

Harbor Health

Key Findings

- Natural resources in and around the harbor provide for a variety of habitat that support fish and wildlife, and desired human uses (e.g. swimming, commercial and recreational fishing, etc.)
- Wading bird and waterfowl habitat is located throughout the harbor but is concentrated in the shallow area near Jameson Point
- Eel grass beds, which support a wide range of organisms and ecological functions, are located throughout the harbor; the largest area is in the shallow waters near Jameson Point
- Shellfish habitat has been identified in the shallow area near Jameson Point; however, the State has closed the harbor to commercial harvesting due to water quality
- The coastal bluff areas along the shoreline are more susceptible to erosion, particularly on the northern end
- Stormwater run-off, direct discharges, and other non-point sources of pollution (e.g. boats) are the main threat to water quality and sometimes lead to warnings or closures to swimming
- The harbor's environment includes water quality, air quality, marine life and habitat, noise pollution and light pollution which have limited capacities

Goals and Objectives

Goal:

- The environmental quality of the harbor supports healthy natural resources, ecological functions, habitats, and sustainable human use

Objectives:

1. Preserve, protect, maintain and wherever feasible improve, the quality of the harbor's natural resources
2. Decision making that is informed by science-based information, collaboration, and best practices

Abbreviation Key:

Harbor Master - HM

Parks & Rec Committee – P&RC

City Staff - S

Wastewater Treatment Plant – WWTP

Harbor Trail Committee – HTC

Harbor Management Commission – HMC

City Council – CC

Comprehensive Plan Commission - CCP

Recommended Actions

Harbor Health			
Objective	Recommended Action	Responsibility	Timeline
1,2	Identify potential partners (e.g. Mid-Coast School of Technology, Island Institute, adjacent communities) for collaboration with harbor health knowledge, opportunities, and threats	HMC, S	Ongoing

1,2	Working with partners, prepare and publish a “state of the harbor” report which can serve as a baseline for harbor health and help focus on areas that inform better decisions on municipal uses and regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline data could include water quality, movement of water, soils, habitat, species, etc. 	HMC, S	Medium Term (3-5 years)
1,2	Prioritize projects that improves stormwater separation	WWTP	Ongoing
1,2	Monitor the municipal wastewater treatment in accordance with best available technology and the highest standards of operation and maintenance	WWTP	Ongoing
1,2	Explore tools to help monitor and protect, as needed, the environmental capacity of Rockland Harbor	HMC	Ongoing
1,2	Regularly request water quality and/or soils testing from Department of Marine Resources to determine whether shellfish harvesting and aquaculture can be allowed	HM	Ongoing
1,2	Explore regulatory limits or bans on pesticide use	S	Short Term (1-2 years)
1,2	Continue support of regulations limiting the use of plastic bags and extruded polystyrene food containers	CC	Ongoing
1,2	Improve harbor water quality through reasonably attainable reductions in nonpoint sources of pollution and enhanced protection from point sources of pollution	WWTP, HM, HMC	Ongoing
1,2	Create and maintain accurate mapping of harbor habitat using easily accessible data and, when available, locally focused data	HM, S	Ongoing