

Currents

• A Quarterly Newsletter of the Casco Bay Estuary Project •

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Fall 1992

ACTION PLANS PRESENTED AT OCTOBER FORUM

Who would come out on the Saturday of a three day weekend to pore over long-term action plans for Casco Bay? You'd be surprised! A group of sixty dedicated citizens came to learn, participate, and have fun for an afternoon focused on the health and future of Casco Bay.

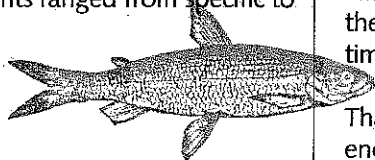
The purpose of the Forum was to present the Action Plans to the public for comment and feedback. The Action Plans were developed by the Management Committee over the course of the summer, with input from technical experts, government officials, and stakeholder groups (see story on page 2 for a summary of how the Action Plans were developed).

Forum participants heard DEP Commissioner Dean Marriott's address on the nomination of Casco Bay to the National Estuary Program, and the importance of public participation in the management stewardship of public resources like Casco Bay. Guest speaker Ed Hawes, Maine's "Dirty Historian", presented his unique and entertaining historical discussion of the "art and science of environmental history". Using a combination of slides, maps and overheads, Mr. Hawes led the audience on a historical-to-the-present tour of the Portland and South Portland areas surrounding the Fore River and Back Cove, showing industrial neighborhoods of the past, and their legacy as they appear today.

At two afternoon work sessions, forum participants had a chance to preview the action plans and offer comments and feedback on how, or whether the proposed actions would correct the priority problems facing Casco Bay: stormwater and combined sewer overflows, individual septic systems and overboard discharges, development, contaminated sediments, and lack of public awareness. As the highlights show, comments ranged from specific to general, technical to non-scientific.

Forum Highlights

Concerns about sediment contamination focused on strategies to increase our understanding of the range and severity of toxic pollutants in Casco Bay sediments. That led to discussion of how to use existing data that have been collected and analyzed using different sampling and analysis parameters. Both groups supported the proposal to take sediment cores to analyze trends in sediment contamination over time. Keep



see FORUM on page 4

MEET SHERRY HANSON, LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATOR

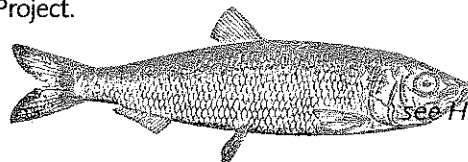
The Casco Bay Estuary Project is pleased to welcome its new staff member, Sherry Hanson. Sherry started work on Monday, November 2 in her role as Local Government Coordinator.



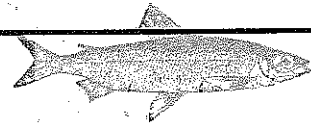
Sherry Hanson

Local Government Committee co-chairs Jeffrey Jordan, Jacki Cohen, and George Flaherty and the rest of the Management Committee realized that the Project needs to work on a one-to-one basis with municipalities in the Casco Bay watershed in order to increase awareness of the Project in local town halls. Hiring a Local Government Coordinator was the logical next step, and difficult as that decision was, finding just the right person to do the job posed an even tougher challenge. The proper person for the job had to have experience with local government, understand local concerns, and possess skills to help municipalities solve the myriad issues confronting them in these difficult economic times.

That's where Sherry Hanson comes in. With eight years experience working with local governments as a planner and technical assistance resource in shoreland zoning, site plan review, and comprehensive planning, to name but a few, Hanson comes to her new job well-qualified. In her last position as land use planner for the (now defunct) Capital Coastal Council of Governments, she became familiar with the goals of the Casco Bay Estuary Project.



see HANSON on page 5



CCMP DEVELOPMENT HITS STRIDE

The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, or CCMP, will be the final product of the Casco Bay Estuary Project. Developing the CCMP is a cooperative effort by the citizens of the Casco Bay watershed, the US EPA and state and local governments, and local businesses. The goal is to forge a blueprint for the future of Casco Bay that reflects the needs and values of the people who use the bay, commercially or recreationally.

The CCMP began its evolution in February 1992 with a workshop to identify the priority problems facing the bay. From a list of 21 priority issues, five were chosen as the primary focus of the Project's efforts: stormwater/CSO's, individual septic systems/overboard discharges, development, sediment contamination, and lack of public awareness. These were presented to the public for comment at the April 11, 1992 Public Forum at Fort Andross in Brunswick.

