



Belfast Bay
Watershed
Coalition

WATERSHED NEWS

Celebrate Our Beautiful Planet in April



Earth Day is Monday, April 22. Earth Day reminds us to think about our beautiful environment and all that we can and should do to preserve it. This is especially important this year when we have had continual reminders of how fragile life on this earth is and how human behavior has affected it.

We, at the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, have planned an almost full week of earth centered activities. We will kick off our Earth Week activities on **Wednesday, April 17 at 6:00 pm** with an Environmental Trivia Night at Marshall Wharf. Put together a team and test how much you know about ecology and our environment!

This year, the national Earth Day organization is focusing on the reduction of the use of plastics – “Planet vs. Plastics.” The organization has set a goal of reducing plastic production by 60% by the year 2040. (Check their website for information <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2024/>.) In keeping with this theme, we and the Belfast Free Library have planned two programs that address the effects of plastics on our environment:

- **Thursday, April 18**, in the Abbott Room of the Belfast Free Library, will be the first of our “Planet vs. Plastics” presentations. At 5:30, there will be a showing of Earth Day posters created by area students. At 6:00, Plastic Pollution Solutions, a BBWC committee working to decrease the use of single use plastics, will discuss their efforts. At 6:30, Dr. Charles Rolsky, Executive Director and Senior Research Analyst of the Shaw Institute in Blue Hill, will present a talk on the impact of plastic pollution on the environment and what we can do to help. Light refreshments will be served. (See *Programs* on page 10 for more details.)
- **Tuesday evening, April 23** will be part two of Planet vs. Plastics. At 6:00, we will show the award winning documentary [A Plastic Ocean](#), followed by discussion about what we can do to limit our personal use of single use plastics.

Friday, April 19, 3:30 – 5:30, there will be a Happy Hour for Penobscot Bay Stewards alumni at Front Street Pub.

Earth Day Activities, continued on p. 2

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

Saturday, April 20, BBWC celebrates with a hike on the Hills to Sea trail (See Outings, p.9 for details.)

Monday, April 22 - EARTH DAY - BBWC is planning a clean-up on Earth Day on Monday, April 22; however, at the time of publication, details have not been finalized. Please check our website closer to the event - Belfastbaywatershed.org.

Many Waldo County organizations and businesses will be celebrating Earth all month:

Thursday, April 11, 6:30 – 8:00 pm in the Abbott Room, the Belfast Free Library will present ReVision Energy's Brandon Mazur for a discussion about how people are making the cost-effective switch to solar combined with battery storage. For more information: <https://belfastlibrary.org/events>

Tuesday, April 16, 12:00 – 1:00 pm in the Abbott Room in the Belfast Free Library, the Belfast Garden Club will present soil scientist Fred Bowers who will discuss man-made "green" solutions to soil erosion which rely on fundamental natural soil processes. For more information: <https://belfastgardenclub.org/learn/programs>

Saturday, April 20, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, Friends of Sears Island and the Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club are sponsoring a clean-up and hike on Sears Island. For more information: <https://friendsofsearsisland.org/event/clean-up-hike-on-sears-island/> or <https://www.sierraclub.org/maine/earth-day>

Sunday, April 21, 9:45 am - St Margaret's Episcopal Church will have an Earth Day Community Morning Prayer during their service. All are welcome.

Thursday, April 25, 6:30 – 8:00 pm in the Abbott Room in the Belfast Free Library. The Library will continue its series on solar energy with Community Solar 101. Shaded roof? Renting? No worries! Revision Energy's Solar Farm expert, Kevin Boyan, will share how you can lower your energy costs and get a 30% tax credit on your investment by joining a local Community Solar Farm. For more information: <https://belfastlibrary.org/events>

Area businesses ask you to celebrate Earth Day by shopping locally:

- ◇ Alexia's Pizza will be selling a special Earth Day pizza from Wednesday, April 17 - Tuesday, April 23.
- ◇ Craig Olson Books will have 20% off science and nature books, April 17-24.
- ◇ The Green Store will advertise a 10% discount during April for some green products on their Facebook page.
- ◇ Belfast Fiberarts offers a selection of natural fibers and clothing made of up-cycled materials.
- ◇ The Grasshopper Shop offers Bee's Wraps and Swedish washcloths to replace plastic wrap and paper towels, and storage containers and stainless steel water bottles.
- ◇ Jamie's Minatures is giving away donated minatures for doll house enthusiasts.
- ◇ Salvatore & Roscia will feature local cheeses and organic wines during Earth Week, April 17-24.

