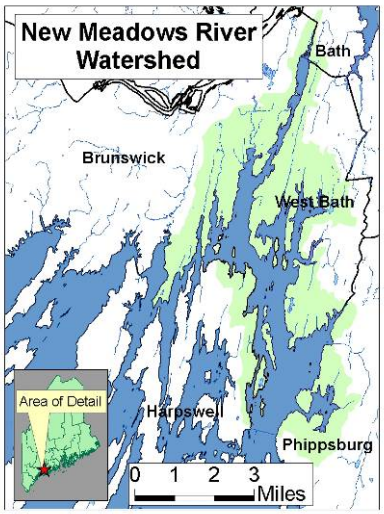
Upper New Meadows River Watershed Implementation Project, Phase 1
#2005R-12

Waterbody Name:	New Meadows River
Location:	Bath, Brunswick, Harpswell, Phippsburg, West Bath – Cumberland and Sagadahoc Counties
Waterbody Status:	NPS Priority Watershed
Project Grantee:	Town of Brunswick
Project Duration:	May 2005 – December 2007
319 Grant Amount:	$38,500
Local Match:	$105,970



PROBLEM:

The New Meadows River watershed covers 26 square miles in Cumberland and Sagadahoc Counties and empties into the northern end of Casco Bay. The river supports extensive finfish, shellfish and lobster fisheries. The primary water quality problems in the New Meadows River include low dissolved oxygen levels, high fecal coliform counts, and roughly 30 licensed overboard discharge systems. While water quality issues in the lower reaches have been addressed, high nutrient levels and low dissolved oxygen levels persist in the upper portion of the watershed. Problems in the upper watershed have been attributed to the Route 1causeway, which restricts tidal flow and forms two "lakes". The lake experiences frequent algal blooms and routinely violates DEP dissolved oxygen standards. While much of these water quality problems are due to the lack of tidal flushing, overland nutrient contributions likely contribute to the problems.

The New Meadows River Watershed Project (NMRWP) was initiated by the watershed towns in 1999 in response to the DEP listing the New Meadows River Estuary as a nonpoint source priority coastal water. This collaborative effort has since conducted a NPS survey of the upper watershed in 2000, completed the *New Meadows River Watershed Management Plan* in 2004 and continues to meet to guide watershed protection efforts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of the project was to reduce nutrient loading to the New Meadows "lakes" in the upper watershed. This was accomplished by fixing seven erosion sites identified in the 2000 NPS survey. Project staff provided technical assistance to 25 landowners and municipal officials about additional erosion and runoff issues in the watershed.

Project staff also conducted a survey in the upper watershed to identify areas of probable nutrient loading not identified in the 2000 survey efforts. Completed project sites were highlighted on a "virtual tour" that will be aired on local cable access stations and the New Meadows River Project website. Another presentation on the "importance of Vegetative Buffers" was presented at the Bath City Hall in December, 2007 and aired on Brunswick Cable Access. Press releases were also printed in the Brunswick Times Record.

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

- Seven sites were stabilized in the upper watershed. BMPs included fencing to keep cattle out of a pond leading to the river; installing stone-lined ditches, water diverters and new surface material on roads; and planting native trees and shrubs along a shoreline property.
- Pollutant loading to the New Meadows River was reduced by an estimated 30 tons of sediment per year (US EPA Region 5 Method).
- The steering committee continues to meet regularly and oversees the larger New Meadows River Watershed Project, which addresses NPS pollution, habitat and tidal restoration, and economic resource protection. The committee is updating an Action Plan for the entire New Meadows River Watershed.
- Due to the extensive work completed at a number of the NPS abatement sites, the total local match exceeded the funds originally planned by nearly $80,000.

Camp Drive, West Bath – Property owner installed a dripline trench to infiltrate roof runoff and prevent soil erosion.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

City of Bath
Bowdoin College
Town of Brunswick
Casco Bay Estuary Project
Cumberland County SWCD
Friends of Casco Bay
Maine Department of Marine Resources
Maine Department of Transportation
Maine State Planning Office
New Meadows Lakes Association
Town of West Bath

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