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# HCPC NEWSLETTER

Hancock County Planning Commission

395 State Street

Ellsworth, ME 04605

phone 207-667-7131; fax 207-667-2099

E-mail: [hpc@hpcme.org](mailto:hpc@hpcme.org) Internet: [www.hpcme.org](http://www.hpcme.org)

Volume XXXIII, Issue 2

Summer 2012

## HCPC Executive Board

Fiscal Year 2012-2013

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Janet Michaud, County Comm. Representative

Steve Walton, County Comm. Representative

### HCPC Staff

Thomas E. Martin, Executive Director

[tmartin@hpcme.org](mailto:tmartin@hpcme.org)

James H. Fisher, Senior Planner

[jfisher@hpcme.org](mailto:jfisher@hpcme.org)

Sheri Walsh, Administrative Assistant

& Planning Technician

[swalsh@hpcme.org](mailto:swalsh@hpcme.org)

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## PLANNING BOARD NEWS

*by Tom Martin*

### **June 28 Workshop to Focus on Alternatives to Conventional Septic Systems**

**ATTENTION CEO'S & LPI'S: This session qualifies for three subsurface contact hours.**

The latest in our series of Striking a Balance workshops is scheduled for June 28, 2012 at the VFW Hall, Washington Junction Road, Ellsworth. The agenda will include discussion of when alternative waste water disposal systems should be considered (such as certain soil conditions). It will also discuss the sorts of systems that meet state standards and the permitting process. The registration deadline is June 22. *Registration at the door is not possible.* The \$18 fee includes a light supper (starting at 5:00 PM) and the session will begin at 6:00 PM and adjourns at 8:30 PM. A complete copy of the agenda is available at [www.hpcme.org](http://www.hpcme.org) or by contacting Sheri Walsh at the HCPC.

Given the high demand for waterfront and water-view property, planning boards are facing more applications for homes built on marginal soils as suitable building sites become scarcer. According to an analysis of soil data by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, about 42 percent (426,472 acres) of the roughly 1 million rated acres in the 37 municipalities in Hancock County have a very low potential for low density development. This means that care must be taken in reviewing applications for septic systems.

Most septic systems, even with maintenance, will work effectively for only an average of 15 to 25 years. It may

be difficult to find another suitable site for new leach field on a small lot. This means that more septic system problems are likely across the county in the future.

## **WORKSHOP ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO BLUE HILL BAY SCHEDULED FOR JULY 9**

### **WATERFRONT PLANNING FOR THE BLUE HILL BAY REGION**

The HCPC is organizing a workshop on public access and waterfront planning on July 9 at the Ellsworth City Hall Council Chambers from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. While the focus of this workshop is Blue Hill Bay, anyone with an interest in these topics is welcome to attend. *There is no registration fee for this workshop and no meal will be served. If you are planning to attend we ask that you notify Sheri Walsh at the HCPC by July 6, 2012.*

One topic will be tools available for preserving the working waterfront. These include harbor planning grants, Land for Maine's Future funding, and current use taxation. There will also be discussion on planning for sea level rise and increased storm surges. The "nuts and bolts" of public access will be addressed. Specific examples include balancing the needs of the commercial and recreational fishing communities, parking policies, and assuring that town regulations (such as noise ordinances) don't restrict fishing operations.

## **CDBG NEWS**

*by Tom Martin*

### **HCPC WORKS WITH HEALTHY ACADIA & U-MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ON HUNGER RELIEF PROGRAM**

The current economic slowdown means that food pantries and other emergency food providers face greater demand. At the same time, the volume of

food delivered to pantries has decreased. In response, Healthy Acadia and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension have initiated the Hancock County Gleaning Initiative. This involves collecting surplus food from area farms and other food suppliers and sending it to food pantries, soup kitchens, and low income housing developments.

This program offers several advantages. It increases the supply of food to local providers. It relieves farmers of surplus produce and it provides a source of local produce to supplement the food generally available at local food pantries. Much of the food provided to pantries has been packaged rather than fresh. The Gleaning Initiative complements other programs that are promoting healthy eating by providing fresh food.

The HCPC assisted the partners in the Gleaning Initiative in submitting (through the city of Ellsworth) a Community Development Public Service Grant to continue this program. If funded, the grant would be used to pay for a coordinator to arrange for the collection and distribution of food. Once the organizational logistics are established, the program is expected to be self-sustaining.

This initiative is an example of what can be accomplished through Community Development Block Grants. It is a grass roots initiative with strong citizen support. It meets the needs of a low to moderate income households. Anyone with ideas on other public services that could be started in Hancock County should feel free to contact Tom Martin.

### **CDBG OUTLOOK FOR 2012-2013**

As we go to press, we are awaiting word on the 2012 - 2013 Community Development Block Grant Program.