In Waldo County, we are lucky to have a number of local businesses that recycle used and vintage items. Before you shop for something new, consider visiting these stores to find unique items, save money, and keep perfectly good used items out of the waste stream. Stop by Ambiance, epoch HOME, Flipper Ds, Goodwill, Minnows Children's Consignment, People Places Things, Robin's Nest Consignment, Second Hand Eve, Treasures and Trash Barn, and Village Wear.

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

BBWC Board Votes to Support Mack Point for Wind Power

by Jeff Shula & Greg Biddinger

In January, the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition (BBWC) took an unprecedented step in its history by taking a position on a local environmental issue, joining other local environmental groups in a letter of support for an offshore wind turbine manufacturing and assembly plant on Mack Point rather than Sears Island. In a letter to the Alliance for Sears Island, the statement of support reads:

The BBWC opposes any commercial development of Sears Island. The current proposal to construct an offshore wind turbine manufacturing and assembly facility in Searsport harbor, if advanced, should only be built on Mack Point. To do otherwise will seriously degrade the ecological, educational, recreational, and economic value provided by Sears Island to the community of Searsport and more broadly the communities along midcoast Maine.

The BBWC decision to support Mack Point was timely as, on February 20, Maine Governor Janet Mills announced that Sears Island was the State's preferred location for the plant. Mills defended her choice, arguing that using the Sears Island site would lower costs because the State owns Sears Island and would be less environmentally damaging due to significant dredging that would be required at Mack Point.

BBWC believes that the Governor's rationale is misleading. The projected construction costs are the same for both sites - about \$450 million. But, the projected cost estimates for Sears Island do not include the cost of building the necessary infrastructure, including potable water, sewage facilities, upgrades to power and upgrading the causeway for industrial traffic. The State's argument that sediment dredging is more damaging to the environment than clearcutting 70 acres of forest and filling 30 acres of intertidal habitat is also specious.

In her announcement, Governor Mills stated, "This is not an easy decision nor is it one I made lightlyIt will be a change to an area that is enjoyed by many people." She argued that the wind port, estimated to cost \$500 million, will create good-paying jobs and deliver clean energy to mitigate climate change and reduce energy prices for Maine people. What the Governor didn't say was that development on Mack Point would have the same conclusion - delivering the same number of jobs and the same number of wind turbines to mitigate climate change - without the destruction of Sears Island. Additionally, since Mack Point already has much of the necessary infrastructure, the project would be completed sooner delivering a greater overall level of climate change mitigation.

Historically, BBWC has focused on public education, research and community projects providing members and the public with information about issues that affect the Belfast Bay watershed and the greater Penobscot Bay. However, BBWC relies on Sears Island as an "outdoor classroom" for the Penobscot Bay Stewards training and community recreational and educational programs. This, plus the obvious value of Sears Island as historic site for First Americans, a home for birds and other animals and a treasured destination for area residents, and the availability of a more suitable alternative site prompted the decision. BBWC strongly supports the development of alternative energy sources but believes that Mack Point is the far better site for this project.



The state's decision to build the wind power port on Sears Island signals a new phase in efforts to protect the island. Though not unexpected, the decision to build on Sears Island instead of nearby Mack Point moves the project from the theoretical toward the real. Environmental groups wasted no time protesting the decision and expressing support for building the plant on Mack Point. At a well attended demonstration on the Belfast Bridge on February 21, the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition joined with Friends of Sears Island and the Alliance for Sears Island, as well as many members of the public who enjoy using the island's trails and beaches to call on Governor Mills to change her decision.

