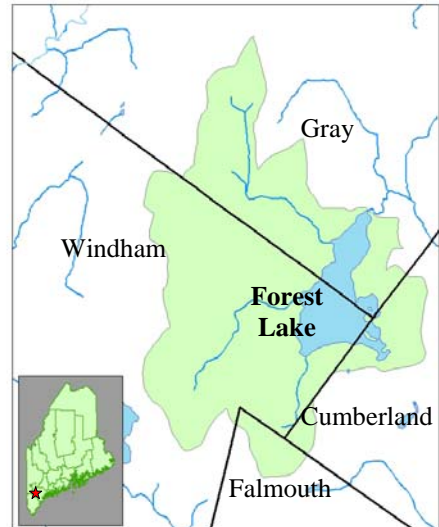


Forest Lake Watershed Management Plan Project

#2002-04

Waterbody Name:	Forest Lake
Location:	Gray, Windham and Cumberland - Cumberland County
Waterbody Status:	NPS Priority Watershed, Most at Risk
Project Grantee:	Cumberland County SWCD
Project Duration:	April 2002 – April 2004
319 Grant Amount:	\$27,622
Match:	\$24,654



PROBLEM:

Forest Lake is a 210-acre lake that is developed with about 380 shoreline homes and located primarily in the Towns of Gray, Windham and Cumberland. Each of these towns has frontage on the lake and comprises a significant portion of the 3-square-mile watershed. The lake is the headwaters of the Piscataqua River, which flows into the Presumpscot River.

The lake has been monitored by the DEP and volunteers since 1974, and data indicates that there is moderate dissolved oxygen depletion in the bottom waters of the lake in late summer. As a result, the lake is listed on the state's NPS Priority Watersheds list and list of lakes "Most at Risk from New Development" under the Maine Stormwater Law. In 1994 the Forest Lake Association (FLA) conducted a watershed survey with technical assistance from Lake and Watershed Resource Management Associates. The FLA also conducted an independent septic system survey.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of the project was to develop a watershed management plan for the Forest Lake Watershed that would be used to guide long-term lake protection efforts in the community. In the first phase of the project, staff and volunteers collected information on the watershed problems and needs. In May 2002, 14 volunteers helped update the 1994 watershed survey and identified 112 erosion sites. The project also conducted a shoreline survey to assess the lakefront buffers and distributed a survey to all watershed households to evaluate septic system characteristics and maintenance practices.

The collected information was then shared with the community and used to develop a watershed management plan. In April 2003, about 50 residents and town officials participated in a daylong community forum where they identified issues and developed strategies to protect Forest Lake. Participants then formed four workgroups and met throughout the summer to further flesh out these strategies. Staff created the draft plan, obtained public input and distributed copies of the final plan to the public.



Sediment delta from erosion on roads and residential properties.

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

- Project staff and volunteers surveyed the entire Forest Lake Watershed and documented 112 erosion sites. They also developed recommendations for each site, rated the impact to the lake and cost and technical level required to fix each site, and estimated the pollutant load for many of the sites.
- Project staff produced the *Forest Lake Watershed Survey Report* (April 2003), which summarizes watershed survey findings and lists specific information on each identified site.
- About 50 watershed residents and municipal officials attended a daylong Community Watershed Forum in April 2003. The issues identified and the preliminary strategies developed during the forum formed the framework for the Watershed Management Plan.
- The highly successful Community Watershed Forum was designed as a tool to gather public input and to inform and involve the watershed community. This innovative approach generated approximately \$12,000 in in-kind match through forum participation, donations, Design Team planning and Action Team work. A ten-page “*Summary of Proceedings*” was prepared to provide an overview of the planning process, budget and outcomes.
- The *Forest Lake Watershed Management Plan* was completed in December 2004.



PROJECT PARTNERS:

Forest Lake Association
Town of Cumberland
Town of Gray
Town of Windham

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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