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HCPC NEWSLETTER

Hancock County Planning Commission

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Fiscal Year 2011-2012

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PLANNING BOARD NEWS

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT: AN OPTION FOR TOWNS TO MANAGE WATER QUALITY. (adapted from a presentation by the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments)

What is the Problem?

Non-point source pollution (stormwater runoff that carries contaminants into the water) is the number one threat to water quality in Maine. It is distinct from point pollution, which is a direct discharge from a pipe. Undeveloped land retains more stormwater since it is absorbed by vegetation and is not generally a major source of non-point pollution. As land is developed and covered by impervious surface, more stormwater runoff is created.

According to the Center for Watershed Protection, impervious surface produces 16 times more runoff than forested land. If two inches of rain were to fall on a parking lot, 1.9 inches would become stormwater runoff. In a forested area, only 0.12 inches would become stormwater runoff with the remainder being absorbed into the ground.

There are several types of pollutants found in stormwater runoff:

- Bacteria that can threaten our water supply or close beaches and shellfish

beds

- Nutrients notably phosphorus that can cause algal blooms
- Pesticides, oil and grease, and anti-freeze that can be harmful or deadly to aquatic life
- Muddy water can block sunlight from reaching plants, clog waterways, and physically harm animals
- Heavy metals, such as zinc, copper, and lead, that can be toxic to organisms.

Some heavy metals accumulate in organisms, causing them to be unsafe for human consumption.

What Can Be Done?

Towns can amend their land use ordinances to incorporate low impact development techniques. These include provisions that limit the amount of cleared land on a site and minimize the amount of stormwater that leaves the site. One specific technique is a rain garden, a dish-shaped depression that is planted with vegetation that retains stormwater on site. Others include vegetated buffers and strips. Permeable pavement is another option. Runoff from roofs can be caught in rain barrels and cisterns.

How Can We Learn More?

Low Impact Development will be one of the topics at our April 26, 2012 workshop. (See announcement on Page 3). There is also information on our web site: www.hcpcme.org/environment/LID/index.html
Feel free to contact Tom Martin if you have any questions.

SUPPLEMENTAL PLUMBING CODE: DOES YOUR TOWN NEED ONE?

What is a Supplemental Plumbing Code?

It is a plumbing code that exceeds state minimum standards. It is generally aimed at large subsurface disposal systems (those serving three or more dwelling units or non-residential systems generating 1,500 or gallons per day). However, it also requires local plumbing inspector review of

any expansion of an existing structure served by a septic system. Some towns restrict their supplemental code to the shoreland zone of vulnerable lakes.

Why Enact a Supplemental Code?

If your town has cases of marginal septic systems, especially in vulnerable watersheds, you may want to seek additional protection of your water resources. If you have or expect to have multi-family developments or shared septic systems, a supplemental code may be particularly valuable. If you have a lake surrounded by homes with older septic systems you may want assurance that these systems are operating in a safe manner.

What Are the Provisions of a Supplemental Code?

They may require greater design flows than required by state standards. Systems generating more than 1,500 gallons a day or serving multiple dwelling units are required to have an operations manual. This manual includes the manufacturer's instructions for maintaining and running all equipment. It should also include a detailed description of the owner's responsibilities and procedures in the event of system failure. The rules concerning operation of any shared system should be incorporated into the development's bylaws (similar to homeowner's association agreements on streets and other commonly held property).

Some ordinances require that no seasonal dwellings be converted to year-round use or any dwelling be sold unless the wastewater disposal system meets state standards. They may also require that all existing systems be inspected for potential malfunction through dye testing or similar means. Owners of failing systems may be required to undertake corrective actions within ten days.

Contact Tom Martin for more information or visit: <http://www.hcpcme.org/environment.html>

SHORELAND ZONING NEWS

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection undertook a shoreland zoning stakeholder review during the 2011 calendar year. The purpose of the review was to make shoreland zoning easier for both landowners and towns. Revised shoreland zoning guidelines are expected sometime in 2012. HCPC will keep towns apprised of the revisions. We recommend that towns postpone any rewrite of their shoreland zoning standards until the DEP guidelines are finalized.

