we are doing in Baykeeping now is very complex, reflected in our comments on discharge permits. We are really the lead advocate in this arena.

Our role in commenting on the MS4 permit draft is to emphasize to the Department of Environmental Protection that the permit that DEP is issuing has to conform to the requirements of the Clean Water Act (CWA). After six iterations, the current MS4 permit draft, which will be in force for the next five years, is still at a preliminary stage; it has a long way to go to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act. In Maine, the first MS4 was issued in 2003 and re-permitted twice more until now. There historically has been pretty ineffectual compliance, since municipalities could write their own Stormwater Management Plan for what they would do to comply with CWA requirements. The courts have said that is not sufficient. Towns will have to do testing and monitoring to know if they are complying.

Integrated Planning allows a city to rank the steps in their process to improve water quality, doing the most effective and manageable steps first. We have supported this common-sense process in Portland, but the City has delayed fulfilling its separation requirements. We have to speak for the Bay: No more delays. The letter we just submitted to the DEP says Portland cannot keep postponing implementing remedial measures, even though the City is confronted with rising cost estimates due to steel tariffs and contractors focusing on projects other than city projects. Funding comes from the local stormwater utility fee, state funding for Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) remediation, and some federal funds for meeting the requirements of the Clean Water Act. Our understanding is that the city has not brought in much federal funding for this effort.

The legislative hearing on our Climate Change bill was overwhelmingly positive. The Marine Resources Committee will be watching to make sure that the Governor's omnibus bill incorporates the intent of this bill. The Maine Ocean and Coastal Acidification partnership (MOCA) is starting a process to create a five year plan of action, which we hope will be incorporated into whatever legislation results from the Governor's efforts..

Executive Director Update—Cathy

Cathy read a letter from Terri Eddy complimenting Mary Cerullo's presentation at the South Portland hearing on consideration of a fertilizer ordinance.

Julie Rosenbach, South Portland's Sustainability Coordinator, has asked Cathy to serve on the fertilizer ordinance task force.

Our old pumpout boat was moved to our driveway on Friday, and the old decals are coming off to prepare for its sale. Two people are looking at buying the boat, thanks Sandy and the ad he ran in Points East to promote the sale of the boat.

We expect the new pumout boat to be delivered and seatrialed tomorrow. We will also be launching the Baykeeper boat. Should you bump into Mike Soucy of Port Harbor Marine, please thank him for providing us with two prime boat slips for free for all these years.

The case statement for our campaign, Climate Change and Casco Bay, is moving forward significantly. Cathy, Sara Biron, and Will Everett met with a professional designer last week who offered great compliments on the draft design and layout and provided helpful feedback.

We have lined up a great summer intern, and we waiting for confirmation on a legal extern for fall.

Cathy said she was happy to be in a new fiscal year and donations are rolling in.

Wrap up & close

The meeting adjourned at 7:24p.m.