

Friends of Casco Bay / Casco Baykeeper
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Grant Awarded to Citizens Combating “Green Slime”

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Friends of Casco Bay was awarded the second annual “Minding the Planet” Grant from the YSI Foundation, the philanthropic arm of YSI, Inc., a global company based in Ohio that designs scientific instruments for professionals who protect natural resources and aquatic life. The group was awarded \$10,000 for its Nitrogen Pollution Initiative. Friends of Casco Bay is a non-profit marine stewardship organization in South Portland, founded to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay.

Friends of Casco Bay believes that nutrient overloading in the water is having a harmful effect on the Bay’s ecosystem. Nitrogen pollution from sewage discharges, fertilizers, and smokestack emissions has led to visible growth of slimy green algae smothering clamflats, as well as contributing to red tides, fish kills, and marine mammal deaths. The organization plans to collect extensive data on nitrogen, dissolved oxygen, pH, and chlorophyll levels at more than 30 sites around the Bay.

Throughout the project, the group will use YSI equipment to measure the changing water quality. While nutrients are necessary to support living organisms, what people need to realize is that “too much of a good thing is a problem for the Bay,” states Will Everitt, development director for Friends of Casco Bay. “We have an opportunity to stop the effects of nutrient pollution before it becomes irreversible.”

The data collection team, comprised of volunteers and professional staff, will provide this baseline data to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection for further analysis and modeling. The group will also work with local citizens, businesses, and agencies – including at least three wastewater plants - to find ways to reduce nutrient discharges into Casco Bay. “At YSI, we are very proud of our support of the environmental causes that affect us and our planet’s natural resources,” notes Rick Omlor, YSI CEO & President. “Concerned citizens play their part, too, which is why we’re pleased to support the work of Friends of Casco Bay.”

“The health of Maine depends on the health of our marine waters,” continues Everitt. “Casco Bay has some of the largest clam and lobster landings in the State. It also has the busiest oil port on the East Coast, and its watershed is home to one-quarter of the State’s population.”

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Photo caption: Casco Baykeeper Joe Payne prepares to lower a YSI 6600 data sonde into Casco Bay to collect and record water quality data.