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

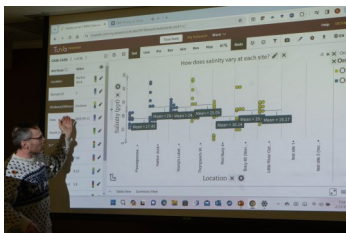
Annual Meeting Celebrates BBWC Volunteers

On the evening of Thursday, February 15, the Abbott Room at the Belfast Public Library was packed. The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition's (BBWC) Annual Meeting brought together BBWC board members, volunteers, and past and future Penobscot Bay Stewards who met to celebrate BBWC's accomplishments over the past year and thank those who helped achieve them.

After a brief business meeting which included recognition of past Board members and approval of the new board, Board and Team leaders stepped to the podium to highlight their team's work and to thank the volunteers who pitched in to help:



- * Greg Biddinger and last year's Penobscot Bay Steering Committee who organized training for 18 new Pen Bay Stewards.
- * Jenny Judkins, BBWC's Natural Literacy Educator, who worked with over 200 students in 5 area schools, bringing them outside in nature and engaging them in activities that teach them about the environment around them.
- * Cloe Chunn, Tom King and BBWC volunteers who organized natural literacy activities that involved students in raising and releasing salmon spawn into area streams (Fish Friends), conducted Arbor Day programs in the schools, sent a dozen middle school students to Hurricane Island Science and Leadership Camp and established The Merlin Club, an environmental exploration club, at Troy Howard Middle School.
- * Joy Bowles and the resurrected Water Quality Monitoring Team who, after extensive training, sampled water in 3 offshore and 4 onshore sites in Belfast Bay weekly for 8 weeks this summer.
- * Dave Thomas, and his "Data Heads" from Belfast Area High School's Marine Academy, who mapped the data produced by the Water Quality Monitoring Team.
- * Ann Kennedy and volunteers who provided public education by producing the newsletter, developing BBWC's evening programs, organizing the Winter Book Club, and organizing Earth Day activities.
- * Kate Hanson and volunteers in the Butts Be Gone campaign who collected and recycled over 252,000 cigarette butts.
- * Dave Bond and the volunteers who participated on BBWC's team on the Keep Belfast Beautiful cleanup day.
- * Cloe Chunn and the volunteers who make BBWC's hikes, ski and paddle outings, Bird Week and Birding on the Bridge possible.
- * Dianne Torresen, Chuck Easley and the Trail Crew volunteers who maintain the Little River Trail.



www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

Greg ended the meeting by discussing what lies ahead for BBWC in the coming year. BBWC has provided leadership in forming a coalition of Waldo County environmental organizations into a "Climate Action Coordinating Committee." Members of last year's Pen Bay Stewards class have formed Plastic Pollution Solutions, a committee working with area businesses to replace single use plastics in restaurants and carry-outs with more sustainable items. And, as in every year, the organization is looking forward to a new Pen Bay Stewards class and the energy and ideas they will bring. As people mingled at the end of the program, the positive energy was palpable.

Thank You BBWC Volunteers!

