

SALMON FALLS WATERSHED COLLABORATIVE

Scope: Regional/Watershed

Location: New Hampshire and Maine

SCOPE:

- » Regional, supports watershed protection efforts in portions of Maine and New Hampshire
- » Network of local, state, and federal partners working to protect the Salmon Falls River
- » Salmon Falls River is the drinking water source for over 47,000 residents in Maine and New Hampshire
- » The Salmon Falls Watershed Collaborative was awarded a 2012 US Water Prize by the U.S. Water Alliance
- » Focus on improved watershed planning and source water protection

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- » A 2010 workshop brought together 80 water supply managers, municipal staff, planning board and conservation commission members, federal/state agency personnel, and community members.
- » Workshop participants identified priorities and a core group developed an Action Plan to address water quality issues facing the region.
http://prepestuaries.org/01/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/sfwc-salmon-actionplan_final.pdf
- » Funded by NH Dept. of Environmental Services, ME Center for Disease Control & Prevention Drinking Water Program; technical and communications support from the Source Water Collaborative (selected as one of two 2009 SWC pilot projects).

MEMBERS:

- » Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance
- » Berwick (ME) Water District
- » Granite State Rural Water Association
- » Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- » Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (ME CDC) Drinking Water Program
- » Maine Non-point Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO)
- » Maine Rural Water Association
- » New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) - Drinking Water Source Protection Program and Watershed Assistance Section
- » City of Somersworth (NH)
- » South Berwick (ME) Water District
- » Strafford (NH) Regional Planning Commission
- » Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Collaborative Leads: The Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) and the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

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- » USDA - Forest Service
- » USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- » U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1
- » Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
- » York County (ME) Soil & Water Conservation District (SWC)

WATER CONCERNS:

- » Increased runoff-related impacts from development of forested lands and shoreline.
- » Water quality impacts from industrial and residential land use
- » Lack of awareness regarding the River as a public drinking water source needing protection

STRATEGIES:

- » Water resource information to support land conservation initiatives
- » Land use best practices and policies (e.g., forest management, low impact development, aquifer protection zoning)
- » Education and training initiatives
- » Volunteer water quality monitoring
- » Information sharing to promote collaboration
- » Identification, management and cleanup of potential sources of contamination
- » Shoreland protection activities

RESULTS:

- » Development of Action Plan using a multi-faceted approach that involved mapping source water areas
http://preestuaries.org/01/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/sfwc-salmon-actionplan_final.pdf
- » Land conservation and development restrictions on aquifers and land adjacent to surface water
- » Nonpoint pollution control
- » Education of municipal officials and private landowners
- » NRCS Maine and NH offices provided outstanding leadership and financial investment for this project.

The total investment from NRCS was more than \$1 million and almost 6,000 acres of private working lands treated (receiving forest management plans and/or conservation practices).

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Financial Assistance obligation from 2012 - 2014 was \$1,068,493.00. This includes EQIP fund and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) funds to protect the New England Cottontail rabbit. In summary:

- » 5,919 private working lands were treated in the Salmon Falls river watershed
- » 37 contracts were awarded to private landowners
- » 130 conservation practices were implemented

The land uses targeted for treatment in the Salmon Falls Watershed included cropland, forestland, pasture and hay land addressing many resource concerns including: erosion and sediment control, groundwater and surface water quality protection, grazing benefits, livestock water needs, nutrient management, healthy forests and invasive treatments, fish and wildlife habitats.

Counting landowner matching financial contributions, the total Conservation Program Investment in the Salmon Falls watershed is approximately \$1.5 million from 2012 - 2014.