

**Friends of Casco Bay
Community Engagement Committee
Minutes
Monday, February 7, 5-6:00 p.m., via Zoom**

In attendance

Board: Seb Milardo (committee chair), Steve Bushey Deb Debiegun, Howard Gray, Megan Hallett, Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, David Kaufman, Sandy Marsters, Joan Samuleson, Lori Thayer
Staff: Susan Bosco, Will Everitt, and Sarah Lyman

Clean Water Act 50th Anniversary – *Seb Milardo & Will Everitt*

Picking up from our November 2021 conversation around how to plan for events in 2022 in light of the pandemic, we are now looking at some actual events staff are planning. They are considering the theme of celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act throughout this year. Should we celebrate this important tool and milestone? If so, how?

The Clean Water Act (CWA) was landmark legislation for the nation and for Casco Bay. Sailing magazines used to suggest skipping Casco Bay because of the stench of the Bay. The Clean Water Act is an essential tool in our work, much like our boat or our Continuous Monitoring Stations. It has made much of our work possible: making Casco Bay a no discharge zone, reducing cruise ship waste, combined sewer overflow remediation, and the important changes coming to the MS4 permit requirements this year (see below).

The staff have started compiling events ideas under this theme, starting with a kickoff event where we would share the importance of this tool and announce the various events we will hold throughout the year. They might include a kayak event, walking tours, friend-raising house parties, a large event during a summer evening under a tent, and a hybrid in person and online film festival in the fall. Our Water Reporter and other volunteer events would also have this theme.

- Consensus was that this is a great theme to have. We would miss an opportunity if we don't take advantage of celebrating this anniversary.
- Consider the accessibility of events: libraries and parks are typically accessible. Offer free events. This is important as we think about diversity and inclusion.
- A concert could be held at Fort Allen Park, featuring environmental songs, accessible to everyone.
- CWA is a Maine grown act, Ed Muskie, created a national movement, local actions are not contained to that body of water or even the watershed. Our actions and activism are connected, just like our waterways and watersheds.
- Consider the CWA's fishable and swimmable goals: Catch and release fishing event, Peaks Island swim.
- There is a risk in going too much into the weeds. Keep it simple and clear.

- The most powerful, captivating message is about the history of 50 years ago vs. today. There is a lot of documentation on the differences over the years. CWA and changes have made a material difference. Messaging idea: dirty to clean.
- Create a 30 minute, captivating pictorial/verbal history of the last 50 years, where we were, how we got there, where to go now. Then share in multiple venues.
- Push it out to the largest audience we can and, at the same time, this is an incredible opportunity to build our major donor base. A lot of our financial security comes from people who donate to us. The population has changed. People have an ability to give but are not aware of our work. Fundraising is not “dirty”, it simply provides an opportunity for someone to support.
- Pesticides/BayScaping ties in, connecting to victory of MS4, contest to convert 100 yards to being resilient across the watershed.
- Collaborating with other organizations in the watershed. Portland Trails, Friends of Presumpscot. Presumpscot River Trail, West Falmouth to the mouth of Presumpscot, nice easy trail.
- Reach new people by up the watershed, tours near the dams? Discharges up the street, Presumpscot River Land Trust, Royal River Conservation Trust.
- Boat racers are their own little community and there are a ton of donor opportunities there. Regatta(s)? Start by talking to the group. Gulf of Maine Ocean Racing Association, who runs the race program. After race parties are a great opportunity, and families of racers join. People hold pride in what they do, they’re using the Bay 4 times a week
- Sailors for the Sea and Surfrider are organizations we could team up with.
- Pennants or burgee as giveaways/thank yous
- A big event to celebrate. Cape Elizabeth Casino like the roaring 20s.
- Build awareness about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and doing what’s right maybe through acknowledgement of indigenous names and their meanings. Names of the Casco Bay Lines boats, for example.
- Any tie in with EPA’s celebrations?
- Educate summer residents and visitors alike on the ferries. Give talks on the ferry, or a video.
- Almost all the islands have a meeting place. Put the program on every island.
- Walks along the coast by Board members. Get more people involved than we typically have.
- There are so many new people in our communities, how can we reach the people who need introductions to our work?
- And how can we reach the younger generation? Ensure they know the importance of diligence as things can turn quickly. Every year the CWA is under attack. Celebrate and also look to the future.
- What can we do that is a little unusual for the CWA 50, at a time when many people may also feel unfettered from covid precautions.
- Be sure with new events ex: kayak, that liability is considered and covered.
- Also our 30 year anniversary of collecting Water Quality data 50/30 event?
- Board members are eager to help and implement the plan that comes together.

Thank you all for the amazing ideas. Staff will review all these ideas to inform the Operating Plan and event planning for the year. The draft operating plan will be shared in March.

Relaunching the Pumpout Program – *Sandy Marsters & Will Everitt*

We will be relaunching the Pumpout Boat this year. This position will be much more integrated with our other programs and areas of work. The Pumpout Captain will participate in Staff meetings regularly and be extra eyes on Casco Bay. They will pay attention to what's happening at the various Marinas and pumpout locations and participate as a Water Reporter. We will consider Saturday operations for the visibility it would bring to have *Headmaster*, our pumpout boat out on busy weekend days.

Details and a job description are to come. Once these details are in order, we will be relying on Board Members to share the posting, as we will need an experienced boater who wants to take on this important role. It was suggested staff consider reaching out to Maine Maritime Academy to share the position.

Announcing our stormwater victory on the MS4 permit – *Will Everitt*

This week we will send an email to announce our municipal separate storm sewer systems (or "MS4s") win. This is a major victory to reduce one of the largest sources of pollution to Casco Bay. MS4 permits, like all Clean Water Act permits, are renewed every five years, and it has taken 5 years of work to reach this important point.

The email we send this week will just be the very beginning of a messaging campaign that we have planned. The releases of these various messages in different forms and media will continue through July 1st when the new MS4 permit will go into effect. Our plans include a media release this week, a video with Ivy explaining this victory, a newsletter this Spring focused on the topic, and a Maine voices story. It was suggested that Erin Ovalle may be someone who could help us get the word out.

As each of these pieces comes out, please be proud of this work and share them widely, starting with the email this week.

Seb adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.