Beverly Baker	Noah Gilchrist	Tom King	Gene Randall
Van Bankston	Pat Gladding	Max Kurke	Lawrence Reichard
Greg Biddinger	Sharon Goguen	Chip Lagerbom	Kathleen Reilly-
Genna Black	Geri Goldrich	Charlie Lamonica	Repass
David Bond	Josh Goldstein	Ned Lightner	Mike Repass
Judy Bond	Marjie Gormley	Kristen Lindquist	Jeff Shula
Mike Bowe	Howard Green	Sandy Lord	Kris Shula
Joy Bowles	Mickey Green	Skip Luken	Cyrene Slegona
Paul Briggs	Sam Green	Chris Mattson	Dave Thomas
Chantal Brouillard	Gary Gulezian	Teddy Mattson	John Tipping
Loren Brown	Kate Hanson	Katie McDonald	Dianne Torresen
Kevin Connolly	Jane Hardy	Aleta McKeage	Sarah Torresen
Susan Connolly	Ron Harrell	Marianne McKinney	Nancy Trimper
Marcia Cooper	Connie Hatch	Linda Meadows	Don Trites
Jennifer Craig	Kip Hillman	Peter Millard	Andrew Watkins
Paul DeOrsay	Lee Humphreys	Jim Miller	Cheryl Wienges
Robyn Duffy	Ann Kennedy	Chad Mills	David Wessels
Jane Earley	Kenneth Kornfield	Tom Murphy	Glen Widmer
Tom Earley	Kim Ingraham	Debbie Murphy	
Chuck Easley	Rusty Ingraham	Mollie Noyes	
Kevin Finnigan	Sally Jones	Rene Ouellet	
Gef Flimlin	Anita King	Lisa Pohlmann	



www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

BAHS Offers Students a Deeper View of Their World

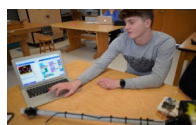
by
Lisa Pohlmann

The Belfast Area High School (BAHS) offers a unique program that encourages students to become involved in the environment that surrounds them. The BAHS Marine Institute focuses student study on an important economic, social and environmental resource in Belfast – the bay that lies just a few blocks from their school.

Last semester, in the Projects in Engineering class, taught by Dave Thomas and volunteer Dave Sprague, students designed and built a sensor that monitors light levels, conductivity, and water temperature. This year, building on that experience, they continued learning about sensors and buoys. Valuable lessons in design were learned after students tested the sensor buoy they called “No Wave” in Belfast Bay and realized they needed more ballast. They filled the base with sand to allow the buoy to stay upright and gain stability. The class plans to build small model electric boats, as well as building an underwater glider in the second semester this year.



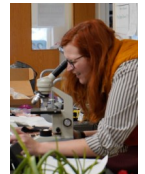
Dave Thomas and student Lucas Newsome check the sensor



Junior Adam Tomalty displays plotted data

Students are also getting valuable experience logging, interpreting and using data. Students equipped the sensor buoys with solar panels and an SD card that logged data for later analysis. In Dave Thomas' 11th grade “Chemistry of the Ocean” class, students assisted BBWC Board member Joy Bowles and BBWC's Water Quality Monitoring Team by plotting the results of water samples they took last summer.

Genna Black and Chip Lagerbom teach Marine Studies. Students learn the biology and physiology of the creatures who inhabit the Belfast Bay. In one class, students dissected and drew scallops. They also learned how sea urchins reproduce. Students injected potassium chloride into the urchins, prompting them to release sperm or eggs. Other BAHS teachers contribute to the program by centering their curriculum around the Bay. Art teacher Kim Baker instructs students in creating art related to marine life. Outdoor recreation teacher and Master Sea Kayak Guide, Chris Audet, will lead kayaking adventures for students in the Spring.



Genna Black focuses on sea urchins.



The new “Wet Lab”

Last year, the Institute obtained federal and state grant money to create a “wet lab” that has recently been placed in its permanent location. There are big plans ahead for this laboratory. It will house tanks for specimens taken from the bay and will provide a well-equipped space for the student-run kelp nursery and other aquaculture and research projects.

The Belfast Area High School Marine Institute offers experiences that appeal to a diverse variety of students. It offers students an opportunity to explore what could become a life-long interest. At the very least, the program encourages students to better appreciate the important natural resource that many students, who have lived in the Belfast area all their lives, may take for granted. As one student said during class, "I have no idea what I'll do with my life, but this is really cool!"

Note to BBWC Volunteers— Please Keep Track of your Volunteer Hours

BBWC, as a volunteer organization, may make itself more attractive to grantors and funders if we can show how its members' volunteer efforts make a difference in our mission. We'll soon be emailing a form for you to complete on your 2023 efforts. Thanks in advance for all you do and for helping us to brag about it!

