

**Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition**  
**May 22, 2008, 2008**  
**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**@Gilsland Farm, Maine Audubon**

**2008 Upcoming Meetings of the PRWC Board**

July 24, 2008  
September 25, 2008  
December 4, 2008

**In attendance:** Forrest Bell- PRW, Diane Gould-EPA, Matt Craig- CBEP, Will Plumley-FOPR, Jeff Varricchione-DEP, Merrie Cartwright-NOAA Fisheries, Margaret Chabot-Americorps, Brooks Moore - Town of Windham, Lee Carlton - FOPR/USM, Curtis Bohlen –CBEP, Jennie Regal – Portland Trails intern, Nan Cummings – Portland Trails, Mike Gillis – Portland Trails intern

**I. Introductions** - Will led a round of introductions. He noted that in addition to representing Friends of the Presumpscot River, he also participates in the Northern Forest Canoe Trail board. Several interns joined us for the meeting, including Lee Carlton, a Junior at USM who will be helping with the Riverfest, and Jennie Regal and Mike Gillis (a Senior at Portland high), working with Portland Trails. Curtis Bohlen, the new Director of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership joined us for the first time.

**II. Administration** – Will noted that at their last meeting, the Executive Committee agreed to recommend adding Jeff Varricchione, Maine DEP, and Merrie Cartwright, NOAA Fisheries, as new members of the Executive Committee. Both Jeff and Merrie have been long-term, active participants in the PRWC and have agreed to serve if confirmed. They were both confirmed by group acclamation.

**III. Open Forum-**

Nan Cummings noted that trail-building season is here. Portland Trails purchased Brickyard Point 1 ½ years ago (the parcel sticks out on one side of 295). It is now part of Maine Island Trails. She thanked PRWC for the letter of support that helped them get funding to build the trail. The Maine Conservation Corps will help to connect that parcel to Gilsland Farm (through Tidewater Farm development).

Will noted that Matt did a presentation at the River management society meeting and led a tour of the Presumpscot. Will noted the fact that the Abenaki Indian names used for places on the Presumpscot (many rough places) like Ammonscongin and Saccarappa dams only extend downstream as far as the place where Chief Polin was killed. He was taken upstream for burial.

Forrest noted that the river was ashen grey and foamy from point source pollution in the past (before the 80's). We should celebrate the huge change. Matt noted that he has FOCB footage from the 1970s showing the nasty condition of the water downstream of Cumberland Mills dam. He will bring it to the next PRWC meeting.

Matt reported that the YCC is starting up in early July and is looking for projects. They have money for shrubs and trees and labor. They do erosion control and buffer planting. Contact Matt with proposed projects. Matt also noted that there is a new Gorham Trails kiosk by Gambo Dam and it may offer an opportunity to do some outreach.

Brooks noted that the YCC may want to do some freshening up of Riverbank Park for the Riverfest.

Will reported that Molly just (Westbrook City Planner) is meeting with Westbrook Development Collaborative to discuss how the removal of Cumberland Mills Dam will impact development potential. Will also noted that the settlement agreement was signed just a year ago. Technical details are slowly being worked out. The original date for dam removal and completion of grading was May 2011.

Will noted that the introduction to the 1994 *Guide to the Presumpscot River* (now being updated) is still appropriate. He quoted George Mitchell's comment that it is time to pay back the river for its hundreds of years of continual service mankind.

**IV. Status Check** – Will asked for confirmation of the members of the various project teams (absent members names may need to be added).