Groups of experts were invited to brainstorm possible actions and solutions that could be taken to address the problems. These "expert roundtable" discussions took place over the first week in July. A lengthy list of possible strategies was brought to the Management Committee.

The Management Committee met six times to develop the Action Plans. These long, hard working sessions were run by a facilitator

to ensure that everyone's opinion was heard and accounted for. After consensus was reached among the Management Committee, the resulting draft of the Action Plans was ready to be taken to the stakeholders.

Eight focus group meetings were held September 10 to introduce the proposed actions to the groups who have a stake in managing the future of Casco Bay: 1) farmers and foresters, 2) local government elected officials, 3) local government staff, 4) developers, 5) marina users (included clambers, boaters and marina operators), 6) waterfront organizations and industry, 7) environmentalists, and 8) individual septic system users. Each focus group had the opportunity to review the Action Plans in advance. These sessions were also run by a facilitator to ensure that all voices were given equal weight. They were rich and very productive meetings. Comments and input from the focus groups were brought back to the Management Committee for review, and as a result the Action Plans received another round of changes.

The final step was to introduce the revised action plans at the October 10 Public Forum on Casco Bay. It was obvious from the comments received there that the public feel strongly about the future of the bay and the direction the Casco Bay Estuary Project is taking (see "Forum" on page 1).

At its October 29 meeting, the Management Committee again

see CCMP, page 5

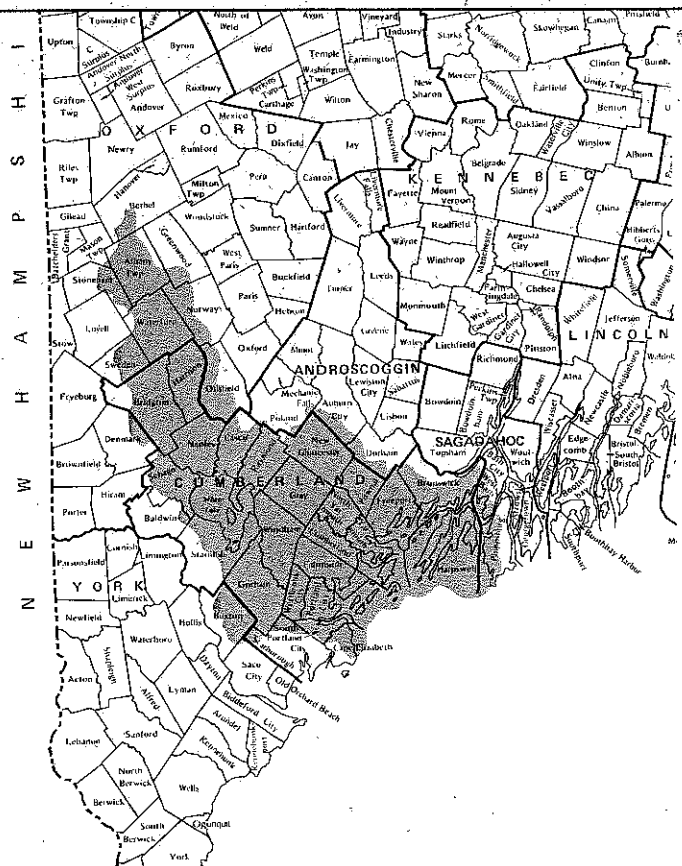
The Casco Bay Estuary Project is

a partnership between the U.S. EPA and the State of Maine. The project is directed through an open, consensus building approach that brings together the public, business, academic institutions, and local, state and federal agencies to develop a comprehensive conservation and management plan. The process is designed to insure that local needs and values are the foundation for that plan.

The project mission is to preserve the ecological integrity of Casco Bay and ensure the compatible human uses of the bay's resources through public stewardship and effective management. To accomplish this the

Casco Bay Estuary Project will:

- take steps to prevent, mitigate, and remediate impacts from existing and potential pollution sources and habitat loss;
- support efforts to understand the bay ecosystem, including natural processes and the impact of human activities;
- support public education efforts to instill a responsible sense of public ownership of the bay, especially among coastal and watershed communities;
- develop the management framework to sustain the bay's resources and benefits.



MEET P.D. MERRILL

To demonstrate the depth of the Casco Bay Estuary Project's volunteer committees, Currents offers a profile of PD Merrill, Citizens Advisory Committee member and Portland marine terminal operator.