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

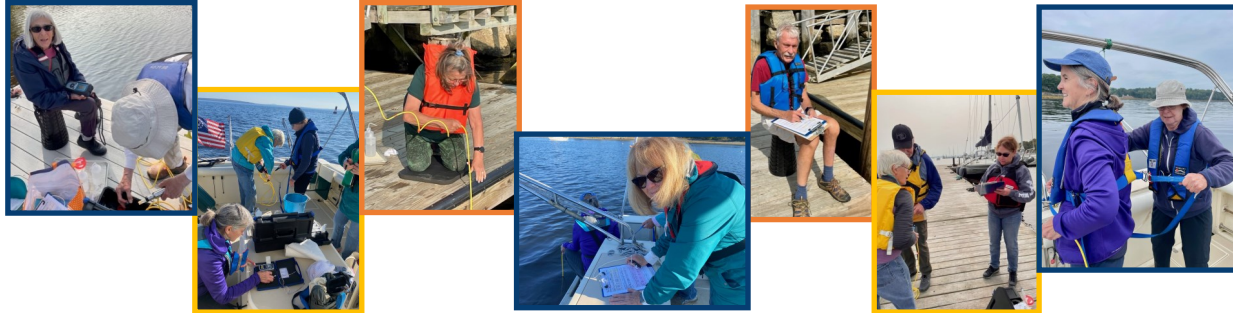
info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

Water Quality Monitoring Team Prepares for Summer Sampling

by Joy Bowles, Team Leader

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition's revitalized Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) Team completed its first year of sampling in October 2023. In four weeks during the summer, the Team conducted eight sampling events in Belfast Bay at four offshore and three onshore sampling sites.



The data from the five parameters sampled (conductivity, dissolved oxygen, pH, salinity and turbidity) were compiled into spreadsheets and sent to Dave Thomas and his Belfast High School students (BAHS Chemistry of the Ocean "Data Heads"). The students placed the data into a computer program that generated animated graphs that allowed changes to be more easily observed. Reductions in dissolved oxygen and salinity were noticed which could have been associated with a large rainfall event. More information and research is needed to confirm any early conclusions. The data were also shared with other water quality experts for additional interpretation.

The Water Quality Management Team will begin its work again in 2024 with a general meeting in April. Refresher training (for returning team members) and new members' trainings are scheduled for May. The Team is planning to purchase new instruments to conduct the sampling more easily and precisely. The Team is exploring other parameters it may want to assess.

The WQM Team is recruiting new volunteers and looking for motorboat owners to assist with the offshore sampling at least once a month during June to early October. If you are interested in the water quality of Belfast Bay and would like to be a part of an active water research team, contact Team Leader Joy Bowles: (joyl.bowles@gmail.com). We're looking forward to a great year - come join us!

Last Winter Birding on the Bridge - April 13



Winter is the best season for seeing birds in Belfast Harbor. We see several arctic species who migrate down "south" for better eating. Many of our resident birds are also here. The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition invites you to drop in at the **Belfast Footbridge on April 13, 8:30 - 10:00 am**, for the last bird watch this winter. Ron Harrell and Gary Gulezian will be at the bridge with their spotting scopes to show people the birds in the harbor area and answer questions about them. Bring personal binoculars and dress appropriately for the weather.

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

May Brings Back Our Migratory Birds: Enjoy Them During Kathy Morgan Bird Week

You'll be among bird loving friends as we welcome back our migratory birds, and greet our faithful, year round residents too.



Saturday, May 11 - International Migratory Bird Day. Meet at Sears Island gate.

Sunday, May 12 - Mother's Day Bird Watch.

Treat your mother or yourself to a bird walk at Cloe and David's farm, 210 Oak Hill Road, Swanville.

Monday, May 13 - Meadow Brook Preserve. Meet at the trail to the Bessey Tract of Meadow Brook Preserve on Swan Lake Ave. (Rt. 141) in Swanville, across the road from the Swanville Transfer Station.

