



2006 Summary Report

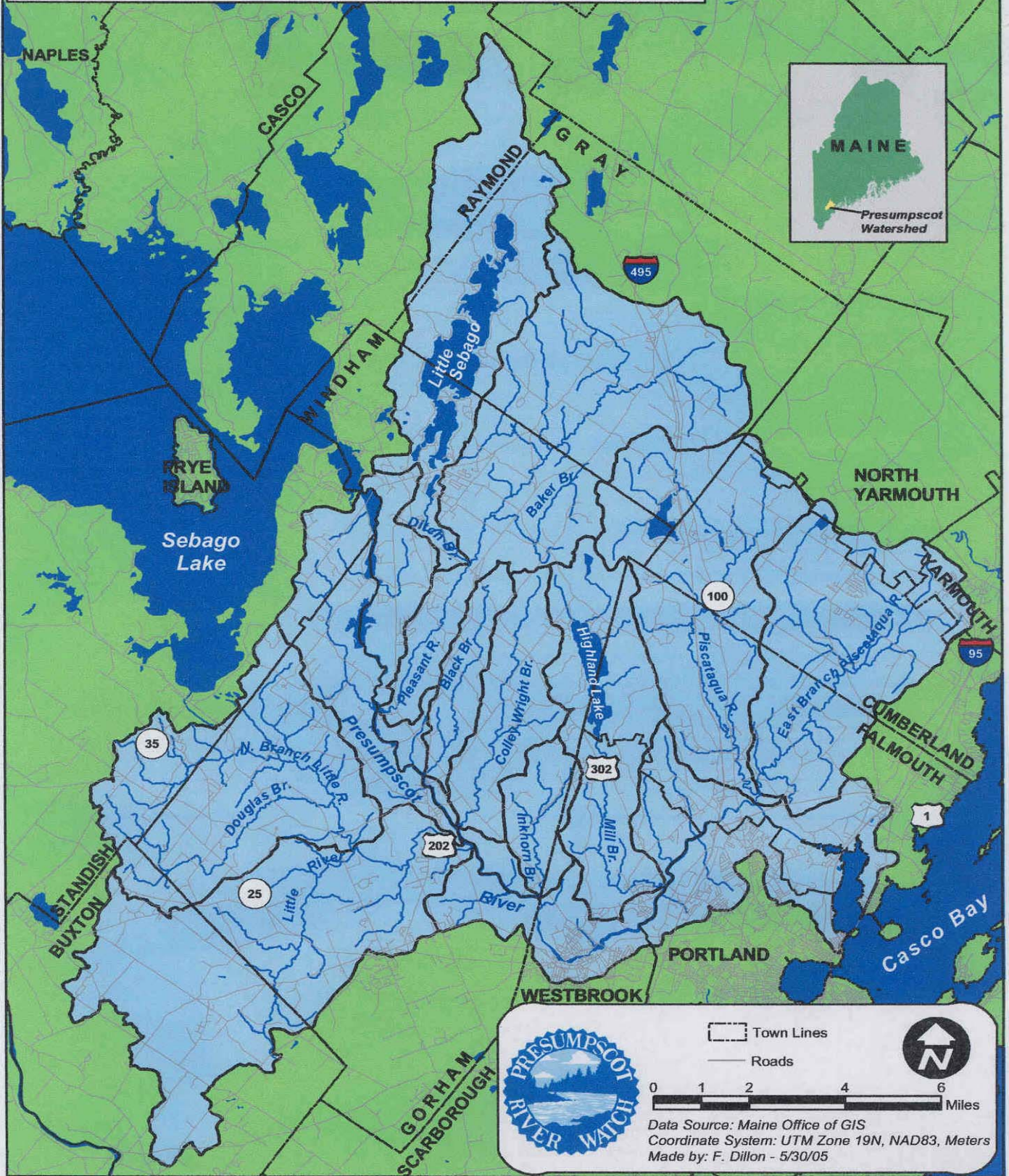


A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF



Presumpscot River Watershed Map

PRESUMPCOT RIVER SUBWATERSHEDS



Background Information

What is a Youth Conservation Corps?

A Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is a crew of area high school students dedicated to installing environmental improvement projects adjacent to rivers, streams, and lakes within a watershed. They are directed by a crew leader who is college-aged or a college graduate. They work on a diversity of projects that include vegetative shoreline buffer plantings, trail maintenance and construction, river clean-ups, and many other best management practices. They work with local towns and governments as well as private landowners. One unique feature of a YCC is that all labor is carried out by hand; there are no power tools involved in their work. A field season typically lasts between 5-8 weeks during the summer months. YCC's continue to show success throughout the state of Maine.

Why a Presumpscot River YCC?

- * Despite recent improvements, water quality in the river remains degraded. As the river is cleaned up, development along the shoreline is resulting in a loss of vegetated buffers alongside rivers and streams. Increased runoff and erosion has altered stream channels and continues to degrade fisheries habitat. The Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps (PRYCC) will work to reverse these impacts.
- * An active coalition of partners is in place to guide watershed improvement projects. The Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition (PRWC) is made up of more than a dozen government and private organizations concerned with improving fisheries, mitigating impacts from watershed development, and preserving natural areas along the river. Several studies have identified specific problem areas for improvement. Referring to the *Presumpscot Plan*, the PRWC will guide the PRYCC toward high priority improvement efforts.
- * YCC's promote stewardship among community members and projects yield tangible water quality benefits. Organizers also rave that YCC's are an effective way to raise awareness, energize communities and inspire local youth to become environmental leaders.

Falmouth

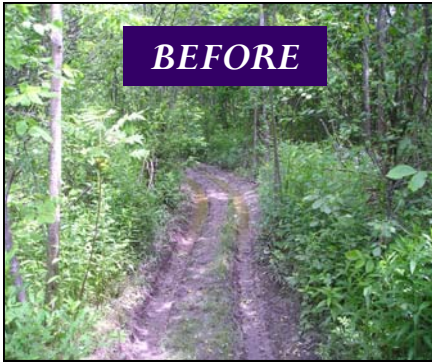
Smelt Hill, Department of Natural Resource and The Polansky's Property



As part of a larger project for the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, the PRYCC assisted with two projects at the site of the former Smelt Hill Dam. For the first project, they helped lay rip-rap, plant 350 plant plugs, and lay mulch all in an effort to mimic a natural streambed. This will allow water to flow to the Presumpscot without eroding the land as well as filter pollutants out that could otherwise lower the river's water quality. The second project, entailed stabilizing an eroded storm water drainage ditch on adjacent property. The crew installed 2 yards of riprap to stabilize the bank and prevent further erosion. They also created plunge pools to collect runoff and prevent soil and other pollutants from entering the Presumpscot River.

Westbrook

East Bridge Street Trail, Portland Trails



This new trail, located directly on the Presumpscot River, was heavily eroded by ATV use. The YCC help stabilize the trail by filling eroded gullies with crushed stone to prevent further erosion. They also partnered with the Maine Conservation Corps to build bridges and level out the trail to prevent soil from running into the river.



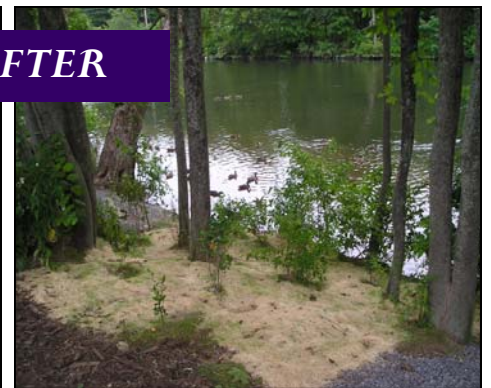
Bicentennial Park, Town of Westbrook



As part of a Project Canopy grant that was awarded to the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, the YCC planted 52 mature trees in this park. The park is located directly adjacent to a stormwater tributary that flows into the Presumpscot River.