Q: Why did you become involved with the CBEP?

A: As a marine terminal business, Casco Bay is important to us. We're concerned with unknowns, that is, first, its management, second, continued progress to improve water quality, and third, how everybody using the bay may work together. So when this came up it appeared to be an unprecedented opportunity for all the various actors and participants that affect the bay to work together and to somehow influence the direction public policy takes with regard to the bay.



Q: Why is improving water quality in Casco Bay important to industry, and do you see industry having a role?

A: No Question. Because industry working on the bay is going to either add to or detract from water quality. And while a lot of attention is given to the petroleum industry, the fact is that the coming and going of vessels, whether commercial or recreational, all have certain polluting potential. Another aspect is that I live on Cousin's Island, I boat on the bay, so I see Casco Bay from another perspective - I'm personally interested in the bay.

Q: How do you think the Casco Bay Estuary Project differs from other studies that have been done in Casco Bay?

A: It attacks an environmental issue from a totally different perspective than either our traditional DEP perspective or our traditional advocacy group perspective. And I guess it is a credit to DEP that they're promoting the Estuary Project. But if the Estuary Project works the way it should, it should in some degree produce a different angle, which may be more effective than what a purely regulatory organization can do.

Q: Do you agree with the Project's choice of priority issues?

A: I think they're all worthwhile issues. I continue to be concerned that we still don't know enough about what our problem is yet. We have some ideas, but even the people with the most well developed ideas acknowledge that they're standing on very thin ice. They simply don't have the data.

One of the things that must come out of this is an established standard for data collection, otherwise we're going to be yapping about it for the next 30 years. For example, we [Merrill's] did extensive analysis of sediment before a dredging project in 1979 and 80, and that data is probably totally irrelevant to anything that's been done since. Some of the most exotic sampling in the world has been done around dredging. There have been hundreds of thousands of dollars spent, that I know of personally in the last 10 years, just in the Fore River area.

Q: As a member of the CAC, what will you work hardest for?

A: My greatest concern is we don't assess risk. In the absence of a risk assessment, it's pure b.s., and whoever can talk the loudest or the most articulate gets their project to the front of the pile. We should put it in perspective: what is it that's most important? As a company we have spent enormous sums on cleanups where we feel that we have gone 500 times further than is justified by the risks involved. And had we not spent that money it would have been available to go to something far more serious. And that to me is the greatest frustration. So my concerns revolve more around how we allocate scarce resources than around the urgency of the need for improvement.

Did You Know?

DO LOBSTERS HAVE TEETH? AND OTHER FUN FACTS!

1. Do lobsters have teeth?
2. What do lobsters eat?
3. How big is a lobster egg?
4. How many eggs does a female lobster have?
5. How old do lobsters get?
6. Are lobsters left or right handed or both?

Answers:

1. The teeth of a lobster are in its stomach, which is close to the mouth.
 2. Lobsters eat primarily live crabs, clams, mussels, starfish, sea urchins, and sometimes other lobsters.
 3. A lobster egg is the size of the head of a pin.
 4. A one pound lobster usually has between 8,000 to 12,000 eggs, but only about one tenth of one percent survive longer than six weeks.
 5. Because lobsters moult, you can't determine their exact age. However, researchers think lobsters can live to be 100 years old.
 6. The side with the large crusher claw tells you. Most lobsters are "right handed" - the crusher is on the right. It is very rare for lobsters to have two crushers.
- from "Nor'easter", magazine of Northeast Sea Grant programs

Forum, continued from page 1

ing the scientific characterization meaningful to the public poses a challenge: how do scientists present technical results accurately, while resisting the tendency to over-simplify in order to package the results in a form that is easy for people to understand.

Discussion about development issues offered support for the Project's cooperative approach. There was great encouragement to work with local government officials and grass roots organizations to foster understanding of habitat and water quality impacts of development. And while there was general support for prioritizing marine habitats, more emphasis on the inland, stream and lake habitat and water quality was encouraged.

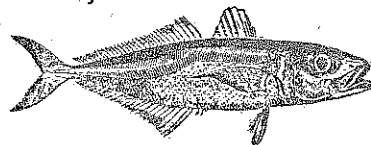
Septic systems and overboard discharges pose problems with bacteria and nutrients in the environment. The proposal to investigate the concept of regional wastewater management district to maintain rural wastewater systems was supported, even if the district's jurisdiction crossed town boundaries. It was suggested that the objective of re-opening shellfish beds that have been closed to harvesting would be achieved sooner if more emphasis were placed on public education, that the combined economic and ecological impacts of failing septic systems form a compelling reason to take action to solve this priority problem.