Tuesday, May 14 - Walk and Roll Birding on the Rail Trail. Meet at the Train Station. (ADA-accessible walk)

Wednesday, May 15 - Take your own bird walk.

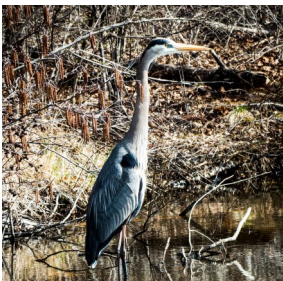
Access trails, maps and guides on the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition website - <http://belfastbaywatershed.org/trail-guides.php>

Thursday, May 16 - Ducktrap River Preserve.

Meet at the parking lot of this Coastal Mountain Land Trust Preserve in Lincolnville. Hike will be led by Kristin Lindquist and Gary Gulezian.

Friday, May 17 - Sears Island Bird Walk. Let's enjoy the peacefulness of this island while we have it. Meet at the Sears Island gate.

Saturday, May 18 - Paddle and bird the Goose River in Swanville. Meet at 9:00 am at the put-in below Swan Lake Dam (and behind Swan Lake Grocery). Bring boat, paddle, PFD, water, lunch, protection from sun, rain, bugs, binoculars if possible. Be prepared to drag over a few beaver dams (it's fun!)



All walks begin at 7:00 am except May 18. Bring binoculars if possible. FMI: Cloe 338-1147 (no texts)

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

Spring Outings

Saturday, April 20, 10:00 am -1:00 pm. Celebrate Earth Day with a hike on the Hills to Sea Trail

The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition invites you to celebrate Earth Day by admiring the Earth's beauty on the Hills to Sea Trail. We will meet at Waldo County Tech Center on Rt. 137 in Waldo at 10:00 sharp, and carpool the rest of the way. The hike is about 6 miles over medium-rugged terrain. Bring water, lunch, rain gear. FMI: Cloe 338-1147 (no texting)

Saturday, May 25, 8:00 am - 2:00 pm - Greet Spring Flowers on the Hills to Sea Trail in Unity

The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition invites you to hike a 9-mile section of the Hills to Sea Trail in Unity. This stretch takes us along scenic Sandy Stream and Fly Brook, in the peak of spring wildflower bloom. Meet at 8:00 at the Freedom General Store on Rt. 137 in Freedom. Bring water, lunch, binoculars, and protection from sun, rain, and bugs (especially ticks). FMI: Cloe 338-1147 (no text)

Saturday, June 8, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm—Paddle the Marsh River on the Rising Tide

The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition invites you to paddle the South Branch of the Marsh River in Frankfort/Prospect. We will paddle the rising tide up the river through Mendall Marsh Wildlife Management Area, watching ducks, eagles, ospreys, and kingfishers, and scolding marsh wrens in the marsh grasses. We'll eat a bag lunch at the head of tide, and when the tide turns (1:00 pm), we will paddle with its help back to the boat launch. Meet at 11:00 am at the Frankfort Boat Launch on Rt. 1A. Bring boat, paddle, PFD, water, lunch, protection from weather and bugs (especially ticks). Bring binoculars if you have them. FMI: Cloe 338-1147 (no text)

Walk and Roll Day Seeks to Build Inclusive Stewardship



**Saturday, June 22
10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Belfast Waterfront**



Come and join us on a Walk and Roll Stewardship Day along the Belfast Harbor Walk. We'll share in our interest in the Penobscot Bay Watershed, learn from others about the history of coastal Maine and meet others of all abilities and backgrounds that share our interest in the health of the Bay.

You will learn about the people, organizations and agencies concerned with the health of the Bay while enjoying music, food and activities for children.

