



Town of Casco

Water Quality Committee Minutes

April 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Casco Community Center

Committee Attendees

- Tom McCarthy
- Levi Thornton
- Diane Cormier
- Maggie Daigle
- Jim Arsham
- Pam Edwards

Public Attendees

- Russ Hutchinson (Crescent Lake Watershed)
- Steve Crain (Raymond Waterways)
- Nancy Crilly-Kirk (Raymond Waterways)
- Mary Jewett (LEA)
- Mike Dennis (PLPPA)
- Grant Plummer (Casco Selectboard)

Regular Meeting

1. Review and approval of the meeting agenda

Approval of minutes moved after public participation

Moved: Levi, Second: Diane, Unanimous approval

2. Establish quorum

3. Public participation for non-agenda items

4. Approval of minutes from March 18, 2025

Moved to postpone by Pam, Second: Levi, Unanimous approval

New Business

1. Round Table Discussion with Lake Association on Courtesy Boat Inspections

Topic: Historical coverage per site

- Raymond Waterways: 1620 hrs requested across 4 launches for in 2025
- Crescent Lake (through RWA): Fr/Sat/Sun, plus holidays
- Thomas Pond (through RWA): Half days Sat/Sun, plus holidays
- Pleasant Lake (through LEA): 365 casco hrs, 358 Otisfield hrs in 2025 (Sat/Sun, plus some holidays)
- Parker Pond (through LEA): 291 hrs in 2025 (Sat/Sun, plus some holidays)

Topic: Cost / Funding

- DEP grant available (roughly \$7-10k). Based on size and also DEP-established vulnerability index (volume of use, proximity to infestation, potential for colonization). Automatically funded when there is an active infestation, must apply after getting off the list for 3 years.
- DEP grant is available to towns, not just lake associations
- Town budgets funding both lake associations and regional environmental associations

Topic: What is working

- Need to give CBIs enough hours to make it worth their while.
- Need to set a schedule well in advance (May) with known outages
- Need to check references carefully, due to issues with reliability
- Conservation Job Board for hiring
- Notifying schools

Topic: Issues with current approach

- What to do when inclement weather makes CBI unnecessary? Suggestion: keep their hours up by moving them to weekday times
- Young women (at least) feel unsafe covering Thomas Pond due to remote/desolate location
- Need more than just lakefront owners to care about clean water
- Heavily reliant on volunteers to fill in gaps from paid inspectors
- Low-paid compared to other summer job opportunities, and weekend hours can be undesirable to some. In LEA's case, some lakes will overpay compared to LEA.

Topic: Effectiveness of the current program.

- Weekends aren't necessarily the busiest days in the summer
- Optical inspection may not be enough to combat invasives (e.g. Zebra mussels) long-term

Topic: How do we measure effectiveness

- Start measuring # of boats launched, and what % are covered by CBI

Topic: Ideas on ways to improve

Improved Signage

Centralized staffing management?

Centralized video monitoring with two-way communication?

Regional management

- LEA is the closest to this today, but can't increase coverage due to capacity. Proximity also matters - coordinator needs to be able to check in on inspectors

Other Ideas:

- Inspiration from Quabbin Reservoir - require boat sealing in order to get access to the water
- QR-code info at the boat launch

Outcomes - potential projects:

- Audit signage across launches
- Encouraging volunteerism
- Camera
 - 2-way communication too much, requires staffing and could be invasive
 - Just counting launches and gathering data could be a good starting point
 - Having a camera trained on the boat launch could be a public service (is it busy? Is the dock installed?)
- Print materials covering clean/drain/dry, boater laws, and penalties

Continuing Business

1. Section review of comments received.
 - a. Land Use Ordinances
 - b. Watershed Stewardship
 - c. Testing and Inspections
 - d. Shoreline Conditions and Documentation
 - e. Education and Outreach
 - f. Funding
2. Budget proposal
 - a. "Water Quality testing and support for the 4 lakes that did not submit a donation request" will to be revised to "invasive mitigation efforts and pilot programs"

Moved: Tom, Second: Diane, Unanimous approval

Action Item

1. **Tom** to send the latest budget proposal to the committee for approval before town warrants go out

Reminders to the Attending Public: Water Quality Committee meetings are open to the public, but the public may not speak unless recognized by the Committee Chair or Vice Chair in their absence. Except during a public hearing, comment time is limited to 2 minutes per speaker during public participation or on agenda items.

Future meeting dates (subject to change)

May 20, 2026 at 6:00 PM Casco Community Center

June 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM Casco Community Center

July 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM Casco Community Center

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