We will keep you posted through our website: <http://www.hpcme.org/comdev.html> At this time, it seems likely that funding will be reduced, making the program even more competitive than it is presently. If you are planning to apply this year, now is the time to begin work. Specific

steps could include conducting public outreach activities, securing matching sources of funds, and obtaining preliminary cost estimates for needed infrastructure improvements. HCPC staff is available to meet with towns to discuss the overall CDBG application process and offer hints on how to submit a competitive application. Feel free to contact Tom Martin if you have any questions.

## **SOLID WASTE NEWS**

*by Tom Martin*

### **HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE**

The annual Ellsworth Area Household Hazardous Waste and Universal Waste collection is scheduled for Saturday, August 18, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Ellsworth High School. It is being organized this year by a private consultant with no HCPC involvement. For more information, please contact Sherry Churchill at (207) 667-9054 or [schurchill@midmaine.com](mailto:schurchill@midmaine.com).

HCPC received funding for solid waste technical assistance for the October 2012 – September 2013 period. We expect to organize a HHW collection for the summer of 2013. We will also be helping towns with other solid waste management and recycling efforts. Contact Tom Martin for details.

## **WATER QUALITY NEWS**

*By Tom Martin*

### **Sanitary Surveys: When Are They Appropriate?**

#### **What is a Sanitary Survey?**

A sanitary survey identifies sources of water pollution such as failing septic systems and agricultural, industrial, and commercial operations. The focus is usually on threats to water quality that may affect aquatic life or recreational use of a water body. Ideally, the survey should cover the entire watershed. Since this is not always practical, surveys often focus on areas close to the water body in question.

### **Why Do a Sanitary Survey?**

Maintaining clean water is important in keeping shellfish harvest and swimming areas open. While there are state standards for septic systems, not all systems comply with these standards. Surveys are an effective way to identify sites where sources of contamination need to be addressed. The survey can be followed by clean-up and mitigation measures. For example, there are grant funds available to assist income-eligible homeowners to replace their septic systems. There are also funds available to help farmers with best management practices to address erosion and related problems.

### **Where to Begin?**

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) provides technical assistance to towns interested in conducting a survey. Given the highly technical nature of the survey, it is best to work with DEP or others trained in this task (see contact information at the end of this document).

Initial steps include determining what previous work has been done in the study area, contacting the DEP and the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and notifying residents. A good resource is [Municipal Guide to Clean Water: Conducting Sanitary Surveys to Improve Coastal Water Quality](#) prepared by the Maine Healthy Beaches Program (<http://www.mainehealthybeaches.org/resources.html>). This publication provides detailed guidelines on how to conduct a survey and has sample forms.

### **Whom Can We Contact for More Help?**

The Maine Healthy Beaches Program ([www.mainehealthybeaches.org](http://www.mainehealthybeaches.org)) has beach water quality data for certain coastal towns that may be useful. The Public Health Division of the Maine Department of Marine Resources ([www.maine.gov/dmr/rm/public\\_health/closures/closedarea.htm](http://www.maine.gov/dmr/rm/public_health/closures/closedarea.htm)) has information on areas closed to shell fishing. DMR staff may be available to help conduct a survey. The DEP Watershed Division

<http://www.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/index.html>) has technical assistance resources. It may also have information on previous surveys that have been done.

Also, feel free to contact Tom Martin (207-667-7131 or [tmartin@hpcme.org](mailto:tmartin@hpcme.org)) at the Hancock County Planning Commission you have any questions.

## **TRANSPORTATION NEWS**

*by Jim Fisher*

Several events unfolded between the last newsletter and this. The biennial municipal project solicitation has come and gone as have several project proposal deadlines.

### **Project Solicitation**

HCPC was aggressive in sending information to towns, calling and encouraging participation in the MaineDOT survey. As a result we were successful in getting project proposals from a majority of Hancock County Towns. The scope of project requests is certain to exceed available funds. MaineDOT with input from HCPC will be setting priorities based on customer service, safety and corridor condition. You can see how your roads rank on these criteria at [www.maine.gov/mdot/mapviewer](http://www.maine.gov/mdot/mapviewer). Project selection and funding is a lengthy process, but this is the most legitimate path to getting significant transportation improvements. Construction crews have already started on a number of projects in the county that were identified in the past two biennial solicitations. A summary table of projects is available on our website.

### **Quality Communities**

Some opportunities come and go very quickly. Bucksport applied for and won a New Freedom Grant to improve sidewalks and crosswalks all in the course of about one month. Improvements will be focused on providing safe access to transit services near to the IGA near to the Bucksport to Verona Island Bridge.

Ellsworth recently completed construction of a Safe Routes to Schools Sidewalk to improve the connection between the Ellsworth Trail and Ellsworth K-8 School. This is the outcome of several years of planning and adds to this city's growing number of complete streets that serve autos and pedestrians.

Trenton has moved another step forward on their transportation enhancement program passing resolutions at town meeting to construct a scenic turnout area by the Sea Plane Ramp at the Hancock County Bar Harbor Airport and sidewalks along a portion of Route 3.

