

# Salmon Falls Watershed Collaborative

Scope: Regional/Watershed

Location: New Hampshire & Maine

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

### Collaborative Leads:

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

Kira Jacobs  
U.S. EPA, Region 1  
617-918-1817  
[jacobs.kira@epa.gov](mailto:jacobs.kira@epa.gov)

Pierce Rigrod  
NH Department of Environmental Services  
603-271-0688  
[Pierce.Rigrod@des.nh.gov](mailto:Pierce.Rigrod@des.nh.gov)

Website: <https://preestuaries.org/what-we-do/community-technical-assistance/salmon-falls-watershed-collaborative/>

## 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 US Water Alliance
- Focus on improved watershed planning, source water protection, and goals identified in the 2010 Action Plan

## 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. [https://preestuaries.org/02/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/sfwc-salmon-actionplan\\_final.pdf](https://preestuaries.org/02/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/sfwc-salmon-actionplan_final.pdf)
- Initial funding was provided by the NH Department of Environmental Services, Maine 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).

## STRUCTURE/FUNDING:

There is no formal funding for the collaborative. However, the collaborative has leveraged more than \$1million in funding to implement conservation practices on private lands. This funding was provided by the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs, improving land management practices to protect drinking water sources.

Due to staff turnover and resource constraints, the collaborative has been less active in recent years. For the past several years, the lead partners have been holding two meetings each year. The first meeting is an annual meeting of all the partners and has been held in the spring each year.

The second event has been a very popular annual “Salmon Falls Success Safari.” Each August, the project partners have hosted a one-day tour throughout the watershed in New Hampshire and Maine. Different partners host “stops” on the tour ranging from tours of water treatment plants to hiking on conserved land parcels to visiting local businesses that rely on clean water. The 2018 and 2019 Success Safaris were featured in two Northeast Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) online articles:

<https://rcpnetwork.org/blog/salmon-falls-collaborative-approach-to-engagement>

<https://rcpnetwork.org/blog/educate-update-and-engage-the-salmon-falls-watershed-collaborativ>

## MEMBERS:

[Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance](#)

[City of Somersworth, NH](#)

[Granite State Rural Water Association](#)

[Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Drinking Water Program](#)

Maine Rural Water Association <https://www.mainerwa.org/>

[New Hampshire DES Drinking Water Source Protection Program](#)

[New Hampshire DES Watershed Assistance Section](#)

Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) <https://prepestuararies.org>

[South Berwick \(Maine\) Water District](#)

[Strafford Regional Planning Commission](#)

[Town of Berwick \(Maine\) Water Department](#) <https://www.berwickwater.org/home.html>

[USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service](#)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency <https://www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection>

U.S. Forest Service <https://www.fs.usda.gov/>

[Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve](#)

## 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
- A graduate student from the University of New Hampshire completed a year-long evaluation of the collaborative’s work in 2019. This was a very valuable contribution to the work of the collaborative.
- The group uses a “Basecamp” site that provides a platform for sharing information among members. Basecamp has proven to be an excellent tool for collaboration.

## RESULTS:

- Development of Action Plan using a multi-faceted approach that involved mapping source water areas  
[https://prepestuararies.org/02/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/sfwc-salmon-actionplan\\_final.pdf](https://prepestuararies.org/02/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/sfwc-salmon-actionplan_final.pdf)
- Land conservation and development restrictions on aquifers and land adjacent to surface water
- Nonpoint pollution control and water quality improvement
- Education of municipal officials and private landowners
- The Maine and NH Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices have provided outstanding leadership and financial investment for this project.

The total investment from NRCS to date has been more than \$1.5 million. In addition, more than 8,000 acres of private working lands have been treated (received forest management plans and/or conservation practices).

NRCS’ Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has provided more than \$1.5 million in Financial Assistance throughout the watershed. This includes both EQIP funds and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) funds to protect the New England Cottontail rabbit.

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. Including matching financial contributions from landowner contributions, the total NRCS Conservation Program investment in the Salmon Falls watershed has been more than \$2 million.

In summary:

- More than 8,000 acres of private working lands have been treated in the Salmon Falls river watershed
- More than 50 contracts have been awarded to private landowners
- More than 150 conservation practices have been implemented



**Information current as of April 2021. Please check with the Collaborative contacts or website for the most up to date information.**

**To find other source water collaboratives across the U.S. or to add yours to the list, visit the Source Water Collaborative's [How To Collaborate Toolkit](#)**