Riverbank Park, Town of Westbrook



Riverbank Park is located directly on the Presumpscot River, in downtown Westbrook. This park experiences heavy use which has caused severe erosion along the riverbank. The YCC installed three sets of infiltration steps, planted 25 trees and shrubs, mulched, seeded, and laid curlex. All of these practices will help reduce runoff into the river and allow plants to grow to help stabilize the shoreline as well as filter runoff. As a result, the park has easier and safer access to the river, all while helping to protect the water quality.

Windham

Route 35, Sappi and Department of Transportation



BEFORE

This site on Route 35 is a popular fishing spot where several trails leading to the river were eroding. By partnering with Sappi and the Maine Department of Transportation, the crew was able to plant 35 trees and shrubs. They also defined a commonly used trail and added mulch to cover exposed tree roots.



AFTER

Covered Bridge, Town of Windham



BEFORE

This site is owned by a private landowner but is heavily used by the public as a recreational area. Due to this use, the bank was severely eroded, the soil was compacted, and many tree roots were exposed, causing both a safety and environmental hazard. The YCC installed (6) infiltration steps and planted 29 trees and shrubs to stabilize the bank.



AFTER

Storm drain Stenciling



Storm drain stenciling is an educational and public awareness component of the YCC. It informs people that these drains flow directly to a waterbody. That means pollutants such as fertilizers, waste, and cigarette butts to name a few, will also end up in our waterways without being treated. The YCC stenciled drains throughout Windham and Westbrook.



Gorham

Tannery Brook Park, Town of Gorham



The Gorham Parks and Conservation Commission is working to open the Tannery Brook Park in 2007. The PRYCC helped to construct and define trails for the proposed 16-mile trail network by sidehilling or leveling out areas to help prevent erosion as well as lopped, pruned, and laid wood chips along the new trails.

Portland

Cleveland Street, Myatt Property



This site is located on the Presumpscot Estuary, where the Presumpscot River meets Casco Bay. The site posed a great challenge due to tidal influences, brackish water, and the site had extremely difficult conditions. The bank had eroded approximately 12 feet over the course of several years. The YCC laid curlex to stabilize the shoreline, planted 20 shrubs as well as native salt marsh grass. Infiltration steps were modified to accommodate the landscape.

Accomplishments

<i>Conservation Practice</i>	<i>Total</i>
Mulch	26.5 yards
Rock	33.5 yards
Infiltration Steps	17 steps
Rubber Razor Blades	3 razor blades
Buffer Plantings	268 trees/shrubs/groundcover
Trails	~4 miles
Stormdrain Stenciling	250 drains
Trash Clean-up	> 100 lbs.
Sediment Clean-out	5 tons

16 projects in total over the course of 5 weeks!



The PRYCC at Work!



Articles about the PRYCC

The PRYCC was highlighted in several newspapers around the watershed including: Gorham-Westbrook Gazette, Windham Independent, Lakes Region Weekly, and American Journal.

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High school students providing free river-friendly landscaping

Landowners in Gorham, Westbrook can receive assistance

This summer marks the inaugural season of the Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps (PRYCC), a crew of area high school students dedicated to installing environmental improvement projects adjacent to rivers and streams within the Presumpscot River watershed.

Landowners from the communities of Gorham and Westbrook, as well as those in Buxton, Cumberland, Falmouth, Gray, North Yarmouth, Portland, Standish, Windham, and Yarmouth will be eligible to receive free technical assistance and manual labor from the PRYCC to improve and manage erosion issues on their land.

The PRYCC will build on the success of existing Youth Conservation Corps, such as the Highland Lakes YCC, which have demonstrated measurable improvements with similar projects.

In its first season, the PRYCC will be composed of

a crew leader and five local high school students whose objective will be to improve the environment within their communities.

Crew members will be involved in a diverse array of projects including planting vegetated buffers, building run-off diversions, trail construction and maintenance, and river clean-ups, all in an effort to help protect and improve water quality throughout the Presumpscot River watershed.

