

**Hill Bay Watershed Needs Assessment**  
**Monday March 5, 2012**  
**6:30 - 8:30 pm**  
**Ellsworth City Hall**  
**Minutes**

**Welcome and Introductions.**

- Barbara Arter, BSA Consulting
- Carl Young, Town of Tremont
- Chris Peterson, College of the Atlantic
- Ciona Ulbrich, Maine Coast Heritage Trust
- Dave Gray, Blue Hill Resident
- Denise Black, Healthy Peninsula, Blue Hill Friends and Neighbors
- Elsie Fleming, Healthy Acadia, Maine Legislature
- George Fields, FOBHB
- Jane Disney, Town of Bar Harbor, MDI Bio, Frenchman Bay Partners
- Jim Dow, Blue Hill Heritage Trust
- Jim Fisher, HCPC
- Kate (Mrozicki?), Farmer
- Leda Beth Gray, Downeast Audubon
- MacGregor Stocco, SPO
- Mark Baldwin, Surry Resident (Borealis Press)
- Mark Whiting, DEP
- Meggan Dwyer, MERI
- Norman, Farm, Friends of Morgan Bay
- Phil Black, Blue Hill Marine Resources Committee, Fisherman
- Sebastian Bell
- Sharon White, MERI
- Stephanie Clement, Friends of Acadia
- Tom Martin, HCPC

**Introduce and Review the Project.**

**Thomas E. Martin.** *AICP, Executive Director, Hancock County Planning Commission*

- Share perspectives
  - Preliminary Maps
  - Target June, 2013
  - Stake holders
- Identify issues
  - Hearing from Jane Disney
  - Conducting outreach meetings
- Final Report
- Acknowledgement of SPO Funding

### **Barbara Arter**

- Qualifications
- Prof. Botany, Biology

### Description of the Bay

- Watershed – all of the land and water including drainage for Union River
  - 407 square miles water and frontage
  - 500+ square miles upland
- Significant seal pupping area

### Human Factors

- Discussion of population change – growth and aging
- ANP – Visitation

### History and related projects

- URWS
- Taunton Bay
- FOBHB
- MERI
- Frenchman Bay Partners
- Blue Hill Bay Symposium
- Coastal Zone Survey
  - Waterfront planning
  - Water quality

### Values

- Fishing
  - Highest number of fishermen in the state
  - High value of catch
  - Number of fishermen by town
  - Related businesses
  -
- Recreation
  - Preference for clean environment
- Environment

### **Jim Fisher**

- Work completed in 2007 – Maps
- New analysis – including
  - updated information,
  - analysis of watershed
  - land cover
  - impermeable surface and other non-point issues
  - LIDAR

### **Phil Black**

- Marine Resources Committee
- Concerns
  - Access to water

- Much is privately owned
- Private owners are not as open about clamming
- Blue Hill Bay clamming is recovering
  - Re-seeding flats
  - Local ordinances to restrict clambers – require that time be spent re-seeding the flats
- Water quality
  - Discharge into the bay
- Lobster catch
  - Have had a few good years
  - Is the high tide wharf a problem?
    - Yes – not enough time to load and unload
  - Most lobster fishermen use the South BlueHill wharf

**Jane E. Disney, Ph.D.** What Can Be Learned from the Frenchman Bay Experience. *Staff Scientist*  
*Director, Community Environmental Health Laboratory*  
*MDI Biological Laboratory*

#### Frenchman Bay History

- Stakeholder meeting March 2010
- Follow up meeting- Nov, 2010
- Planning Committee Formed – Jan, 2011

#### Conservation Measures Partnership Open Standard for Planning

Working with Margaret Chase Smith Center – collecting information for Bay Planning (privacy protocol)

#### Focus Group results

- Interesting graphic with letter font showing more frequent words (wordl)
- Using text based analysis to assess values

Created a website for the project

#### Open Standard – Adaptive management

1. Concept
2. Plan Action
3. Implement
4. Evaluate and Adapt
5. Capture and share learning

Continue iterating the loop

#### Suggestions

1. Create a core planning team
2. Define the scope
3. Vision – A healthy and sustainable future for Frenchman Bay where multiple users can enjoy the inherent beauty and benefit from the ecological and economic benefits of the bay
4. Conservation targets - Ecosystems and species
  - a. Mudflats

