

Long Creek Property Evaluations & Program Development

#2009SP02

Waterbody Name: Long Creek

Location: Portland, South Portland, Scarborough,
Westbrook – Cumberland County

Waterbody Status: Urban Impaired Stream

Project Grantee: Cumberland County SWCD

Project Duration: September 2009 – September 2011

ARRA 604(b) Grant: \$90,000

Local Match: \$62,908



PROBLEM:

Years of urbanization have impaired Long Creek's capacity to support recreation and wildlife, such as brook trout. Stream degradation was caused by increased volumes of stormwater runoff and associated pollutants – flowing into the stream from impervious areas such as parking lots, roadways, and rooftops. Long Creek does not attain state and federal water quality standards and is classified as one of 31 "urban impaired" streams in Maine. State and federal laws require that Long Creek be restored to meet water quality standards. The *Long Creek Watershed Management Plan* (July 2009) is a locally supported plan to restore the stream. The management plan was developed through a two-year stakeholder process involving South Portland, Portland, Westbrook, Scarborough, Cumberland County SWCD, local nonprofits, small and large businesses, the Conservation Law Foundation, DEP, and EPA. Independent of the watershed planning effort, EPA Region 1 used the residual designation authority under CWA Section 402(p) to designate properties with more than one acre of impervious surface in the watershed as subject to NPDES permit requirements for stormwater discharges.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

In 2009, Maine DEP awarded Cumberland County SWCD an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant. The project goal was to establish the institutional structures necessary to support implementation of the Long Creek Management Plan. This included assessment of watershed properties to provide the basis for financing implementation of the plan; development of financial controls including policies and procedures, and an accounting database in Quickbooks; outreach to designated property owners; securing landowner commitments for plan implementation; and establishment of a water quality monitoring program to assess the success of plan implementation and provide information on which to base program decisions and priorities.



PROJECT OUTCOMES:

- A fee structure was developed for watershed property owners. Fees were based on the existing stormwater runoff potential of properties with one acre or more of impervious surface. Potential was determined by measuring the area of impervious surface and its use frequency, identifying existing on-site stormwater control practices and determining the level of maintenance.
- About 120 landowners (industries, public entities, commercial enterprises, etc.) agreed to the terms of a Participating Landowner Agreement. The agreement includes components to address a variety of ownership relationships that exist in commercially developed watersheds; a sample easement with many potential redevelop scenarios considered; and a credit structure to both acknowledge properties that were developed utilizing stormwater BMPs and to incentivize landowners to install BMPs not identified as part of the Management Plan.
- The Long Creek Watershed Management District was established. An Interlocal Agreement between four municipalities was executed to establish the District as a quasi-municipal nonprofit entity that supports public and private representation on a governing board.
- A financial policies and procedures manual was developed. An accounting database was developed in Quickbooks to provide the necessary structure for the Long Creek Watershed Management District accounting. This included permittee (all designated properties) and vendor lists, and the ability to track expenditures on a project basis, grant basis, and by cost categories (i.e., administration, monitoring, good housekeeping, and construction & maintenance).
- A monitoring program was established to track water quality in Long Creek, and five months of water quality monitoring data was collected.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
City of Portland
City of South Portland
City of Westbrook
Town of Scarborough
Maine DEP
Long Creek Watershed Management District



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Suggested Citation:

Maine Department of Environmental Protection (2012) “Nonpoint Source Management Program 2011 Annual Report,” Document # DEPLW-1237. Augusta: MDEP.