1. PWI – Matt (lead), Will, Forrest, Diane, Betty
2. *Guide to the Presumpscot River*- Forrest (lead), Matt, Will
3. Mill Brook – Matt and Jeff (leaders), Diane, Merrie, Margaret, Forrest
4. Sebago-to-the-Sea trail – Richard Curtis (leader), Will, Forrest, Nan
5. Outreach to Municipalities – Betty (leader), Matt, Brooks, Will
6. Fundraising – Executive Committee (Lee will also join)
7. Riverfest – Margaret (leader), Lee, Jeff, Matt, Diane, Forrest, Will, Merrie, Jennie, Betty
8. Millfoil Training – Forrest reported that the training is a go. Fred is working with the Center for Invasive Plants. Upstream of Gambo Dam there is variable milfoil in the impoundments. There is a need to measure and map. Forrest will check on the date for the training (a Saturday in June). Fred (leader), Brooks, Lee, Matt

**V. Sebago-to-the-Sea Report and Discussion-** Will noted that this effort started about a year ago. The Presumpscot Regional land Trust convened an effort to connect trails from Sebago to the bay. They got some seed grant funding, brought stakeholders together. Nan noted they are breaking the river into doable pieces. Portland Trails is working on Portland/Falmouth/Westbrook. The group is planning preferred trail routes. At the last meeting they tried to plot out the route they'll aim for, a continuous land trail for pedestrians and bikes. Will noted that the Northern Forrest Canoe Trail group is aware of the effort and likes the idea of connecting with Portland via the Presumpscot. Portland Water District has been very helpful in guiding what lands are appropriate, which need to be avoided for drinking water protection. There will be a public meeting later this year. It was agreed that Tom Howard should be invited to participate in the trail planning. Will reviewed that past history of SAPPI's involvement with the Presumpscot management

planning process and PRWC. Forrest noted that we are actively implementing major projects in the three focus areas of the Plan – Fisheries (dam removal), Cumulative Impacts/Conservation (the PWI), and Open Space (Sebago-to-the-Sea).

#### **VI. Other Focus Topics-**

Mill Brook – Via a slide show, Jeff presented the results of the report he has developed on Mill Brook. It is a compilation of existing studies and assessments. He noted that fish can access Mill Brook from the ocean and there is a good alewife run to Highland lake. The brook has good habitat diversity but there are some culvert issues that hinder fish passage. The recommendations in the report include inventorying large woody debris and augmenting as needed; preserving lands adjacent to the brook and throughout the watershed ( building new parks in large blocks of open space, trails along the steams), reducing pollution impacts and promoting healthy riparian buffers, and restoring stream continuity from Highland lake to the Presumpscot River for migrating fish and wildlife. Jeff is looking for reviewers for the report. He will make the report available as a text file with appendices on a CD. Contact Jeff for a copy. Diane will distribute the text portion of the report electronically to members of the Casco Bay Habitat Restoration Committee. Forrest noted that Davis Farm will provide 50 acres of protected land.

**Riverfest**– Margaret reported that the event is set for July 19<sup>th</sup> from 9 to 1 at Riverbank Park. She developed and submitted a proposal to Maine Community Foundation for \$1500. She has been putting information about the event on websites (Maine Today, etc.) MPBN has been contacted but hasn't responded yet. Curtis suggested tying in the event with local weeklies, other events. Betty provided a list of papers for press releases. The event should be tied in with the variable milfoil training. Forrest suggested getting information about the event on the Westbrook flashing sign closer to the day. Nan suggested getting the event on Facebook to reach the high school/college age group. Margaret will follow up. Margaret has one musician lined up. Lee will look into the band “Esperanza.” Curtis will approach some musicians he knows. The focus will be on families to raise awareness, celebrate the river, share information about it. The target audience is members of organizations in the PRWC and people in the Westbrook area. It was suggested that Margaret coordinate with Mike Schultz at Westbrook Parks and Recreation. We are hoping for about 200 people. Margaret will send out an e-mail to get commitments for booths from member organizations. The rain date is Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup>. This will be announced on the website with a phone number to contact. Curtis suggested asking the Lions Club and other organizations if they'd like to be a vendor (as an opportunity for them to raise funds). Rob Sanford was suggested as a nature walk guide. Lee also offered to serve as a guide.

The Riverfest planning group will meet at *Burrito* restaurant on Main Street in Westbrook on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 PM.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

The next meeting will take place on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008.