

Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
December 4, 2008
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
@ Room 327 Wishcamper Center, USM

2009 Upcoming Meetings of the PRWC Board

Thursday	January 22nd, Gilsland Farm
Thursday	March 26th, Location TBD
Thursday	May 28th, Location TBD

In attendance: Fred Dillon – PRW, Mike Doan – FOCB, Jeff Varricchione - DEP, Merrie Cartwright – NOAA Fisheries, Will Plumley - FOPR, Bob Shafto – Town of Falmouth, Andy Colvin – Maine Audubon, Brooks More – Town of Windham, Diane Kenty – Westbrook resident, Tania Neuschafer – PRLT, Matt Craig – CBEP (minutes).

I .Introductions – Will led a round of introductions.

II. Areas of Focus for 2008 – Brief Reports

- a. Presumpscot Watershed Initiative – Matt reported that most PWI implementation work is finished, and partners’ attention is focused on the final report. A workshop for teachers to use the GIS products developed under the grant is being held on 12/11/08.
- b. Guide to the Presumpscot River – Fred & Matt reported on the Guide’s status. Most of the water quality chapter revision has been completed by PRW. The next step will be to work with the original authors, Amy McDonald & others, to approve the revisions.
- c. Mill Brook habitat enhancement/restoration – Jeff & Matt reported on recent field visits to impacted areas identified in the 2005 Presumpscot River Habitat Restoration Inventory, as well as stream crossings over Mill Brook. Many of the sites identified by the 2005 assessment are in better shape due in part to reduced impacts from ATVs through the brook. Smaller BMP projects are still needed but they are not urgent. There are minor improvements to be made at stream crossings, particularly Rte. 302, that could enhance year-round fish passage. The primary recommendation of the Mill Brook report remains working with area land trusts and municipalities toward protection and conservation of the riparian corridor.
- d. Sebago-to-the-Sea Trail – Tania talked about a productive site walk with PWD yesterday at the Sebago Lake end of the proposed trail, to a beach along the eastern shore. PRLT was awarded a in-kind grant to partner with National Park Service experts in planning and developing the Sebago to the Sea trail. Next S2S meeting will be held at Portland Trails on Friday 12/12, from 8:00 – 10:00.
- e. Outreach to municipalities – Will summarized 2008 outreach efforts, which included presentations to the Town Council’s of Falmouth, Windham, and Gorham. The intent of the presentations was to raise public awareness about the Coalition & our work. Any municipal outreach efforts in 2009 will shift focus now that the PWI is nearly finished.
- f. Fundraising – Will summarized fundraising activities in 2008. Initially, fundraising was to focus on continuing two components of the PWI: water quality monitoring and the PRYCC. No proposals were written. Over the course of the year, Mill Brook also emerged as a focus area and a possible focus area for fundraising. Site visits to Mill Brook did not generate ready-to-go grant proposals. The Sebago to the Sea effort, which now includes its own coalition, has been very successful in fundraising. The S2S focus should continue in 2009.
- g. River Festival –Will briefly summarized the July Riverfest in downtown Westbrook.

- h. Milfoil Training – Fred discussed PRW efforts to train volunteers to identify milfoil in the Presumpscot. There is a need to remove milfoil in North Gorham Pond. PRW will continue working on this effort with interested citizens in 2009.

III. Public Hearing on Fish Passage at Cumberland Mills Dam – Will provided background for the upcoming public hearing on this issue. FOPR requested that IFW move forward with proceedings to require fish passage at Cumberland Mills after the previous Settlement Framework Agreement fell through. IFW is the only entity that can require fish passage now, since the Cumberland Mills dam is not a hydroelectric facility and therefore, is not subject to FERC license requirements. There is a public hearing on the issue of whether IFW should require fish passage on 12/15. If passage is required at Cumberland Mills, it will trigger passage requirements at all the FERC licensed dams further upstream. Will handed out a sheet with talking points for the hearing on whether IF&W should require fish passage at the Cumberland Mills Dam. The public hearing will be held at the Westbrook Public Safety building from 7:00 – 9:00 PM on Monday, 12/15. Interveners have separate hearings scheduled during the day. Will invited representatives from PRWC to speak about how the river is important to individuals & organizations, and why. Several individuals signaled their intention to participate.

