

**Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition/
Casco Bay Habitat Restoration
Committee - Joint Meeting
July 28, 2005
3:00- 6:00 p.m.
@ MDEP, Canco Road, Portland**

Next Meetings of the PRWC Board

**Thursday August 25 4:00 – 6:00 PM
Thursday October 27 4:00 – 6:00 PM**

In attendance (at all or part of the meeting): Forrest Bell-PRW, Jeff Varricchione-DEP, Don Kale-DEP, Betty Williams-CCSWCD, Diane Gould-EPA, Matt Craig- CBEP, Merrie Cartwright-NOAA, Pete Clark- Falmouth, Don Card- DMR, Sandy Cort- FOPR, Erno Bonebakker- WNERR, Jon Kachmar- Maine Coastal Program- Erin Crowley- Americorps, Karen Young- CBEP, Will Plumley- FOPR, Jim Stahlnecker- DEP, Fred Dillon- PRW

I. Introductions/Purpose of Meeting:

Matt explained that the purpose of the joint meeting was to bring the groups together to discuss the *Habitat Restoration Inventory for the Lower Presumpscot River Watershed* and to help set priorities.

II. Presentation and Discussion

Matt presented a powerpoint slide developed by NEA, the consultants that completed the inventory. He reviewed the project goals, i.e., to develop an inventory of potential restoration sites below Cumberland Mills Dam, to record site conditions and to disseminate the information to interested parties. Five water bodies were inventoried: the Presumpscot Estuary, West Branch of the Piscataqua, Mill Brook, East Branch of the Piscataqua and the main stem of the Presumpscot River below Cumberland Mills. Sources of degradation were identified. Restoration opportunity was ranked according to factors that would influence the feasibility of restoration, e.g., land ownership, access, probability of long-term success. Site summary reports were developed for each of 154 sites. The reports include an aerial photo/map, site photo, landowners, cost estimates, limitations to restoration, evaluation scores and project tracking information.

The database is a Microsoft Access database. Matt demonstrated the search capabilities (e.g., by cost, location). The database can be accessed via the password CBP. Matt passed out a set of excel spread sheets he developed from the database sorted by various factors. Potential sorting factors are:

- degradation score/ecological benefit
- management priorities
- cost
- ownership/access
- visibility (demonstration site)
- type of degradation
- size of the site to be restored

III. Prioritization Session

Erno suggested that we pick a manageable handful of sites (perhaps try to obtain easements on riparian buffers). We could move forward using CBEP funds. Look for a project we can fund using internal funds (CBEP and PRWC) as a demonstration project.

Will noted that the overarching criteria should be projects that we can start with to build momentum, e.g., visible, size, public/private (perhaps a private land owner would promote the project publically).

Erno noted that working with a group like Portland Trails to do land restoration (erosion from trails) could provide us with access to volunteers.

Jeff noted that we should consider the risk of failure, maintenance issues.

Several people suggested that we divide the sites among multiple geographic areas. Best from a watershed perspective.

Matt highlighted a few sites as examples:

Site PR-16A - Site has a high degradation score and is on public land. There is bank erosion, behind a former landfill. Cost estimate was \$25-75,000.

Site MB-06 – This site is an active gravel pit off Methodist Avenue. There are 2 culverts that discharge from a detention pond. Need to eliminate source of sediment loading. The landowner is approachable. There may be a partnership opportunity. Talk to enforcement people. Need to stabilize 1500 linear feet.

Site PR-26 – Another gravel pit near an apparent hayfield. Perhaps WHIP money would be available. Betty will follow up.

Matt showed several ATV sites. The group noted that such sites are challenging and that money may be best used on outreach and education of ATV riders.

Site PE-8 – This site is a tire dump (on 295 where Radio Tire is located).

It was agreed that Matt will go ahead and put together a list of 8 sites. He will send out the site reports electronically as pdf files, from which the group will pick 4 to visit. Matt sent around a sign-up sheet for copies of the database CD and report. Betty also requested that we consider a site on Mill Brook for which she has an engineering report (she passed it around).

IV. PRWC Board Meeting:

Forrest noted that the last meeting was sparsely attended. Alan Caron was a guest speaker, discussing GrowSmart Maine.

V. Old Business:

Signs: Erin presented examples of possible signs, looking for guidance on color scheme, font, watershed image, and overall size. The group supported a blue background, upper case for the upper part of the sign (NAME OF TRIBUTARY) and upper and lowercase for the lower part of the sign (Presumpscot River Watershed). The group also supported a medium level of detail for the watershed image and 18" X 24" as the size. A red star marking the location of the tributary on the watershed was recommended. Erin will e-mail out a sample of the sign we agreed upon. Diane agreed to review past minutes to see if we had voted on a dollar amount to spend on the signs. If need be, we can vote by e-mail on the amount of money we want to spend.

CBEP/PRWC Project Fund Proposals: Matt noted that we should decide how much to allocate to restoration sites on the lower Presumpscot. The PRWC has approximately \$21,000 and the Casco Bay Habitat Committee has approximately \$20,000 in their budget.

PRW Guides: Fred reviewed the costs of reprinting the PRW River Guide. Printing plus approximately 60 hours of labor (for updating, editing, and layout) would cost \$2800 for 500 copies and \$4400 for 1000 copies. The consensus was to go ahead and print 1000 copies, no cover price. Copies would be available with a suggested \$5.00 donation.

Targeted Watershed Grant Proposal Update: Karen noted that Forrest and she will meet in mid August with Senators Snow and Collins and Congressman Allen to urge them to support the Presumpscot proposal.

VI. New Business:

Presumpscot Tour: The Executive Committee supports the idea of doing a river tour for local stakeholders in the fall, rather than an annual meeting/dinner on Sept. 22nd. The 5 hour UCOWR Presumpscot Tour was a success and can serve as a model for a similar tour for local decision makers. Karen noted a couple of suggestions from the tour participants were a longer lunch break and quieter locations so the narration can be heard. The goals of the tour would be

- connectivity (connect pieces of the river and the lake)
- build a sense of place for decision-makers
- promote stewardship
- education
- river visibility

Getting people to come is critical. The UCOWR tour had 20-25 people. It was rushed in 5 hours and dealt only with the river as far upstream as Westbrook. Ideally the tour should include at least one upriver site. Karen suggested we videotape the tour. It was agreed that the Executive Committee should meet again in a few weeks to discuss the tour. Fred

agreed to help; Lois, who was instrumental in planning the UCOWR tour, will be invited to help as well.

Committee Reports:

The **Open Space Committee** met and has identified two properties that are ready to go. Jeff has developed a map that identifies important areas to protect.

The **Cumulative Impacts Committee** met. The group recommended we should move forward on sites identified in the *Habitat Restoration Inventory for the Lower Presumpscot River Watershed*.

The **Fisheries Committee** has not met recently. Jim agreed to pull together a meeting. Diane will send him a list of names of committee members.

Dam Issues:

Sandi reported that the FERC licenses were upheld despite SAPPI's appeal. The 401 Water Quality Certification was also upheld despite appeals. SAPPI is now appealing to the Supreme Court.

Section 319 Projects in the Presumpscot Watershed:

Don noted that 3 projects have been funded: Long Lake Conservation Project and implementation projects in the Little Sebago Lake and Thomas Pond watersheds.

Meeting Adjourned

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