What services are available? The PRYCC, in partnership with the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, will conduct free site visits, design repairs to problem sites and help prepare all necessary state and local permits.

If this job is available for the PRYCC, free labor will be provided to implement suitable erosion control practices.

Based on the recommendations, landowners may also qualify for free plantings.

If you live within this watershed and are interested in setting up a free consultation visit or for more information, please contact Lisa Vickers, Technical Director, Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps at 207-615-8587, or at lisa.vickers@maine.edu.

The PRYCC is being established as part of the Presumpscot Watershed Initiative, a two-year effort by the Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition, the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, Presumpscot River Watch, and Friends of Casco Bay to implement recommendations from the Presumpscot River Management Plan.

The plan was developed over three years by over a dozen representatives from federal, state, and local government

Westbrook trail part of PRYCC inaugural project

The Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps (PRYCC) kicked off its inaugural season on July 5 by partnering with Portland Trails to help establish a new recreational trail in Westbrook.

The PRYCC is a group of local high school students under the direction of a crew leader that live throughout the watershed and work on environmental improvement projects specifically focused on improving the water quality.

The East Bridge Street trail project will help address the water quality improvement goals of the PRYCC by addressing erosion issues along the trail through run-off diversions construction, eroded trail repair, and litter and debris clean-up.

Portland Trails, a non-profit land trust, has recently acquired the parcel on East Bridge Street through a unique partnership with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Kimberly-Clark.

The acquisition helps to further Portland Trails' long-term goal of providing public access trails along the length of the Presumpscot River.

This is the first project of many for the PRYCC that are located around the 150-square mile watershed which includes

the towns of Westbrook and Gorham as well as Buxton, Cumberland, Falmouth, Gray, North Yarmouth, Portland, Standish, Windham and Yarmouth.

If you live in this watershed and have erosion issues on your property, you are eligible to receive free assistance from the Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps.

The PRYCC was established as part of the Presumpscot Watershed Initiative, a two-year effort by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, the Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition, Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, Presumpscot River Watch, and Friends of Casco Bay to implement recommendations from the Presumpscot River Management Plan.

The plan was developed over three years by over a dozen representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies, businesses, and area conservation groups concerned with improving fisheries, mitigating impacts from development, and preserving open space within the Presumpscot River watershed.

For more information, please contact Lisa Vickers, PRYCC technical director, at (207) 615-8587 or e-mail at lisa.vickers@maine.edu.

Presumpscot River on its way back

By Cathi Smith
csmith@koopnews.com

The stretch of shoreline along the Presumpscot River at Riverbank Park has a new look thanks to the efforts of a youth group.

There are new steps leading to the water. Soon, there will be grass growing where before there was only haphazard dirt and exposed tree roots, and eventually bushes and trees will be growing on the water's edge.

The Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps, a group consisting of mostly high school students that was created this year by a \$300,000 two-year grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, did the work last week. The grant was awarded to the Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition and the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership—two groups focused on improving water quality in the Presumpscot.



Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps members Warren Taylor, 18, of Falmouth, left, and Jeremy Lowell, 17, of Windham, right, work on a dirt path leading down to the Presumpscot River at Riverbank Park.

with the strictest regulations. The stretch from Pleasant River to the Sacopscus Dam that has been classified as class B now has a restriction that no new discharges will be allowed. The river is currently classified as class C from Cumberland Mills Dam to the Casco Bay.

The Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps is the second of the youth conservation corps created in recent years to help improve water quality on Southern Maine water bodies. This summer, the group worked on a number of projects along the Presumpscot planting trees and bushes along the water, building paths and installing steps, among other tasks to help prevent shoreline erosion and improve water quality.

According to Matt Craig of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, project manager of the EPA grant, the youth group is just a part of the effort of improving water quality in the river.

He explained that will be done through the youth group's restoration work along the river to return vegetation and steep erosion caused by foot traffic and development. The grant money will also be used to educate residents and developers about environmentally friendly lawn and garden practices, as well as teach youth about protecting the river through school programs.

