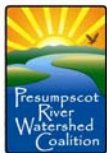


Developing Shared Vision, Values & Priorities for Land Conservation in the Lower Presumpscot River Watershed



PROJECT SUMMARY

Version: 30 November 2010

Background



Following a century of abuse, the Presumpscot is a river in recovery. However, recent development trends are permanently changing the landscape and degrading water quality. Over the coming decades, the Greater Portland Area is projected to continue growing at a pace exceeding that of the rest of Maine. The relatively rapid rate of suburban sprawl will further increase impervious surfaces (paved areas), fragment habitat, and erode quality of place. Research in Maine shows that at 8-10% impervious cover, detrimental impacts to streams occur.

Over 7% of the Presumpscot's watershed is comprised of impervious surfaces, while 2.5% is permanently protected. This project grew out of broad recognition among Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition partners of needs & opportunities to strengthen land conservation.

Needs

A collaborative approach to land protection at the watershed scale is needed to:

- Maintain water quality, aquatic habitat, & fisheries
- Promote proactive, not opportunistic, protection
- Communicate & coordinate in pursuit of limited funds
- Protect ecologically significant areas that span institutional boundaries
- Improve dialogue between

upstream and downstream conservation partners

Opportunities

After decades of turning our backs on the Presumpscot, we have a unique opportunity to protect a relatively undeveloped watershed close to Maine's fastest growing urban area, and in the process:

- Build capacity for regional land conservation
- Find efficiencies in land conservation efforts
- Strengthen fund raising
- Expand policy influence & speak as a unified group
- Build on existing successes & projects
- Demonstrate broad support by highlighting common interests across multiple constituencies

Project Goals

- ESTABLISH SHARED VISION, VALUES, AND PRIORITIES FOR LAND CONSERVATION IN THE LOWER PRESUMPSCOT RIVER WATERSHED
- DEVELOP A TRANSFERABLE PROCESS MODEL FOR USE IN ADJACENT WATERSHEDS

Roles & Expectations

The Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition serves as the convening entity for the project. To date, we have engaged land trusts, municipalities, & resource providers. Upcoming public forums will seek direct engagement with large landowners and targeted businesses. The current structure defines two distinct committees as outlined below.

Stakeholder Committee

- Comprised of representatives of organizations & parties interested in land conservation in the Presumpscot watershed
- Decision making body for process and content
- Meets at least once per quarter & as necessary
- 'Chair' to run meetings, set agenda, & ensure effective communication.

Steering Committee

- Subcommittee of the Stakeholder Committee
- Tasked with project management tasks by the Stakeholder Committee. Tasks include background research, organizing public involvement, reporting, & grant management
- Meets at least once per month with additional meetings as necessary





The watershed both directly and indirectly provides for our basic needs: clean water, active farms, fish & wildlife, and working forests.

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Why your participation is important

This project is designed to be collaborative, inclusive, and broad-based. We hope that a collaborative approach will enhance credibility, improve the final products, and most importantly, accurately reflect the core values and priorities of conservation part-

ners active within the watershed. For these reasons, we are striving to engage all 12 towns & cities which comprise the watershed, all 6 local land trusts that are active within the watershed, and the public at large, in order to achieve maximum support,

impact and effect. As a representative of a town or land trust, you are being asked to participate because you can speak directly to the land conservation values, vision, and priorities of your organization or town.

Funding

FUNDING FOR THIS INITIATIVE IS PROVIDED THROUGH THE ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDERS NETWORK QUALITY OF PLACE INITIATIVE, AS WELL AS THE CASCO BAY ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP.

THE CASCO BAY ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP, LOCATED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE, IS THE GRANT RECIPIENT ON BEHALF OF THE PRESUMPCOT RIVER WATERSHED COALITION.

Project Outcomes

In Oct. 2010, the Steering Committee developed a mock up-document for the Stakeholder Committee to consider as a possible end product. The document will incorporate several components toward completion of the overall project goals:

- Background & context
- Process model
- Conservation values, with accompanying maps
- Conservation priorities, with accompanying maps
- Vision statement
- Recommendations

- Implementation strategies
- Lessons learned

A second product/tool will be a transferable geodatabase for storage, analysis, and development of existing & new geospatial data.

Process & Timeline

Winter, Spring, 2010-2011

Data development:

- Stakeholder meetings
- Public forums
- GIS data collection
- Identify & develop new data

Spring, Summer, Fall 2011

Values & Prioritization:

- Stakeholders
- Public input & refinement
- Between meeting work by Steering Committee
- GIS analysis

Fall & Winter, 2011-2012

Maps, Vision, Recommendations, Strategies:

- Stakeholders
- Steering Committee
- Public input & refinement



Maintaining traditional recreational use and access requires knowing what we have, what we value, and what we'd like to add.

For More Information

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Additional information about the project and the Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition is available at: www.presumpscotcoalition.org