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

Spring Programs

Thursday, April 18, 2024 - 5:30 - 8:00 pm - Planet vs. Plastics, Part I

5:30 - Exhibition of Earth Day posters created by Troy Howard Middle School students

6:00 - Presentation by Plastic Pollution Solutions

6:30 - The Effect of Plastic in Our Environment - Dr. Charles Rolsky Ph.D. - Executive



Director and Senior Research Analyst, Shaw Institute

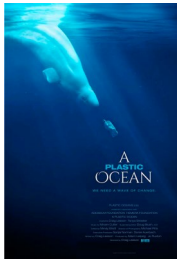
Charlie will be focusing on our complicated relationship with plastic and the impact of the material on the planet as pollution. How did we get to where we are today? Is there still time to turn things around?

Charlie is the Executive Director of the Shaw Institute in Blue Hill where he studies threats to environmental and human health. Charlie served as a postdoctoral research scholar at Arizona State University's Biodesign Center for Sustainable Macromolecular Materials and Manufacturing (SM3). He has focused much of his research on marine conservation topics, which began with field work with endangered killer whales, and evolved into innovative analysis of microplastics from the water column and surrounding biota.

Thanks to Alexia's Pizza for providing pizza for this program.

Tuesday, April 23, 2024 - 6:00 pm—Planet vs. Plastics, Part II

Film: Our Plastic Ocean



A Plastic Ocean is an award-winning feature length documentary brought to you by a group of dedicated scientists, film-makers, social entrepreneurs, scholars, environmentalists and journalists, that explores the fragile state of our oceans and uncovers alarming truths about the consequences of our disposable lifestyle.

The film will be followed by a discussion. Light refreshments will be provided.

Thursday, May 16, 2024 - 6:30 pm - Bird Week Program - Maine's Spring

Birds - Nick Lund - Advocacy and Outreach Manager, Maine

Audubon Society



Millions of birds of hundreds of different species pour into Maine each spring, and it can be an overwhelming experience for birders. Join Maine Audubon to calm your nerves about spring migration, learning about why and how it happens, and what species to expect.

Nick Lund is Maine Audubon's Advocacy and Outreach Manager, and also the author of the American Birding Association's Field Guide to the Birds of Maine.

Programs will be held in the Abbot Room of the Belfast Free Library.

If you would like to view a past BBWC program, click on the video link to the archived program on the BBWC website - <http://belfastbaywatershed.org/2022-programs.php>

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

A Message from Our Board

by Greg Biddinger, President



As we move into the Spring of 2024, we find ourselves with mixed emotions. On the one hand we are excited by the new energy provided by Penobscot Bay Stewards (PBS) classes of 2022 and 2023 to existing BBWC community programs like *Butts Be Gone* and our in-school programs like *Fish Friends*. Under the leadership of Joy Bowles, a 2023 PBS graduate, our *Water Quality Monitoring* program was rejuvenated, and we are looking forward to future expansion. We have new leadership for our *Trail Maintenance Crew* from Dianne Torresen and Chuck Easley.

The 2023 class of PBS also brought new programs to BBWC. A significant new *Plastic Pollution Solutions* initiative with a focus on an elimination of plastic cutlery throughout Belfast is being spearheaded by Jacquie Gage, Chris Shula and Dianne Torresen. The Merlin Club, a new middle school science club, was formed with help from Cheryl Wienges, Dianne Torresen, and Troy Howard teacher Kathy Gass. As we enter the 2024 PBS training cycle this spring, we look forward to the energy and creativity that this year's stewards will bring to our efforts.

At the same time, we find ourselves facing old and new challenges to our local environment. The Nordic Aquafarm decision drags on with no sign of resolution and the Governor's recent decision to advance a wind turbine assembly facility on Sears Island are both worrisome.

On a positive note, there is new energy forming in Waldo County to address our changing climate and the resulting impacts to nature and our economy. At the end of 2023 BBWC, in collaboration with the Belfast Free Library's All of Belfast Climate Dialogue and the City of Belfast's Climate, Energy and Infrastructure Committee have led the formation of the Waldo County Climate Action Coalition (WCCAC). This new group is being formed with the mission to: *Collaborate to reduce impacts of climate change and build sustainable communities in Waldo County*.

