**Conservation Commission Annual Gathering
Notes
Thursday, July 22, 2021 Town Wharf**

**In attendance**: Mark Whiting-Hanock County Soil & Water Conservation District, Lucy Leaf- Toddy Pond Association, Hans Carlson-Blue Hill Heritage Trust, Sue Sokol – Friends of Patten Pond, Susan Shetterly, Norman Mrozicki, Barbara & Pat Tedesco – Surry Alewife Committee, Annie Langston Noll & Maya- Pemetic Sea Farms, Heather Richard (+Maya)-Shaw Institute, Nancy Hathaway – Conservation Com. & Dark Sky, Tom & Sharon Minogue, Ralph Topham & Chris Stark-Conservation Commission, Irene Schmidt, George Borowsky, Marie Merkel

Sue Sokol - the **Friends of Patten Pond**, includes Surry, Ellsworth, Orland – Monitor water quality, boat checks for invasive plants, particularly at the campground on the Ellsworth side. Seeing increase of geese population.

Mark Whiting – **Hancock County Soil & Water Conservation District** – agriculture/water bodies. Fresh water – invasive plant/aquatic life monitoring, Courtesy Boat Inspection Program, water testing. Also work in Frenchman’s Bay studying health of shellfish – clams/invasive green crabs. Works with 7-town Greater Frenchman’s Bay group studying shellfish habitat. Mark ncourages Surry to partner with other towns, like Blue Hill, to study shellfish.

Susan Shetterly, Norman Mrozicki, Barbara & Pat Tedesco – **Surry Alewife Committee**. Residents recognized the anadromous fish passage barriers on Patten Stream. There was a major die-off of alewives at the culvert with Route 172 where the fish were unable to continue their run. In 2009 volunteers organized to transport fish in buckets and later in nets upstream from below the culvert. In 2011, Surry adoped an Alewife Ordinance to protect the alewife run on Patten Stream. By October of 2015 a rock-weir passage was constructed with funding from the DOT and other organizations to fix culvert and passage for migrating alewives. The Surry Alewife Committee continues to collect data on the alewife fish run (in May), including visual counts, water temperature and weather condition which is shared with scientific and technical partners. The Alewife Committee needs volunteers for the May fish count. If they don’t collect data each spring, the Town of Surry forfeits the right to protect and restore the alewife population that migrates up Patten Stream.

Heather Richard – **Shaw Institute**  and Ralph Topham – **Conservation Commission** reported on their efforst to address water quality in Patten Bay and shellfish studies in Patten Bay and Newbury Neck (Union River Bay). Shaw institute has been testing for fecal pollution in Patten Bay and from Patten Stream and Flood Stream with funding primarily from Under Canvas. Currently, instances of high levels of fecal pollution (over 104 MPN-most probable number) is from Flood Stream and is avian. It also appears on the south shore of Patten Bay by Abenaki

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Lane. A full tidal survey, a drifter study to study the way water flows through the bay, a flow meter in Patten Stream, as well as testing algae and microplastic will also be conducted. Ralph talked about studying invasive green crabs and using exclusion boxes to get a count of the crabs/including their size and gender both in Patten Bay and off Newbury Neck. There are volunteer needs in these studies at this time.

Annie Langston Noll - **Pemetic Sea Farms** – talked about farming oysters and kelp. She said that when they pull their oyster cages, each cage is covered with hundreds of invasive green crabs. It is difficult to get rid of green crabs or compost them (terrible smell) but in Machias, they have been selling them to Purina for cat food. Annie also does educational programs about locally farmed seafood and marine environments and develops curriculum for UM Machias. She said it takes 3 years to harvest oysters, but, lately, has lost over 100,000 oysters to crabs and starfish. Ivory barnacles are appearing on oysters and have been reported by lobsterman to appear on lobsters.

Hans Carlson-**Blue Hill Heritage Trust** – In Surry, they are making a southern entrance, off Route 172, to the Meadowbrook Forest (2033 acres) and the firewood for the parking area is being donated to Downeast Wood Bank, which provides firewood for people who cannot afford it. On the Meadowbrook Forest lot, they have leased out a small portion for Chickadee Compost – a company that is collecting food scraps and waste from seafood processors to compost for community use. They will be in operation by the end of this summer. Chickadee Compost may be collecting invasive green crabs for composting.

Lucy Leaf-**Toddy Pond Association**. Toddy Pond is shared with Surry, Blue Hill, Penobscot and Orland. About 5 miles are in Surry. It flows towards Orland and the Penobscot Bay. The Surry portion is a dense developed area with many camps. The Toddy Pond Association focuses on preventing invasive plant infestation through the volunteer Courtesy Boat Inspection Program. They also do water monitoring and watch for algae blooms. There are several Bass Fishing Tournaments on Toddy Pond which requires a lot of boat inspecting for invasive plants. In addition, the boats go too fast on the pond in search of bass.

Nancy Hathaway-**Dark Sky Maine.** Dark Sky Maine, started in Surry, promotes an appreciation of the night sky through education and by supporting measures to use appropriate lighting by businesses and residents while maintaining dark skies overhead. They promote Dark Sky designation throughout Maine, have special events at the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and have 4 virtual sessions around Solstice/Equinox. The next Dark Sky event in Surry will be on August 5 at the Carrying Place Beach lead by John Meader of the Northern Stars Planetarium.