

Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
March 22, 2007
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
@ MDEP, Canco Road, Portland

2007 Upcoming Meetings of the PRWC Board

Thursday	May 24th
Thursday	July 26th
Thursday	September 27th
Thursday	December 6th

In attendance: Kerry McCormack - Cumberland Maine Land and Island Trust, Forrest Bell - PRW, Jeff Varricchione - DEP, Matt Craig – CBEP, Dusti Faucher – FOPR, Merrie Cartwright – NOAA Fisheries, Brooks More – City of Westbrook, Betty Williams - CCSWCD, Diane Gould - EPA, Matt Craig- CBEP, Will Plumley- FOPR, Lois Winter - USF&W, Roger Berle – Portland Trails, Karen Young – CBEP, Bill Hancock – Maine Audubon, Richard Curtis – Gorham Sebago Land Trust, Melissa Evers – DEP, Sandra Cort – FOPR, Don Kale - DEP

I. Introductions – Will led a round of introductions.

II. New PRWC Logo – Will distributed color and black and white versions of the new logo. Jess White, graphic designer, generously donated his time to create it. We can use it for the PWI and anywhere our partners would like to use it. Will has a complete suite of digital file formats available. Will reiterated the creative brief he developed to guide creation of the logo. We are a regional collaborative of organizations. We foster collaboration, are open, caring, informal, inquisitive, provide information and seek balanced solutions. We serve as a forum for dialogue and action. Our target audience is people who want to realize the greatest good for the human and ecological communities that share the resources of the watershed. They tend to be members of other organizations, such as non-profits, town boards and agencies. We want to help them do their work better, and to embrace the PRWC, working with us to expand knowledge and horizons for the benefit of all. The logo shows a tributary joining the mainstem, illustrating a convergence of waters and stakeholders, the main story illustrated by the logo. The bird is unidentified, maybe an eagle. The Yardscaping brochures (an event will be held today) use the new logo. The PWI will use the paired CBEP and new PRWC logo.

III. Presumpscot River Bacteria TMDL Study – Melissa Evers from DEP explained that a TMDL is a watershed assessment and pollutant loading study for any DEP-designated impaired water body (on the State’s 303d list). DEP is required under the federal Clean Water Act to prepare a TMDL study for waters on the list. For nonpoint source (NPS), it is hard to evaluate the pollutant load. NPS TMDLs describe the water quality problems, sources of pollution, and describe how to reduce sources. The Presumpscot is listed for bacteria in the estuary. Some tributaries are listed for bacteria and dissolved oxygen problems. Each pollutant type has to have its own TMDL.

A new concept is a state-wide TMDL for bacteria. The Presumpscot will serve as a template for the state. A dissolved oxygen TMDL will be done later. The PRW monitoring data will likely be used as the data source for the TMDL. The consulting firm ENSR may work with FB Environmental (Forrest's firm) for TMDL development. A first draft of the TMDL is due by September. ENSR has already developed a TMDL for Massachusetts. This is a very new approach. This TMDL will have a general discussion of sources and will focus on BMPs (best management practices) on how to address the problem. The TMDL will be used to prioritize where s.319 funding is spent. Bacterial standards are different for different segments of the river according to their designation. The TMDL will include maps and target reductions for each segment. The goal is to credibly flag issues and lend support to correcting the water quality issues.

IV. River Bond Discussion – Dusti led a discussion of the Riverfront Community Development Bond. The \$5 M bond goes before the Appropriations Committee on Tuesday night. She asked if the Coalition wants to formally voice support. Funding from the Bond, if passed, would be available competitively with a 2:1 match requirement and could be used to:

- rehabilitate run-down or abandoned buildings along the river
- restore or improve habitat for fish and wildlife
- develop and establish public access points for boating and fishing
- create riverfront parks, walking trails white-water parks and other amenities

For more information, see the Atlantic Salmon Federation on Dusti's website. Supporters include Maine Rivers, FOPR, Portland Trails, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Natural Resources Council of Maine. The bond money will not cut into money for wastewater treatment. The consensus was that Dusti should speak for the group on Tuesday night. The Executive Committee will draft a letter and sign it. A few members of the PRWC asked not to be named specifically in the letter because they would have to go back and seek agreement from the organization they represent and there wasn't time to do that before the letter is due (DEP, CCSWCD, NOAA Fisheries, EPA).