As for the Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps, Craig hopes to be able to make the group a permanent feature along the Presumpscot's banks. "There's certainly a lot of interest in continuing the work beyond the length of the grant," he said. "We'll have to do some creative thinking on how to make it permanent."

Any leader of the Westbrook Public Works Department granted the youth for its work at Riverbank Park, saying that they worked hard and really made a difference to the shoreline at the park.

"When it's all said and done, it should be a very safe and environmentally friendly way for kids and families to access the river's edge," he said.

"I would like to try to come back next year," said corps worker Jess Curlew, 17, of Windham, who said it was satisfying seeing the site after the group had done its work.

Warren Taylor, 18, of Falmouth agreed. "It's nice to put what we learn in environmental science to work," said Taylor. "We're actually doing something."

The grant that formed the Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps is the latest step in an effort by local organizations to bring the water quality of the Presumpscot River to where it was before it was diminished by industry and development.

And according to those directly involved, the effort is paying off.

In 15 years the river has gone from being considered a lost cause to being a valuable natural resource that people respect, enjoy and appreciate," said Will Plimley of the Friends of the Presumpscot River.

"Today, many organizations are working to continue that progress," Members of the Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition include the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Friends of the Presumpscot River and the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, to name a few.

Plimley said several events have contributed to the river's improved health since the Friends of the Presumpscot River was founded in 1992. Organizations such as the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership and the Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition have worked to improve water qual-

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Gorham youth spending her summer improving the landscape

Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps offers environmental help to area towns

By Erin Lynn Violette
Gazette Reporter

This summer is Emma Deans' first working with the Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps (PRYCC). The 16-year-old Gorham High School student said she was immediately interested after reading about the organization and inquired about a job.

"I love being outdoors," she said. "So I thought this would be a nice job and seeing all the work you have accomplished is real nice too."

Every couple of days the group heads out to a new location to work on projects that help both the environment and the community. On Monday and Tuesday, Emma was working with her group to lay wood chips along the Tanney Brook Trail in Westbrook.

"We've covered a lot," she said. "It's a pretty long way, but we're not covering the whole thing, just as much as we can in two days."

Last week the group worked at Riverbank Park in Westbrook by stabilizing the embankment down to the water and making infiltration steps to make it a safer environment for people to walk to the water. They also planted trees, Emma said.

The group will continue improvements in the area until Aug. 9 and then their work will be complete. But before they are through they still have a few more places to visit. In the following days the group expected to be working at a beach in Falmouth Foreside.

"We've gotten a lot of public comment already," she said. "In Westbrook, we were told we had compliments on our work by residents. It's more than just landscaping, it's preventative maintenance."

Emma said her experience working with PRYCC has been rewarding and she is considering doing it next summer, before she enters college.

"It's nice to work with other high school kids," she said.



EVERYDAY IS EARTH DAY — Gorham resident Emma Deans (center with shovel) stands with her Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps co-workers, from left, Jeremy Lowell, Mika Cole, Emma Deans, Evelyn Lane, Jess Curlew and Warren Taylor. The group worked to clear and spread wood chips along portions of the Tanney Brook Trails in Gorham earlier this week. (Erin Lynn Violette photo)

(Please turn to page 5)

YCC Staff

Technical Director: Lisa Vickers

Technical Assistance: Betty Williams

Crew Leader: Evelyn Lane

Crew: Michael Coty (Windham)
Jessica Curlew (Windham)
Emma Deans (Gorham)
Emily Myshall (Windham)
Jeremy Lowell (Windham)
Warren Taylor (Falmouth)
Sam Tureff (Yarmouth)

Program Funding and Support

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District
Friends of the Presumpscot River
Presumpscot River Watch
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Town of Westbrook
Westbrook Public Works
Town of Windham
Town of Gorham
Gorham Lands & Conservation Commission
Portland Trails

*Thank you to all that participated in the
2006 Presumpscot River YCC!*



"The song of the river ends not at her banks, but in the hearts of those who have loved her."

--Buffalo Joe

For more information or to nominate a site for 2007, contact:

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