



Caption: Footprints in mudflats along the Falmouth shore show the depth of algae mats that grow in nitrogen-polluted water.

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Maine Instant Lottery Funds Pollution Prevention

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Friends of Casco Bay has received a grant of \$25,000 from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund to support its research and outreach to protect Maine's coastal waters from nitrogen pollution. Through the sale of instant Lottery tickets, the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund awards approximately \$700,000 annually to projects that promote recreation, as well as conserve Maine's special places, endangered species, and important fish and wildlife habitat.

Cathy Ramsdell, CPA, Executive Director of Friends of Casco Bay, said, "This grant supports research on a huge but largely unrecognized threat to our coast. Rainwater carries nitrogen-rich fertilizers and sewage wastewater into coastal waters, and this can create bright green shag carpets of slimy algae that cover mudflats, smothering clams, crabs, worms, and mussels. This past summer, we were shown the extreme result of nitrogen pollution in Qingdao, China, the site of the Olympic sailing competition, where

10,000 people worked to remove waist-deep mats of green algae choking their coastal waters.”

Friends of Casco Bay staff began sampling for nitrogen pollution in Casco Bay in 2001. In 2005, using the organization’s corps of EPA-certified volunteer water quality monitors, the program was expanded to a 50 sites around the Bay. In 2007, Friends of Casco Bay helped to get a state law passed to begin establishing limits on nitrogen pollution. The law directs the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to work with sewage treatment operators, environmental groups, and municipalities to establish a numerical limit on allowable discharges of nitrogen into coastal waters. The grant from Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund will help Friends of Casco Bay/Casco Baykeeper to continue to collect data on nitrogen pollution and to collaborate with state agency scientists and policy makers to develop these criteria for Casco Bay and beyond.

Since 1989, Friends of Casco Bay/Casco BAYKEEPER® has been working to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay through advocacy, education, collaborative partnerships, water quality monitoring, and other scientific research. For more information, visit www.cascobay.org.

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