The stormwater discussions offered support for improved technical assistance to towns and environmental managers. Best Management Practices, or BMP's, are methods to control pollution entering a water body, and if things work out as planned they will become a household word in the very near future: they form an integral part of the action plan to minimize the impact of

stormwater runoff and combined sewer overflows. There was enthusiastic support for the proposal to provide a single resource which could give assistance on identifying pollution sources, permitting, and how to comply with environmental regulations (the "one stop shopping" approach).

Improving public awareness was repeatedly emphasized: "If people know more about the impacts of their individual actions on the bay, they will make better choices to protect it in their daily lives" was a common theme. At the discussion sessions specifically focused on public awareness, participants supported actions that would educate constituency groups and coordinate outreach and volunteer activities with other groups. A theme that ran through all discussions at the Forum was that taking the time now to work with local groups and learn their priorities will be time wisely invested in the future of Casco Bay.

Notes from the discussion sessions were summarized, and reviewed by the Management Committee at their October 29 meeting. The October Forum represented only the introduction of the Action Plans for public input. If you missed the Forum and still wish to learn more about what is on the table for discussion, copies of the action plans are available by writing or calling the Project office. There will be ample opportunity for your input over the next three years as the Casco Bay Estuary Project develops the CCMP for Casco Bay.



Portland Harbor Marine Debris Task Force

By Herb Adams, State Representative, Portland

Where do you throw away your trash when there's no more "away" left? That's the problem facing the new Portland Harbor Marine Debris Task Force, a 20-member alliance of marina operators, environmentalists, the US Coast Guard, fish dealers, and public members which has since June been studying alternatives to tossing your trash overboard into busy Portland Harbor.

The Task Force, first of its kind in Maine, has adopted the red logo "STOP" - STop Ocean Pollution - and focused its collection efforts on three categories of familiar harbor waste: used oil, bulk debris, and general trash.

For used oil, volunteers distributed 1000 five-gallon plastic buckets bearing the red STOP logo to commercial and recre-

ational waterfront users. At present the waterfront's used oil collection point is on the city-owned Portland Fish Pier, with further collection points in the works.



A local waste hauler has offered free service for special dumpsters with general debris - such as plastic packaging, plastic nets and fishing gear - located at East End Beach, the Maine State Pier, DiMillo's, and Union Wharf. The project hopes to place one dumpster at each of the harbor's 17 wharves, and to tackle the problem of marine related debris with special cleanups, one pier per month.

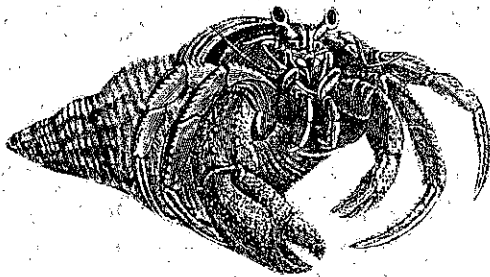
The task force is part of the Gulf of Maine Program, a joint effort of three New England states - Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts - and two Canadian maritime provinces, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. "Portland's marine debris project may serve as a model for other ports," notes Craig Freshley, coordinator of the project. About 64 percent of all

Hanson, continued from page 1

She recognized the importance of having early local government support if the final CCMP is to be implemented at the completion of the Project.

Hanson recognizes that most municipalities in the Casco Bay watershed aren't aware that the Project's objectives are important to them. "Local selectmen may personally agree with the overall Project goal," said Hanson, "but this doesn't have much to do with the day to day running of a town. We need to approach [towns] at the local level, working on local problems that affect the water quality of a local stream or lake. If we can help them accomplish their goal to improve water quality in their stream, it provides benefits downstream all the way to Casco Bay."

Working with 40 towns in the Casco Bay watershed can be a daunting challenge, but Hanson sees her job as being that of a coordinator, working with existing groups to see who can provide the quickest and best service where it is needed. "I see this office as a resource for municipalities," said Hanson. "My goal is to provide tangible and practical information and service that the towns see as valuable. It's a way to keep them interested and involved." She sees the Greater Portland Council of Governments, state government agencies, and other regional councils serving the watershed towns all participating. "We may end up playing the facilitator role rather than providing the assistance ourselves," said Hanson. Much of her work can be called outreach. If you work in a town office, you can expect a call from Sherry Hanson soon. As she put it on her first day on the job: "The more I know about each town, the more effective I'll be."



