

S.O.S.-MAINE SHORELINES WINTER 2009

Greetings from the Board:

A Look Back At S.O.S.-Maine

For more than a century, there has been a community living on Drakes Island, Wells, drawn by the vibrant ecosystem of ocean, beach, and marsh. The rich variety and abundance of plants, animals, and birds was a treasured enhancement of life for both vacationers and the few year-rounders. Exploring the dunes at the northern end of the island is the valued memory of many who spent childhood summers there.

But change is inevitable and the constant ebb and flow of the Atlantic, sometimes powered by winter storms, over time altered the coastline. Harbor jetties aggravated and increased normal beach erosion by interrupting and unbalancing the redistribution of sand.

In the spring of 1993, a group of citizens met to seek ways to address the serious danger that threatened the beaches and homes. It was at first focused on the restoration and maintenance of the ten mile stretch from the Wells beaches to the south to Laudholm beach at the north. This small group invested their time, ideas, and personal funds to explore ways to first stop or at least slow the erosion occurring at the northern tip. Still today stray strands of the orange netting appear as evidence of their early attempts and experiments at the northern end of the sea wall. And still today the sea seeks to break through that area to connect with the marsh.

However, within a very short time it was clear that the problems affecting the coastline reached far beyond a single beach system and this core group of citizens reached out to offer education, leadership, and representation to all coastal concerns. In 1994, S.O.S.-Wells was incorporated as a non-profit organization to meet those objectives. Key targets of effort were: to accomplish the long overdue dredging of Wells harbor, to work toward renourishment of sand-starved beaches, and to achieve a redesign, modification, or removal of the troublesome jetties. Ambitious goals indeed!

As a grass roots organization, members of S.O.S.-Wells learned as they moved forward – seeking expert advice from coastal experts and engineers, learning how to navigate the politics of town and state and federal agencies, advocating for environmental policies that support viable ways for human and animal/bird life to share the environment.

Over the years, SOS Wells grew and expanded. As we learned that problems affecting the local coastline were not isolated occurrences and their impact reached far beyond a single beach system, we found similar actions were taking place all along the Maine coast. S.O.S. Wells became S.O.S.-Maine and the Maine Coastal Coalition. Several hundreds of members support our efforts and we are recognized as a significant voice for coastal issues. The officers include members from several Southern Maine communities. S.O.S.-Maine is now an information source for State legislators, departments and committees, as well as coastal property owners all along the Maine coast. Along the way, S.O.S.-Maine's significant achievements include:

- Promoting the initial Corps of Engineers study in 1994.
- Accomplishing the passage of L.D.#160-"An Act to protect the integrity of seawalls and retaining walls" in Augusta, June 1995.
- Promoting by publicity and political action the Wells Harbor Dredge, carried out in the winter of 2000-01.
- Supporting the subsequent impact studies of the marshes.
- Sponsoring the State of Maine Beaches Conferences.
- Testifying in Augusta at Legislative Hearings, utilizing lobbyists to keep updated on legislative issues.
- Developing the first Beach Management Agreement which brought together Federal and State Environmental Agencies, Audubon, Rachel Carson, Town Government and maintenance personnel, and property owners.
- The contract that came out of this effort has been effectively implemented for ten+ years. The creation of a plover monitoring task force with significant reliance on community volunteers has become a model for the State of Maine.
- Actively participating in overseeing the development of flood maps in 2003, challenging many inaccuracies.
- Accomplishing the passage of the Dune Laws in 2004.

As we move forward, the renourishment of beaches and protection of the rights of property owners, both commercial and private , to secure and repair structures continues to be an area of challenge. Convincing the State to seek a thorough analysis of the impact of the loss of coastal properties, developing viable ways to secure access to the coast in the face of expanding populations and desired usage, supporting the efforts of towns to secure corrective measures in regard to the problems of the jetties, preserving this ecosystem which so enhances coastal life require on-going dedication to the effort of finding a balance. S.O.S.-Maine continues to be a strong, unique and important voice in seeking ways to establish such a balance.



"SHORELINES"

is the official publication of

**SAVE OUR
SHORES-MAINE**
P.O. Box 1785
Wells, ME 04090

MISSION:

S.O.S.-Maine's mission is to educate the coastal community about issues that impact Maine's coastal heritage.

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COASTAL ENVIRONMENTAL CORNER

By Bob Foley

Wells

Several issues are on our radar screen as we continue to monitor the environmental issues that affect coastal property owners.

The Town of Wells has started the application process for a new harbor dredge which will allow sand to be deposited on both Drakes Island and Wells Beach. The specific areas to receive the material will be the far northern-end of Drakes Island Beach, at the end of the sea wall, and on Wells Beach at the Casino Square area. Both areas are in a key position for the sand to do the most good, while allowing the natural currents to spread the sand southward on Drakes Island and northward on Wells Beach. The application process has been slowed, as the town needs licensing agreements from the property owners to allow the sand to be placed, the workers to access the area, and for the management of any piping puffers that nest in the impacted area.