BLUE HILL BAY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UNDERWAY

HCPC, with help from BSA Consultants, is undertaking a needs assessment of Blue Hill Bay. The Blue Hill Bay Needs Assessment is a multi-town, multi-stakeholder initiative designed to engage the eight communities in the watershed in a dialogue to learn more about their resources and make informed decisions about coastal activities that impact these resources. The eight communities are Tremont, Mount Desert, Bar Harbor, Trenton, Ellsworth, Surry, Blue Hill, and Brooklin. The communities benefit from the economic and aesthetic assets of the bay, such as fisheries and recreation. They also contribute to the health of the bay via factors such as stormwater runoff and coastal activities. (*See related article on Low Impact Development*).

Community leaders are in the process of identifying priority issues. Already identified issues include stormwater runoff, waterfront access, clam flat closures, shellfish ordinances, alewife restoration, shellfish aquaculture, recreation opportunities, and coastal storm preparation. The project builds on the work of several existing programs in the region including Healthy Peninsula, Healthy Acadia, and Sustainable Ellsworth. The project also builds on a "Use Inventory of Blue Hill Bay" that engaged communities to compile and map data about the bay and the many ways it is used for commercial,

recreational, governmental, scientific, and other purposes. (www.fobhb.org/projects.html)

Similar initiatives have been developed in neighboring bay communities including Taunton Bay, Frenchman Bay, and Penobscot Bay. In each case area watershed or bay management organizations worked with municipalities to develop strategies for better planning and resource management. The Blue Hill Bay Needs Assessment will learn from these initiatives and adapt their lessons to this new context.

Contact Tom Martin for more information or see: <http://www.hcpcme.org/bluehillbay/index.html>

April 26, 2012 *Striking a Balance* Forum To Focus on Threats to Water Quality and How Towns Can Respond

The twenty-second forum in the development-related workshop series will occur at the VFW Hall at 419 Main Street (Washington Junction Road) in Ellsworth from 5:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 26, 2012. The topic will be how to identify threats to surface water quality, how to respond to those threats, and programs and resources available for clean-up.

Speakers include Keri Lindberg, Maine Healthy Beaches Coordinator, University of Maine Cooperative Extension Seagrant Program. She will discuss general threats to surface water quality and the steps towns can take to identify specific sources of pollution. LaMarr Clannon, Coordinator of the Maine Non-Point Education for Municipal Officials Program, will talk about educational and regulatory measures that towns can take to minimize those threats. Mark Whiting and Greg Beane of the Maine DEP will discuss how state programs can be used for clean-up. One case study to be cited will be recent efforts with Card Brook in Ellsworth.

Participants must register by April 20, 2012. *Registration at the door is not possible.* A registration fee of \$18.00 will include a light meal and materials. Please note that doors will open at

5:00 p.m. for registration and the meal. The program will begin at promptly 6:00 p.m. To register, or for more information, please contact Sheri Walsh, at 667-7131 or swalsh@hcpcme.org

CDBG NEWS

Well and Septic System Replacement Grant: There's Still Time to Join

HCPC, in partnership with Washington Hancock Community Agency, is seeking another round of Community Development Block Grant funding for well and septic system replacement. If you have residents in your town with failing wells and septic systems and have not contacted HCPC, please do so ASAP. Based on what HCPC staff has learned to date, the need for septic and well replacement grants is high. We need details on what problems homeowners face. The more we can document the need, the stronger case we can make in our grant application. Feel free to contact Tom Martin if you have any questions.

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

by Jim Fisher

MaineDOT Municipal Solicitation

Every two years the Maine Department of Transportation solicits towns to provide their priorities for future transportation projects. HCPC mailed surveys to towns in Hancock County and Isle Au Haut a few weeks back. We have also posted an online survey, a link to which you will find on our home page, www.hcpcme.org. All project requests must be received by HCPC by April 23, but we prefer earlier submission.

We are asking each town make recommendations for transportation improvements, and where possible provide additional support for the request. Examples of support include 1) documenting the need in your comprehensive plans, transportation plans or other adopted town documents, 2) indicating changes on the corridor that have increased stress on the roads, such as new

businesses, byway designation, rising traffic volumes or 3) particularly dangerous locations.

MaineDOT has created an online mapping tool that can help towns to set their priorities. Visit www.maine.gov/mdot/mapviewer/ to see which roads are highest priority, where service deficiencies are noted and what projects have been funded and which are already being implemented. You can also call up projects that have been approved in recent transportation work plans to see current project scope and status. This is a good way to coordinate local infrastructure improvements with MaineDOT projects.