V. 2007 Priority Initiatives – Will introduced the short list developed by the Executive Committee.

1-PWI Project – This is an ongoing effort

2-Fish Assemblage study – This project is nearing completion. There will be additional sampling this spring, followed by a report.

3-Tributary signage project – Using the existing template, we could add more signs around the watershed

4- Fundraising (see item VI)

5-Introduce PRWC to municipal government and increase involvement – Will noted that Windham is trying to implement comprehensive planning and is working on zoning and shoreland protection. There is nothing internal to the town to help inform their decision making. They could use our Plan and PRWC expertise. We could reach out to municipalities to offer expertise and analysis to help them make good decisions. We could provide tours, events, presentations to town councils, other ideas?

6 –Possible: Canoe trip; Trail Connectivity in Westbrook; Macroinvertebrate study

Discussion:

#3 - Sandi suggested that a donor could fund a sign. The caution raised was that seeking sponsorship is very time intensive.

#5 – Dusti felt that #5 is key. Don noted that DEP expends a great deal of time reviewing Comprehensive Plans and that assistance with planning should be “front-loaded.” The Code Enforcement officer is often the only tool towns have for shoreland zoning and there needs to be a shift so towns have more tools and information from the State. Betty liked the idea of presentations to the councils. Many don’t know that we exist and may be confused by the multiple groups working on the Presumpscot. We should do information presentations. There was general agreement.

#6 – Richard liked the Trail Connectivity idea. We are coming very close. We should have a team of 2 – 3 people, look at potential routes and come back with a report. An Open Space project, possibly with signage, seemed like a timely idea. After further discussion, all agreed to add Trail Connectivity to out list.

Do we want a #7 project? Brooks supported an informal canoe trip, with some publicity. Since several members have experience with organizing canoe trips on the river, the group agreed to add the canoe trip to the list of projects, maybe in partnership with Audubon. Lois noted possible Press Herald coverage would be great.

What about the macroinvertebrate study? Merrie voiced support. Jeff noted that he has put in a special request for a macroinvertebrate study at Riverside Golf Course for the PWI project (to assess the community before and after the riparian plantings). He is looking for \$2,000 (\$350 per bag, \$1,000 per site). The “free” version would not use DEP protocols but would use volunteer protocols (healthy vs. “bombed out.”) Jeff could provide technical help. Dusti noted that 2007 is a reclassification year and it would be good to have data for the lower river for reclassification. The mainstream meets standards for bacteria. The group agreed we should do some macroinvertbrate work to coincide with the release of the fish assemblage study, informally, inexpensively.

The following people agreed to serve on committees to move forward on the 2007 initiatives:

- 1 and 2 – These are ongoing and already have active committees.
3. Tributary Signage – Betty and Will
4. Fundraising – Executive Committee and Roger
5. Municipal government – Matt, Don, Brooks, Betty (Matt will pull together first meeting)
6. Trail connectedness- Tom Jewell, Forrest, Brooks, Richard (Richard will pull together the first meeting)
7. Canoe trip – Bill (leader), Matt, Forrest, Roger, Lois (with time constraint caveats)
8. Macroinvertebrates – Merrie (co-leader), Don, Jeff (co-leader), Tim Bennett

VI. Fundraising – A meeting has been scheduled for April 12th at Ethos Marketing in Westbrook to begin discussing fundraising.

VII. Open Forum –

The next meeting should be at another location, maybe at the Maine Audubon office.

Dusti asked if we should take a position on the State proposal to put money into the Governor's transportation bond to reinstitute rail on the Mountain Division. The discussion noted pros (taking traffic off the roads) and cons (too near the trails). Dusti will bring us some more information.

The question came up of working with schools and where all of our information can be accessed. Matt noted that a lot of information will be on our website and on the maps we are developing.

We need a good URL for our website and are looking at possible hosts. Erin needs to get the website posted soon. The group agreed that we should allocate \$300 to post the website for a year.

VIII. Next Meeting

- May 24th, **place to be announced.**