



## FY12 Maine Coastal Program Competitive Coastal Grant Proposal

### Blue Hill Bay Watershed Community Needs Assessment

**Project Title:** Blue Hill Bay Watershed Community Needs Assessment 2012-2013

**Municipality or region covered:** Nine communities comprising Blue Hill Bay Watershed in central Hancock County (Ellsworth, Trenton, Bar Harbor, Mount Desert, Tremont, Surry, Blue Hill and Brooklin)

**Grant category:** Project will address elements from Categories 4 and 5 (Landuse Activity Impacts on Water Quality and Restoring Coastal Habitats)

**Grant request amount:** \$50,000 (18 months)

**Project Manager:** Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC), 395 State Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605, 207-667-7131, [jfisher@hcpcme.org](mailto:jfisher@hcpcme.org)

**Project partners:** HCPC, representatives from the eight communities (select persons, planning board or marine resources committee members, etc), and Friends of Blue Hill Bay. (May also include representatives from community-based organizations such as Healthy Peninsula, Healthy Acadia and Sustainable Ellsworth)

#### **Project Summary:**

Eight communities make up the watershed of Blue Hill Bay: Trenton, Ellsworth, Mount Desert, Bar Harbor, Tremont, Surry, Blue Hill, and Brooklin. Although these communities benefit from the economic and aesthetic benefits of the bay's resources, such as fisheries and recreation, they also contribute to the health of the bay via stormwater runoff and coastal activities. The Blue Hill Bay Watershed Community Needs Assessment is a multi-town, multi-stakeholder initiative designed to engage these communities in a dialogue to better understand their resources, assess the status of the resources, and make informed decisions about coastal activities which impact these resources.

Although issues to be addressed in the assessment will be determined by community leaders, some of the most prevailing issues include stormwater runoff, waterfront access, clam flat closures and 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" ([www.fobhb.org/projects.html](http://www.fobhb.org/projects.html)) that worked with communities to compile and map data about the Bay and the many ways it is used for commercial, recreational, governmental, scientific, and other purposes.

Similar initiatives have been developed in neighboring bay communities including Taunton Bay, Frenchman Bay, and Penobscot Bay. Each of these efforts was led by area watershed or bay management organizations who worked with municipalities to develop strategies for better planning and resource management. The Blue Hill Bay Needs Assessment will work closely with the neighboring initiatives in order to network and learn from their models.

#### **Project Description:**

The project is designed to work directly with town representatives to develop needs assessment status and strategies and will include both gathering input from community members as well as reporting out the results of findings back to the community. Tasks to achieve the Needs Assessment include:

- Conduct literature review of existing area plans and related documents
- Update existing landuse maps; create new assessment maps as needed
- Create a municipality-stakeholder workgroup
- Conduct a series of regular input-gathering workgroup meetings throughout the region (8 towns)
- Conduct a series of community-based reporting-out presentations to allow for feedback
- Develop a report based on community input and including the developed maps

*We hope your town will join the HCPC and participate in this unique opportunity!*