

Town of Casco
Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee
September 26, 2024
6:30 PM
Casco Community Center

First Order of Business

- Call meeting to Order
- Determine a Quorum – yes.
 - Committee members Present:
 - Deborah Fogg (Chair)
 - Robert Williamson (Vice Chair)
 - Rae-Anne Nguyen
 - Sam Brown
 - Pam Edwards
 - Michele Williams
 - Tom McCarthy
 - Tiffany Payton
 - Robert MacDonald
 - Absent:
 - Halsey Snow (Committee member)
 - Sarah Turner (Planner/Facilitator)
 - Vanessa Farr (Planner/Facilitator)
- Public in attendance: Jess Faye, Bob Learned, Desmond Pieri, Daw Debusk; Panel as listed below
- Review and Approval of the Meeting Agenda - Approved
- Approval of Minutes: August 29, 2024 – Approved

Public Comment:

- Rae-Anne and Deb announced that the Casco Comprehensive Plan has been accepted by the state of Maine!

Water Quality Panel Discussion

Panel:

- Colin Holme - Lakes Environmental Association (LEA)
- Brie Holme - Portland Water District (PWD)
- Russ Hutchinson - Crescent Lake Watershed Association (CLWA)
- Ron Armontrout - Thompson Lake Environmental Association (TLEA)
Works closely with LakeSmart
- Bob Chapin - Thomas Pond Improvement Association (TPIA)
- Steve Craine - Raymond Waterways Protective Association (RWPA)
- Jim Arsham - Pleasant Lake / Parker Pond

Each Panel Member introduced themselves and their organization(s) and provided basic input on what their organization does

Brie Holme - Portland Water District (PWD): Based in Standish, monitor water quality in Sebago Lake; jurisdiction for septic systems in that area; work with Sebago Clean Waters and Land Conservation groups

Colin Holme - Lakes Environmental Association (LEA): Lake-centric programming, milfoil remediation (Songo River); connectivity/waterways; doing statewide work to bring policies and bills moved through; funding is important!

Jim Arsham - Pleasant Lake / Parker Pond: Tests clarity/turbidity, temp and dissolved O₂; Phosphorus testing is not done at this time but would like to add that

Steve Craine - Raymond Waterways Protective Association (RWPA): Raymond waterways has been a group since the 1970s; protect all of the waterways in Raymond by working with the different Lake associations; can help provide equipment (like what Jim uses!); focused on monitoring for invasive species and water quality; focused on prevention mainly with the Courtesy Boat Inspector (CBI) program; CBI is organized town-wide vs left to the individual lake associations - this allows more coverage; work to encourage and discourage certain practices with landowners to prevent non-point source pollution (runoff, etc.) - LakeSmart Program is key - voluntary inspections of land and suggested improvements

Russ Hutchinson - Crescent Lake Watershed Association (CLWA): Started in 2007 as a result of the Patriot's Day storm. Focus on promoting good practices, monitoring water quality, subsidize CBI, work with LakeSmart; watershed survey helps ID all potential runoff issues, can submit results and plan and apply for grants to implement fixes. Pam asked how often this was done / required - every 10 years. Tom asked if there are maps for all the watersheds -Crescent is mapped and should be available within a month or so. Colin says that all the Casco area lakes are mapped - Pam will figure out how to access through the state site(s). LEA has a "map your watershed" feature.

Bob Chapin - Thomas Pond Improvement Association (TPIA): Also acts as dam-keeper; Talked about the importance of community vigilance and attention to things that are happening. Discussion on the impact of the clearing for the proposed solar site in Raymond (withdrawn) and how even though it wasn't moved ahead, the clearing was done and runoff has increased. Protection and Monitoring is key - utilize fisherman to give feedback on what they are seeing (egg laying grounds, temp, etc).

Rob and Deb moved the discussion more generally by asking for guidance on how to “get going”; what are the panel member’s “top 3” things we can do or should focus on?

Brie/PWD: Protect the amount of forested land around your lakes - maintain greater than 75% (Sebago is 84%) using easements and supporting sustainable forestry. Monitoring - PWD has grants available to purchase equipment; utilize CBIs. Zoning - understand and strengthen shoreland zoning, train and support Code Enforcement Officers (CEOs) and support the planning boards, protect smaller “first order” streams. PWD hosts a CEO roundtable - help train and encourage good documentation. Grants available for lake-friendly landscaping.

Russ/CLWA: Lakefront monitoring and training of the CEO; work with ‘direct abutters’; figure out enforcement

Jim/PLPP: Use the lake associations to collect data

Steve/RWPA: Utilize and interpret the data collected, LakeSmart program, citizen scientists / volunteers who live on the lakes, Lake Stewards of Maine offers training, CBIs

Colin/LEA: Aerial photography/drone footage to document what is there - it was crucial to the major issue on Sebago last year; CBIs and monitoring for invasives; planning board support

Bob/TPIA: communicate what lakes mean to the state of Maine; ensure CEOs are doing things above-board. Follow-up with developers (audit!) to make sure they are doing what they said they would do.

Jess Fay/RWPA, State Rep, lakefront property owner: important to educate about the importance of and WHY we are protecting the lakes. It is an ongoing, evolving process and we should help people understand the impact of how they manage their land - educate all people, not just lake-front owners.

Other Discussions:

Pam asked about the value-added having RWPA vs simply having the lake associations. Intermediary to help organize all the small lake associations and get people involved, manage CBI programs. Agreement that this is a very beneficial way to manage things! Raw asked how RWPA started - in the 70s as a group of volunteers and it has evolved to what it is today, and is continuing to evolve!

Sam asked for input on how to move this forward on a municipal perspective. Are there other communities that have intentionally done something like this? Any guidance as we try to provide the select board and community with a recommended approach? Advice was to stay connected and communicate

Michele asked what happens if data shows an issue, such as an algae bloom, milfoil, etc - is there anything available to help? Colin replied the main goal is to monitor and prevent, but if an issue is identified, it can usually be treated but gets very costly. Millions of dollars to, for example, treat Thomas Pond if there was an algae bloom. Discussed the importance of communicating this to people "an ounce of prevention" type discussions. Bob mentioned communicating the impact on the tax base/taxes/state if there are issue.

Sam asked what lakes in Casco currently have CBIs? LEA does all of the Casco Lakes. Discussion on expanding Resource Protection areas, education, etc.