A number of towns have filed letters of intent for Transportation Enhancement, Safe Routes to Schools and Small Harbor Improvement Program grants. The state was overwhelmed by proposals and has pushed back the proposal deadline until August. Only towns that submitted a letter of intent are invited to submit proposals. If your town missed this round, please contact HCPC to develop future proposals.

### **Intermodal Transportation**

The Acadia Gateway Center Phase 1 in Trenton is now officially opened. Phase 1 includes a truly impressive bus operation and maintenance center as well as the basic infrastructure for a future intermodal center to serve



regional visitors. Trenton benefits from having an expanded workforce, particularly in the summer. The facility will also be a trail head for nature trails into the uninhabited center of Trenton. Additional funding is being assembled to complete Phases 2 and 3.

HCPC worked with EMDC to submit a multimillion dollar TIGER IV proposal this winter that would fund construction of the Ellsworth STAR Multimodal Center in Ellsworth. Decision on that grant is expected in June. Competition is very stiff, including proposals to build Phase 2 of the Acadia Gateway Center in Trenton and a bridge replacement project in Rumford. Announcements are expected in June.

## **HEALTH NEWS**

*by Jim Fisher*

### **Public Health**

We are wrapping up the Strategic Health Plan for Hancock County this month. This plan follows on years of planning carried out by four Healthy Maine Partnerships/Healthy Community Coalitions in Hancock County. This plan has five themes: 1) healthy, locally grown food, 2) physical activity, 3) improving social services – including substance abuse prevention, 4) supporting healthy development for children and 5) supporting a cleaner environment. Each of these themes has a variety of potential goals, objectives and related strategies. The new standard for knowing what you want to do and measuring whether you have done it is to express your plan in terms of SMART Objectives. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time. For example, an objective to increase walking and biking might state that we want to increase the percentage of kids in Hancock County walking or biking to school at least one day per week by 5% over two years. Another aspect of SMART objectives is that you identify who is responsible for achieving them and how achievement will be measured. Thinking through all the details of SMART objectives forces us to be more realistic about what we can achieve and we hope increases the odds that we will carry out our plan.

The five themes are all very ambitious, and funding for public health, like so many other programs, may see additional cuts in the near term. In order to implement the strategic plan, we will



need the participation of many organizations and local governments. Participation of Town Health

Officers, Code Enforcement Officers, Recreation Committees, Bicycle/Pedestrian Committees and other municipal leaders will be essential.

## **GIS NEWS**

*by Jim Fisher*

### **Elevating Maps and Aerial Photographs**

The Maine Office of GIS has embarked on an ambitious initiative to create a statewide aerial maps and a statewide dataset of high resolution elevation information, now referred to as LIDAR. Significant Federal and State resources will be dedicated to these two projects, but county and local support will be needed. And there's more. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is in the process of reviewing and improving the National Floodplain Maps. These are a lot of programs all at once, but they are mutually beneficial. The LIDAR topographic information will improve the accuracy of the aerial and floodplain maps while the aerial images will help us to identify flood-prone infrastructure. The following Q&A adapted from the Maine Office of GIS helps to explain the program. We are encouraging the county to be a partner in data collection and for towns to consider buying-up higher resolution imagery if they feel that they can use better imagery for parcel mapping, infrastructure projects or land use planning.

### **How can Hancock County Towns use orthophotos?**

- Emergency Response
- Wildlife Management
- Natural Resource Planning
- Land Use Planning and Zoning

- Transportation Planning and Management

### **Why not just use Google Earth/Maps?**

Free sources such as Google lack the flexibility needed by technical users:

- They cannot be brought into any GIS software
- Accuracy, resolution, and updates are uncertain
- They get their imagery from us, not vice-versa

### **Where is the funding?**

We expect the funding for the base collection to be split between federal, state, and counties.

- State share is \$150K per year (1/3)
- Split between agencies for the state share
- Agency shares based on use of GIS and expected use of orthoimagery
- Buy-ups to higher resolution funded by municipalities, COGs, or similar local-level organizations.

### **What are the base costs for this program?**

The base cost for the 2' ortho-imagery is

\$52.80 per square mile for contiguous areas > 1000 sq miles. The base cost is to be split three ways, equally between State, Federal, and County partners.

**Are there buy-up opportunities? What are the costs? How does a town purchase a buy-up?** Yes, we have pre-negotiated buy-up costs with Woolpert for the project. A town or any other organization wishing to buy up should first contact their county to see at what level the County is participating. Any buy-up on top of that would be initiated by contacting the Maine Office of GIS to enter into an MOA for a buy-up. All funding must be provided before the work order is submitted for any buy-up. There will be a buy-up workshop at the Spring 2012 Maine Municipal Association meeting in Portland. For complete prices lists per town and county see <http://www.maine.gov/geolib>.

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**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.**

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