



Meeting Summary
Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group meeting
October 13, 2021
Brunswick, Maine



Participants:

Joe Delano (Harvester, Freeport); Ruth Indrick (Kennebec Estuary Land Trust); David Wilson (Harvester, Harpswell and Chair, MRC); Anne Hayden (Resident, Brunswick); Marissa McMahan (Manomet); Emily Farr (Manomet); Jessie Batchelder (Manomet); Madeline Tripp (GPCOG, AmeriCorps); Monique Coombs (Maine Coast Fishermen's Association); Corey Wentworth (Harvester, Freeport); Nathan Orff (Harvester, Scarborough and Chair Shellfish Commission); and Jessica Joyce (Tidal Bay Consulting).

Project Updates:

The WG team shared out about current initiatives and announcements. See the Project Updates Handout for the full updates.

- The Conservation Activity Summary is complete and available on the WG Current Initiatives page: <https://www.cascobayregionalshellfishworkinggroup.org/initiatives>.
- Community Intertidal Data Portal: Outreach is being conducted this fall with municipal staff and committees to inform the development of 5-6 data products for the portal. The portal will be ready for beta testing by WG members in the late winter/early spring.

- Ecological Survey: Manomet is developing an ecological survey, which was piloted in several towns this summer, and will continue to test methods this fall with towns in eastern Maine.
- E-DNA: Manomet collected water samples this summer in Georgetown for environmental DNA monitoring, with the goal of understanding timing of quahog spawning events and whether larvae are retained locally.
- Green Crab Monitoring: Intertidal green crab surveys continue this fall at Manomet's long-term monitoring sites in Georgetown, West Bath, Phippsburg, and Yarmouth. Results for 2021 will be available at the end of the season on Manomet's website and in the CBRSWG newsletter.
- Proposals are due January 19, 2022 for the Maine Shellfish Restoration and Resilience Fund (MSRRF), which can be used to fund municipal shellfish projects. See the Project Updates Handout for resources.

Discussion around shared issues and potential regional projects:

1. Access to the intertidal is the primary issue facing towns right now.

- Issues:
 - Access is being lost due to property changing hands, especially to retirees and people moving from other states.
 - A lot of access points are not necessarily 'public' but some harvesters have agreements with the property owners.
- Potential measures to address/mitigate:
 - Towns could take inventory of public access points, through town records, historical documents, reviewing easements, talking to harvesters, and GIS data.
 - Document the change in access over time, and the reported distance from access points to harvesting area.
 - Develop outreach materials about what to expect in the working waterfront, and work with realtors, town permitting offices, and others to distribute the materials to potential property owners. Materials could be written and/or videos.
 - Towns can consider 'right to fish ordinances' (similar to right to farm ordinances).
 - Work with land trusts on access easements – specific to commercial shellfish harvesting
 - Land for Maine's Future is a potential funding opportunity to purchase areas for working waterfront.

2. Snail predation on clams

- The harvesters brought up moon snail predation as an issue in some flats, particularly in Harpswell. There were questions about existing research and monitoring of snail predation.

3. Water quality tracking and pollution identification

- Issues:
 - Many mudflats and rivers/coves are being closed due to pollution.
 - It's hard to identify the source of pollution to address the issues.
- Potential measures and resources:
 - Could there be town ordinances about regular septic system maintenance/testing with dye?
 - Are there legislative options? We could analyze data on bacterial closures to see the acreage this is affecting, and the frequency they are occurring (or have occurred over the years).
 - Many water quality testing and monitoring approaches are outlined in the Conservation Activity Summary.