



GREAT BAY BOOK GROUP

ACTION TOOL KIT

April 2024

Are you feeling inspired by the victory of grassroots activists who defeated a proposed oil refinery and shipping terminal in the Seacoast region 50 years ago? Are you wondering what you can do to make our coastal region healthier and more sustainable in the face of today's environmental challenges?

Please use the resources below to learn more about issues that concern you, develop skills to become an effective advocate in your community, and connect with many people and organizations to amplify your voice and make a difference! As you become more involved, you'll meet interesting, passionate people, gain new knowledge and skills, and feel empowered by being part of something positive.

This is not an exhaustive list of every group and every issue, but it is a good starting point. If you have additional resources, please let us know so we can update this action guide.

**"Start where you are.
Use what you have.
Do what you can."
Arthur Ashe**

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Meade**

Climate Action

Climate change is the greatest environmental threat we face locally and globally. Everyone can be part of the solution to climate change, and no action is too small! Getting involved with groups and other community members is the best way to fight climate anxiety. You'll see how many people care and are working creatively to make our communities and our region more sustainable and resilient.

In the Great Bay region, climate change is causing:

- Warming ocean temperatures that impact the range and survival of plants and animals that are essential for healthy coastal ecosystems;
- Rising sea levels that flood coastal roads and neighborhoods in storms, and even on sunny days when tides are especially high;
- Increasingly intense storms that damage our communities, erode beaches and saltmarshes, wash out roads and culverts, and carry massive amounts of stormwater pollution and sediment into our rivers and bays;
- Hotter summers, warmer winters, and more extreme periods of draught and record-breaking rainfall.

To learn more about how climate change is impacting our region, visit

[New Hampshire Climate Assessment](#)

[Maine Won't Wait – Maine Climate Action Plan](#)

Many communities have local climate action groups that are doing great work to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, shift to renewable sources of electricity, and increase local resilience to the impacts of climate change. Look on your town or city website to see if there is a group near you. A few examples include:

[Seacoast Climate Action Now](#) (Portsmouth and surrounding communities)

[Kittery Climate Action Now](#) and [Kittery Climate Adaptation Committee](#)

[York Ready for Climate Action](#)

[Dover Energy Commission](#)

[Durham Energy Committee](#)

[Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission](#)

Statewide climate action organizations are working to change energy policies, promote renewable energy sources like offshore wind and community solar, support funding for communities to increase climate resilience, and elect leaders who will fight for climate solutions.

[350 New Hampshire](#)

[Clean Energy NH](#)

[Community Power Coalition of NH](#)
[Conservation Law Foundation](#)
[League of Conservation Voters NH](#)
[Natural Resources Council of Maine](#)
[New Hampshire Network](#) – Environment-Energy-Climate

Are you a student who cares about climate change? Get in touch with

[350 New Hampshire](#)

Are you an older person who cares about climate change? Check out [Third Act](#), Bill McKibben's climate action organization for elders who have time, knowledge, and resources to fight for climate solutions.

[Third Act Maine](#)
[Third Act New Hampshire](#)

Plastic Pollution and Waste Reduction

We're awash in plastic waste fouling our land and water. Plastic never goes away, it just breaks into tiny particles that are dangerous for all living things, including people! We need to say NO! to plastic wherever and whenever possible, fight for more sensible recycling and waste reduction rules, and require companies to produce less plastic and pay the costs to recycle it.

We have some great local groups fighting to reduce plastic and clean up our beaches:

[Beyond Plastics](#) and [Ten Towns Toolkit](#)
[Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation](#)
[Surfrider NH](#) and [Surfrider ME](#)

Water Quality and Ecological Health

To learn everything you'd like to know about the health of the rivers, bays and coast in the Great Bay and Hampton-Seabrook Region, check out the [2023 State of Our Estuaries Report](#) from the [Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership](#).

A major contributor of pollution to the region's waterways comes from wastewater from the 400,000 people who live around the Great Bay region. No one loves to think about – or pay for – the proper treatment of sewage but it's essential if we want to protect water quality and our

coastal ecosystem. Be sure your town and city elected officials know that you value clean water and support making the needed investments in sewage treatment.

Another major contributor of pollution runs off roads, pavement, buildings and parking lots every time it rains. By getting rain to soak into the ground before it runs into wetlands, streams and rivers, we can greatly reduce the sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus that wreak havoc on our waterways. Be a champion in your community for rules that require effective stormwater management from all new development and wherever properties are being re-developed.

A third important cause of poor health of our region's rivers, bays and coast is the runoff of lawn chemicals from the landscape every time it rains. By limiting or eliminating fertilizer and pesticide use around your home, you'll be making an important contribution to clean water.

Get involved in local efforts to promote clean water:

[Great Bay-Piscataqua Waterkeeper](#) with Conservation Law Foundation

[Non Toxic Dover](#)

[Save Kittery Waters](#)

[Tide Turners](#) with Great Bay Stewards

York [Lawns for Lobsters](#)

[Great Bay 2030](#) Changemakers Bootcamp – learn how to become a more effective advocate for clean water and sustainable communities. Contact Lynn Vaccaro at lynn.e.vaccaro@wildlife.nh.gov.

Land Conservation

One of the best ways to improve the health of our region is to conserve important landscapes that protect water quality, provide habitat for wildlife, and create spaces for sustainable farming and recreation. Our region is blessed with many amazing land trusts doing this important work. Getting involved with your local land trust is great ways to get to know the special people and places in your community!

In New Hampshire:

[Southeast Land Trust of NH](#)

[Bear-Paw Regional Greenways](#)

[Moose Mountain Regional Greenway](#)

[Society for the Protection of NH Forests](#)

[The Nature Conservancy of NH](#)

In Maine:

[Kittery Land Trust](#)

[Great Works Regional Land Trust](#)

[York Land Trust](#)

[Maine Coast Heritage Trust](#)

[The Nature Conservancy of Maine](#)

Education

If you're looking for awesome local places to learn about our spectacular Seacoast region, or if you're an educator who wants to incorporate coastal issues into your curriculum, please visit:

[Seacoast Science Center](#)

[Great Bay Discovery Center](#)

[The Gundalow Company](#)

[UNH Marine Docents](#) is a great education program that trains people to teach marine science at local schools and outdoor venues.

And if you just want to get your feet wet and hands dirty, pull invasives, count birds, or help on community science projects, visit [Nature Groupie](#) for a full list of outdoor volunteer events going on all over New England.

There are many more groups, projects, and ways to become engaged than are included in this Action Toolkit. Please send additional links, updates or suggestions to

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