IV. Areas of Focus for 2009 – Will facilitated a brainstorming activity as a starting point for developing areas of focus for 2009. Priorities identified will be discussed by the Exec. Committee, which will make recommendations to the full Coalition for the January 22 meeting. Votes for 2009 focus are provided in parentheses (**6 votes per person**):

- Guide to the Presumpscot River (**to be continued in 2009**)
- Mill Brook land conservation (**5 votes**)
- Sebago to the Sea (**to be continued in 2009**)
- Outreach to Munis. (**0 votes**)
- Fundraising – restructure. (**0 votes**)
- Riverfest (**5 votes**)
- Milfoil in Presumpscot (**3 votes**)
- Land conservation values & priorities for the Presumpscot watershed - building on the work of the Portland North Regional Land Trust. GIS as a tool. (**7 votes**)
- Pursue mitigation monies as a source of buying easements or land outright (state in lieu of fund for airport expansion, CMP ROW \$20 million). (**0 votes**)
- Biota tracking/bio-blitz – conduct a 24 hour biological profile. Originated with National Geographic. Previously conducted at Wells NERR. (**5 votes**)
- Social event for key contributors to water quality (eg. Farmers) via health of riparian zone – focus on Pleasant River farms with a “cow paddies potluck” to let folks know about current state of Pleasant River & resources to address pollution sources (**3 votes**)
- Develop partnerships with groups: TU, CCA, anglers club, TNC, Sierra Club, AMC, MCHT, NRCM, Maine Rivers, Ducks Unlimited, CLF, Rod & Gun, Sportsman’s Alliance (**2 votes**)
- More stream crossing signs
- Canoe trip (**1 vote**)
- Land trust site tours (**2 votes**)
- Pursue upgrading water quality classification in the lower part of the River from Class C to Class B. Deploy sondes; explore possibility of utilizing USM interns. (**6 votes**)
- Press relations (**5 votes**) – increase publicity for PRWC activities such as turnout for hearing, Guide, Riverfest, PRWC projects
- Revisit & possibly update PR Management Plan (**2 votes**)

Top vote-getters:

- 7 votes – Land Conservation & Values priority setting
- 6 votes – Pursuing upgrading lower Presumpscot from C to B

- 5 votes – 2009 Riverfest
- 5 votes – Mill Brook Land Conservation
- 5 votes – Bioblitz
- 5 votes – Press relations

V. 2009 Riverfest?– There was limited time to discuss this topic, so it was postponed to our January meeting. Maine DEP Americorps staff won't be available to lead coordination efforts this year.

VI. Discussion to fund projects – Matt led off by providing an overview of current CBEP funds available to PRWC. A total of \$13,000 is currently set aside. Of that, \$4,000 must be spent by 9/2009, \$2,500 by 9/2010, and \$6,500 by 9/2011. Matt noted that July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010 CBEP budget discussions are underway. CBEP takes into consideration how previous funds have been utilized when making new allocations. Will put forth a few ideas for immediate expenditures, based on discussions at the previous Executive Committee meeting. The group proposed to earmark \$2,500 for an outreach brochure for municipalities, \$1,500 for printing the Presumpscot Guide. Other needs for immediate funding included the Presumpscot Conservation focus for 2009, and putting sondes in the water. Matt suggested postponing any decisions on expending these funds until our January meeting to provide members of the Executive Committee who were not in attendance at today's meeting to weigh in. The group agreed.

VII. Next Meeting – The next full PRWC meeting will be held at Maine Audubon's Gilsland Farm Sanctuary in Falmouth, on January 22 from 3:00 – 5:00 PM.

Meeting Adjourned

PRWC Meetings, 2009

Regular Meetings: 1/22, 3/26, 5/28, 7/23, 9/24, 12/3 (3-5 pm, venue varies)

Executive Committee: 1/13, 3/17, 5/21, 7/14, 9/15, 11/17 (12 – 1:30, venue varies)