We have submitted legislation through Representative Kathy Chase and Senator Richard Nass that would allow coastal property owners the right to put up temporary fencing during the winter months to protect their properties. While the current Sand Dune Rules allow temporary fencing for up to seven months, the problem has been that you cannot have any permanent support footings in which to support the temporary fencing. The bill would allow permanent footings to be placed underground in order to support a temporary fence to protect the property. The Maine Coastal Coalition, our legislative policy division, has hired Ted Johnston in order to help us lobby for passage of the bill. Donations to the Maine Coastal Coalition in support of this legislation would be greatly appreciated.

Finally, the Sand Dune Rules will be up for reconsideration next year. We plan to work with the State environmental agencies, especially the DEP, to make several changes within the Rules that appear to continue to be problematic from a property owner's point of view. We hope to be able to update you on these issues at this summer's annual meeting. Stay tuned.

ANNUAL MEETING

The S.O.S.-Maine annual meeting was well attended on July 12th at The Coastal House in Wells. New board members were introduced and financial and membership reports were given. John Delahanty and Bill Taylor from the lawfirm of **Pierce Atwood** in Portland, Maine presented a program on Sand Dune Law and regulations and answered questions from members. A Powerpoint presentation of this program is available on the S.O.S.-Maine website:

http://www.sosmaine.org/pdfs/Presentation_July_2008.pdf

New Web site about coastal access in Maine

www.seagrant.umaine.edu/accesslaw

for coastal property owners, waterfront users, and coastal towns

Throughout the Maine coast, issues related to accessing the water are becoming more common. Now, people on the coast have a new resource to help them understand the legal issues and tools available to address access issues. Maine Sea Grant, in partnership with University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Maine Coastal Program, and the Island Institute, announce the launch of

Accessing the Maine Coast

www.seagrant.umaine.edu/accesslaw

in early February, 2009.

The project partners have conducted extensive assessments of the need for coastal access information, including workshops, public meetings, and a 2007 report on access issues nationwide. Recognizing the confusing nature of Maine's coastal access laws, and the desire for diverse interests to resolve conflicts cooperatively, Maine Sea Grant and its partners created the site based on research conducted by the Center for Law and Innovation at the University of Maine Law School and funded by the National Sea Grant Law Center. *Accessing the Maine Coast* is not a listing of public access points in Maine. Rather, it is an information resource for coastal property owners, beach and waterfront users, public and environmental interest groups, and municipal, state, and federal governments. The site offers legal tools to address the specific coastal access questions and needs of these stakeholder groups.

A pilot version of the site was introduced to numerous SOS Maine members at a fall 2008 workshop held at the Wells Reserve at Laudholm Farm. SOS members expressed strong interest in the site and the site developers expect that the finalized version of the site will prove to be a valuable resource to SOS members. For more information on the site, please contact Kristen Grant with Maine Sea Grant Extension at 207-646-1555 x115 or kngrant@maine.edu.



SAVE THE DATE!!

2009 MAINE BEACHES
CONFERENCE

Valuing Maine's Beaches: Assets, Challenges, and Actions for
Today and Tomorrow

Friday, July 10th, 2009

at Southern Maine Community College, South Portland, ME
The Maine Beaches Conference provides continuing opportunities for communication and exchange of the most current information among beach stakeholders with diverse interests and presents findings from the state's beach monitoring programs.

S.O.S. Maine Community Service Scholarship

In June, S.O.S.-Maine will again award the third annual Community Service Scholarship to a high school senior. The \$1000 scholarship was established to honor the work of former S.O.S. President Bob Foley. The criteria for consideration for the scholarship includes high school seniors who are residents of Wells and who have demonstrated past service to the community and are also planning to perform community service during their college careers. More information about the scholarship can be found at www.sosmaine.org.

E-LETS

Members of S.O.S.-Maine who submit their e-mail addresses with their membership dues will be included in an internal distribution list. This list will be used exclusively to send important and timely information to members in the form of an e-mail alert.

Please let us know if your e-mail address has changed so that we can update our database. The information can be sent to:



info@sosmaine.org

S.O.S.-Maine & Maine Coastal Coalition Membership

The membership of S.O.S.-Maine continues to grow, with over 300 dues-paying members, and others on our mailing list who are receiving this newsletter. We will not be able to continue to mail the newsletter to these individuals in the future due to the cost of distribution, and ask that if you are interested in receiving the newsletter in the future, please become a member of S.O.S.-Maine. There is a membership form below, or you may visit the web-site www.sosmaine.org and print a form for yourself or your neighbor!

The Maine Coastal Coalition is the subsidiary of S.O.S. Maine, which is able to use donated funds to lobby for the interests of coastal property owners.

S.O.S.-Maine's fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th, and membership renewals are sent in July.



S.O.S.-Maine

P.O. Box 1785

Wells, ME 04090



- Yes, we want to be on the S.O.S.-Maine team. Here's our membership:
___ \$25 Individual ___ \$50 Family ___ \$75 Business ___ Other \$ _____
- Yes, we want to be a part of the Maine Coastal Coalition. Enclosed is a separate donation to establish my membership. Our taxable donation is: \$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____
- Renewal New member

NAME: _____

Winter Mailing Address: _____
Street Town Zip

Summer Mailing Address: _____

Phone: (summer) _____ (winter) _____

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