The underlying operating premise for the formation of WCCAC is that, if the hard-working nonprofit and church groups in Waldo County join forces and resources, we can advance climate resilience and create sustainable communities in our county, and possibly influence others to do the same. You will hear more about this new organization in the future but for now we are rallying our effort around Earth Day. As you can see from the list of planned activities presented on pages 1 and 2 of this newsletter, there will be a lot ways for you to (re)engage your own environmental stewardship skills. As always if you want to get involved in any of our initiatives please send an email to me or any of the program leaders listed below. We'll be glad to welcome you aboard.

BBWC Committees & Contact Information:

Community Engagement Committee - Don Trites dgtrites@tidewater.net

Fish Friends - Mike Lotito mikejlot@aol.com

Trail Crew - Dianne Torresen dktorresen@gmail.com, Chuck Easley trees.cwe@gmail.com

Plastic Pollution Solutions - Kris Shula shulafamily@gmail.com, Jacquie Gage jacquie.gage@gmail.com

Natural Literacy programs, Merlin Club - Cloe Chunn clochunn@gmail.com

Butts Be Gone - Kate Hanson katehanson207@gmail.com

Communications - Ann Kennedy annkinmaine@gmail.com

Water Quality Monitoring - Joy Bowles joy.bowles@gmail.com

Earth Day/Arbor Day - Greg Biddinger gbiddi@gmail.com

Penobscot Bay Stewards Alumni - Pat Gladding patricia.gladding@gmail.com

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook

Volunteer Opportunities Available

The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition is looking for committed individuals who are interested in the health of the Belfast Bay watershed and have time and energy to share. Work with a great group of people, have fun, and make a positive impact on our environment. At this time, we are looking for:

Water Quality Volunteers: Help monitor the quality of water in Belfast Bay. Learn how to take and assess samples of bay water and how to interpret results. (FMI - See article on page 7)

Trail Crew for Little River Trail: Trail Crews maintain the Little River Community Trail in Belfast and the Davis Bog Trail in Morrill. Crew members are called upon when trail work is needed. This work is fun, friendly, and very important to our community.

Natural Literacy Volunteers: Help train the next generation of eco-warriors in one of our many school and community based programs.

BBWC Board of Directors

Greg Biddinger, President

Ann Kennedy, VP

Kate Hanson, Secretary

Gene Randall, Treasurer

Joy Bowles

Cloe Chunn

Noah Gilchrist

Pat Gladding

Dave Thomas

John Tipping

Staff

Jenni Judkins,
Natural Literacy Educator

Nicolle Littrell,
Publicity and Website

Newsletter Committee

Ann Kennedy, Editor

Cloe Chunn

Jennifer Craig

Katie McDonald

Lisa Pohlmann

Jeff Shula

Printed on the highest percentage recycled paper available



New Members Invited!

Jump on board and help expand and strengthen our work in the community and watershed.

Visit our website or email us at info@belfastbaywatershed.org.

Mission: *The Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition works to support conservation and stewardship of natural, scenic and public access resources of the Belfast Bay watershed through research, community building and education.*

Subscribe on-line to this newsletter and receive monthly reminders of our activities.

Subscribe at www.belfastbaywatershed.org or send an email to info@belfastbaywatershed.org.

Please visit our website calendar for updates on outings and programs.

BBWC wishes to thank all our individual members, community partners and supporting businesses including the Alexia's Pizza, Belfast Free Library, Belfast Veterinary Hospital, Front Street Pub, Front Street Shipyard, First National Bank, Left Bank Books, The Grasshopper Shop, The Green Store, and the Little River Veterinary Hospital. Many thanks to our granting organizations: Leonard C. and Mildred F. Ferguson Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund and the Schwartz Family Foundation.

www.belfastbaywatershed.org

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, PO Box 152, Belfast, Maine 04915

info@belfastbaywatershed.org

Find us on Facebook