The two year solicitation will also ask for recommendations for other projects, such as small harbor improvements, rail improvements, transit services, safe routes to schools and scenic byways. Please contact Jim Fisher and HCPC if you have any questions or ideas for transportation projects.

May 14 – 18 is Walk and Bike to School Week

With warmer weather, HCPC would like to work with Hancock County Schools to identify walking and bicycling opportunities that enable kids to get some exercise, and save some of their parents' time and gasoline. We have assisted towns including Bar Harbor, Blue Hill, Brooklin, Bucksport, Ellsworth, Gouldsboro, Southwest Harbor and Trenton to develop routes for kids to walk and bike. Some of these projects have included applying for and receiving funds to build sidewalks.

A great way to get started is to hold events for a day or a week in which kids are encouraged to walk all or even part of the way to school. We can help you to understand how these programs, like walking school buses, work and that can lead to long term improvements in sidewalks and trails. You can learn more at www.maine.gov/mdot/bikeped/saferoutes and www.bikemaine.org/what-we-do/maine-safe-



[routes-to-school-program](#). In addition to the May 14-18 Walk and Bike to School week, May 9th has been targeted as National Bike to School Day. Studies show that as more people ride the roads on bicycles the roads actually become safer for the cyclists. Driver awareness increases and transportation improvements are made. More importantly, the long term health benefits of daily exercise can help us to reduce our burgeoning waist lines and reduce the tide of chronic diseases confronting our children when physical activity is not part of their daily lives. Please contact Jim Fisher at HCPC to start building your programs to support youth activity and building paths and sidewalks.

MaineDOT Quality Community Program: Transportation Enhancement & Safe Routes to School

MaineDOT is now accepting applications for federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding through the MaineDOT Quality Community Program. Typical types of projects funded under this program include sidewalks, crossing improvements, off-road connections, downtown improvements, etc. The goal of this program is to improve transportation, improve safety, and promote economic development. MaineDOT will schedule site visits as needed after Letters of Intent have been filed.

Deadlines:

May 11, 2012: Letter of Intent(s) Form must be postmarked and mailed

June 29, 2012: Completed and signed application (Seven (7) copies) must be postmarked and mailed

Announcement of award(s) and funding timeline: If approved for funding, the projects will be included in the fiscal 2014-2015 budget years. Communities will find out if applications are approved in the spring of 2013.

Note: In most cases, if a project is awarded, design will be funded first, with construction funding eligible only once Preliminary Design is

completed, and once additional federal funding becomes available.

Electronic Letter of Intent and Application forms are located at the following link:

www.maine.gov/mdot/pqa/qcp/enhancement/

HEALTH NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Smoke Free Playgrounds and Public Events

HCPC is working with Healthy Acadia throughout Hancock County to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, particularly for our children. It was not



so long ago that public buildings were polluted by carcinogenic tobacco smoke, discouraging non-smokers from eating in restaurants and attending public meetings. The indoor air is clear and the dire predictions of public antipathy proved untrue. Pushing smoking outside has provided significant benefits for non-smokers, particularly children, people with asthma and other chronic breathing and heart problems.

It's time to consider additional measures to clear the air. HCPC is soliciting towns for their current policies about smoking in public parks, playgrounds and at public events. Our goal is to assist towns that want to protect children and adults from second hand smoke by preparing local ordinances and posting Smoke-Free Zones in these public spaces. Enforcement is expected to be voluntary, or limited to peer-pressure from concerned parents. HCPC can provide some simple, easy to understand ordinances and assistance in acquiring smoke free zone signs.

Please contact Jim Fisher at HCPC if you are interested in participating. You can learn more

about the program at www.healthyacadia.org and www.healthyacadia.org/tobaccofreeparks.html.

Did you know HCPC now has
a Facebook Page?



Click on the link below to visit our page. "Like" our page and receive updates on upcoming events and announcements on your Facebook News Feed.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Hancock-County-Planning-Commission/348791130697>

Hancock County Planning Commission is a partner with local and county government to: protect our heritage and resources, plan for the future and promote a sound economy for the people of Hancock County.

Spring 2012 Newsletter



395 State Street
Ellsworth, ME 04605

Change Service Requested

DATES TO REMEMBER

Striking a Balance Workshop
Thursday, April 26th
5:00 - 8:30 PM
VFW Hall - Washington Junction Road

HCPC Annual Meeting
Tuesday, May 22nd
7:00 - 9:00 PM
Ellsworth Public Library Meeting Room