**Presentation of the Frenchman Bay Partners to the Zone B Lobster Council**

**Location:** MDI High School

**Date and time:** April 8, 2013, 6 pm

**Purpose:** To invite the Zone B Lobster Council to elect a representative to the Frenchman Bay Partners.

**Frenchman Bay Partners in attendance**

* Jane Disney, President
* Bridie McGreavy, Secretary
* Emma Fox, Maine Conservation Corps/AmeriCorps Environmental Educator
* Shannon White, Maine Conservation Corps/AmeriCorps Environmental Educator
* Jordan Bailey, Frenchman Bay Partners website designer

Emma Fox, Maine Conservation Corps/AmeriCorps Environmental Educator, presented to the council on behalf of the Frenchman Bay Partners. Included in the presentation was a description of the Frenchman Bay Partners approach; particularly, that the Frenchman Bay Partners address bay issues outside of top-down intervention or legislative action, the group is creating a Frenchman Bay plan, and that five targets have been prioritized, including eelgrass, mudflats, subtidal benthic habitats, migratory fishes, and marine-based livelihoods.

The diversity of the Frenchman Bay Partners was described and examples of different groups of partners were given, including a mention of the eight municipalities that have now signed on as partners.

More detail on the habitats and species of concern to the Frenchman Bay Partners was given and it was highlighted that lobsters fall within the subtidal benthic, or bottom, habitats target. It was also mentioned that the partners will be doing some benthic surveying this summer using a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to learn more about what’s on the bottom of the bay.

The Frenchman Bay Atlas was described and was passed around the audience. It was pointed out that the atlas can be found online and that the partners welcome input on its content. Examples of how the Frenchman Bay Partners helps to facilitate conversations among user groups on the bay were also given, including the recent collaboration between the partners with mussel harvesters held over dinner at Gordon’s wharf, where informal agreements were made about eelgrass restoration areas in Frenchman Bay.

Emma also described how there had been a previous collaboration in 2011 between Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory’s Community Environmental Health Lab with lobsterman Phil Corson, which helped increase our understanding of lobster habitat use in Frenchman Bay. The partners are hopeful for future collaborations with fishermen in Frenchman Bay.

The Frenchman Bay Partners are working on enhancing communication. The bay plan, bay atlas, an events calendar, and a forum for discussion can be found on the website. Partners can also use the website to email other partners.The Frenchman Bay Partners have a Facebook page, which more partners seem to use than the website, although both places provide venues for communications.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Zone B Lobster Council was invited to elect a representative to the Frenchman Bay Partners and to a subtidal benthic habitats subcommittee which is currently being developed to focus on this target. Jon Carter mentioned that the Zone B Council takes in more than just Frenchman Bay. There are only about 2 or 3 representatives from Frenchman Bay.There were then questions about the frequency, time, and place of Frenchman Bay Partners meetings.

Jane Disney, Frenchman Bay Partners President, responded to these questions explaining that the Executive Committee has regular meetings, but not all partners are expected to attend those meetings. The partners are also setting up working groups for eelgrass, mudflats, subtidal benthic habitats, and migratory fishes, but it hasn’t been established how often these groups will meet. The only requirement for the liaison would be that they be the person who receives emails and communications and knows what is going on with the partners. The Frenchman Bay Partners have an annual meeting that we would like all partners to attend to let people hear what is going on. The partners just held the annual meeting in February. There is not a lot required of the person who serves as representative, but it would be good to have someone from the lobster community that has an ear in the Frenchman Bay Partners as we are working toward a healthy and sustainable future for the bay.

Jane discussed how anyone can see who else is a partner on the bay. The partners have already played a role in helping to resolve conflict between clammers and draggers and mussel harvesters have agreed not to harvest in 228 acres that have been set aside for eelgrass restoration.

Jon Carter agreed to sign on as the representative for the time being, but pointed out that it could be more beneficial to have a representative who works at the head of the bay (e.g. Sorrento or Lamoine), where the partners are doing a lot of their work. There were questions about why the partners wanted the representative to be from the council, to which Jane responded that we had expected that representatives from Frenchman Bay would be at the meeting. There was a discussion about the cod landed by the Frenchman Bay fleet in the 1800s. Jane described the report on historic cod fisheries in the bay written by Karen Alexander of the University of New Hampshire.

Shannon, Maine Conservation Corps/AmeriCorps Environmental Educator, described the plan for this summer to sample sites that were historically important to the groundfisheries as part of a survey to collect more data on subtidal benthic habitats and biodiversity in the bay. While our current focus is Frenchman Bay, we might end up with a wider group of partners than just in Frenchman Bay and we already have partners outside of this area (e.g. Friends of Blue Hill Bay).

Anyone as an individual is welcome to join as a partner. Jordan Bailey, Frenchman Bay Partners website designer, is making it possible for individuals and organizations to have their own pages on the website. The website is a place to communicate and a big piece of the Frenchman Bay Partners interest is communication.