CCMP, continued from page 2

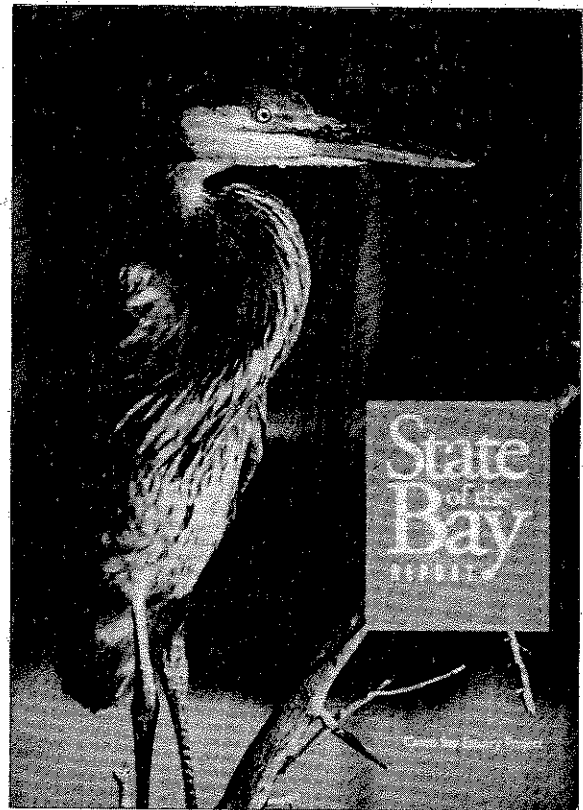
reviewed the Action Plans for additional changes based on feedback from the Public Forum. This was the final stage in developing the preliminary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The Action Plans are the substance of the CCMP, for they outline actions that need to be taken to improve and protect the bay. It was a significant step toward the final CCMP, due in Fall 1995, which will be the end-product of the Casco Bay Estuary Project. Much in the same way your town's comprehensive plan requires constant input and review by local citizens to be effective, so too must residents in the Casco bay watershed participate if the comprehensive conservation and management plan is to reflect local expectations for the bay's future.

Task Force, continued from page 4

Portland's trash was plastic, says Freshley.

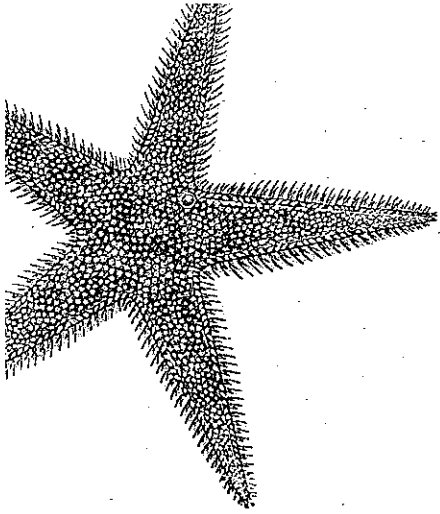
Public education events this fall coincided with the kick-off of Coastweek '92 which was held this year October 3 - 10. Last year's Coastweek cleanup picked up 17 tons of waste along 219 miles of Maine shoreline.

Towns may start their own used oil collection project by entering a contract for financial and equipment assistance with the Maine League of Women Voters (761-9512). For more information about the Portland Marine Debris Task Force, contact Craig Freshley at the Maine State Planning Office, 287-3261.



State of the Bay Report Gets Rave Reviews from all quarters

Aside from its beautiful cover, readers find a wealth of useful information inside. For your complimentary copy, call Project headquarters at 828-1043



Address Correction Requested

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Casco Bay Estuary Project

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THANKS

All of the dedicated people who participated in focus group meetings, expert roundtables and public forums.

Thanks to you, we have laid the foundation for a healthy future for Casco Bay. Stay with us!

Stay Involved!

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings are open to the public. To stay in touch with the latest developments with the Casco Bay Estuary Project, plan on attending these meetings:

February 2

April 6

June 1

All three meetings will be held evenings, 7:00 at the Yarmouth Community House, 57 East Main St., Yarmouth. If you're interested in attending or want to know more about what's happening, call Bob Moore at the Casco Bay Estuary Project. 828-1043