- b. Eel grass
  - c. Diadromous fish
  - d. Coastal wetlands
  - e. Islands
  - f. Rocky intertidal and sub-tidal zones
  - g. Pelagic environments
  - h. Mammals
5. Human Welfare targets – livelihoods
  6. Threats to habitats – identify and rank
    - a. Scope
    - b. Severity
    - c. Reversibility
  7. Free software – for this planning initiative (didn't hear name)
  8. High priorities – unsustainable fishing, biological contamination, obstructions to fish passage?
  9. Conceptual diagram of threats
    - a. Eg obstruction – bad culverts
    - b. Biological contamination
    - c. Harvesting – concerns about dragging, over clamming, over fishing – are not going to take this one on, but are encouraging fishermen to work on this
  10. Analytical work
    - a. Creating a bay atlas
    - b. Working on environmental analysis
    - c. Focusing on priority issues

## Questions

*How do you engage the upper watershed towns?*

- We haven't started on this yet. We want to approach towns with an open agenda and hear their input.
- The first phase was costal. Now need to do outreach.

*How many people are involved?*

- Thirteen core planners. Thirty partners are involved.
- Created bylaws for the organization. Electing officers. Formalizing the planning committee.
- BiO-lab had a grant and led initially
- Working toward a distributed planning process with small teams taking on elements of the project.

**MacGregor Stocco, SPO: What resources the state can offer.**

Coastal water quality is a critical issue for bays

- Appreciated Jane's Comments – may need to take a year to organize your thoughts
- Highly recommend – shifting focus from conservation to development

Guidebook – Low Impact Development- guidance manual.

- Need to include developers in the planning process
- Parking lots affect water quality, so need to have developers input and buy-in to make a change.

#### Other state agencies

- Department of Marine Resources
- Department of Health and Human Services – rectifying problems with water pollution sources like failed septic systems
- Department of Conservation and Maine Forest Service
  - o Project Canopy program has funding to plant trees
- Department of Agriculture – farms (be sure to engage farmers in planning)
- Department of Environmental Protection
  - o Municipal Guide to Clean Water

Announcement: Tom Martin – HCPC will be hosting a workshop on Low Impact Development

#### **Facilitated Group Discussion**

Barbara Arter

#### Clarification

- Project is only engaging the eight coastal communities

#### **Why is Blue Hill Bay important to you?**

- Fisheries – bait fish, lobsters
- Birds and other wildlife
- Beauty
- Recreation - Tourism
  - o Boating (mostly residents and summer residents)
  - o Sailing
  - o Kayaking
  - o Scenery
  - o Hiking trails on the coastline
- Want to maintain high quality of resource
- Businesses that depend on the bay
- Access is a concern
- Historical values - people have recreated and worked here for hundreds of years
- Variations in level of development – protecting natural environments
- Need to offset development with some protection
- High property values generate high tax revenue; this can be a benefit and a threat
- Archeological sites
- Healthy place to live
- Traditional forms of access – maintain and increase

#### **What do you see as the greatest threats to Blue Hill Bay?**

- Sewage – Bay processes our waste, provided we don't overload it
  - o Straight pipes
  - o Overboard discharge systems
  - o Septic systems – leach fields
  - o Sewage treatment
  - o CSOs
  - o Boats with lack of Pump outs

- Recreational facilities without privies
- Taxes – pushing fishermen off of the coastal property
  - Affects everyone’s access
- Conversion of commercial wharfs to condos
- Changes in perceptions
- Landowner perceptions about appropriate use of the bay – people don’t like commercial fishing
- Storm water runoff
- Climate Change (erosion and infrastructure impacts)
- Acidification – and clam flats
- Local government – inactive
  - Loss of diversity of species in the bay– especially groundfish and migratory fish
  - Ripple effects on birds
- Persistent toxins- mercury, pcb, dioxin,
  - Toxins settled into the mud and should not be stirred up
- Incompatible land uses or businesses especially near sensitive areas
- Absence or dysfunction of civic process to work out strategies for management
- Invasive species
- User conflicts – incompatible uses like aquaculture and dragging
- Anything specific for Blue Hill Bay?
  - Relatively undeveloped

**What topics do you feel should be addressed in future focus group meetings?**

- How do you create a process that will lead to long term change?
- How do we motivate participation in the absence of a crisis?
- Balancing small successes with long range planning
- Species diversity and ecosystems
- Fisheries
- Public Access – Obstacles

**Wrap Up and Completion of Evaluation Forms**