

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



2005 Targeted Watersheds Grants: Presumpscot River and Casco Bay

Maine

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

The Presumpscot watershed encompasses 205 square miles, and the Presumpscot River flows 27 miles from Sebago Lake into Casco Bay and the Gulf of Maine. Although it is primarily forested and agricultural land, this region is rapidly being developed. The river has a history of extensive industrial use since the early 1700s. By the 1950s, the river was so polluted that fumes from the river peeled paint off nearby homes. Prior to industrialization, there were abundant, healthy salmon, alewife, shad and eel fisheries. These have since been decimated.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

In recent years the water quality has improved in the river as a result of the cessation of pulp mill discharges in the 1990s, and anadromous fish are returning with the removal of the Smelt Hill Dam in 2002. However, the improvements in the watershed have opened the doors to increased watershed and shoreline development pressures, which have caused increased amounts of impervious surface and non-point source pollution. The Targeted Watersheds Grant will focus on tackling high priority environmental problems:

- Excess sedimentation from roadways and livestock activities is causing deterioration of fish spawning areas.
- Excess nutrients and toxics are present in the river as a result of increased development.
- The loss of riparian vegetation is causing thermal impacts, which impair the water quality for cold water fisheries.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

Together with the Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition, the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership will use Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to improve water quality and land stewardship by:

- Stabilizing or replacing 46 eroding stream crossings to reduce soil erosion and sediment deposition in the watershed.
- Installing forested buffers along five sites to restore riparian areas.
- Establishing a Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps to engage area youth in direct stewardship through hands-on implementation of buffer enhancement and water quality improvement projects.
- Developing a cost-share program with agricultural landowners for streamside fencing and alternative watering systems to reduce livestock impacts on streams, including bacterial, sediment and nutrient contributions.
- Implementing a golf course environmental certification program to encourage improved management practices to reduce in-stream levels of nutrients, pesticides and herbicides.
- Introducing the "Yardscaping" program to local neighborhoods to reduce pesticide and fertilizer runoff.



Tim Bennett of Presumpscot River Watch prepares sampling equipment for deployment into the river. Credit: Matt Craig, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership.



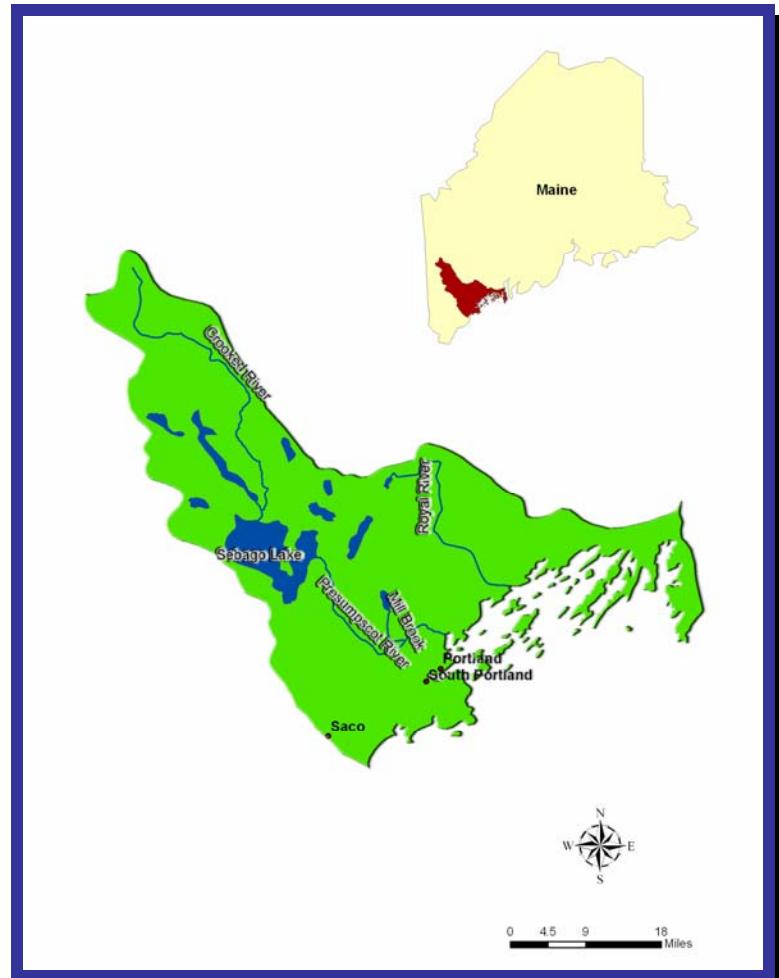
A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

The Casco Bay Estuary Partnership is working with a diverse group of partners including:

- Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
- Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Presumpscot River Watch
- Friends of Casco Bay
- Maine Board of Pesticide Control
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.



Betty Williams of the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District guides the Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps as they install infiltration steps on an eroded trail to the Presumpscot River.
Credit: Lisa Vickers, Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps

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