2019 Accomplishments

(updated in 2020)

**STEERING COMMITTEE** meets a minimum of four (4) times each year, on roughly a quarterly basis. The final meeting of the year is the Annual Meeting, where accomplishments are reviewed/recognized and priorities for the coming year are identified/ranked.

* **2/26/2019 Steering Committee Conference Call**
  + Broadened team/added Project Manager
  + Prepared SWOT Analysis
  + Initiated Committee structure/identified Champions
* **3/22/2019** **Steering Committee Meeting at UNE**
  + Implemented Committee structure
    - Data + Analysis Committee
    - Education + Outreach Committee
  + Revised Action Plan
    - Conducted strategic alignment of actions with partners
    - Identified only ONE (1) orphaned activity: REPORT CARD to reflect health of Saco River Watershed
    - Allowed Saco River to become Federal priority for USDA + USEPA
  + Attended by:
    - NRCS-ME State Conservationist, Juan Hernandez
    - Senator King’s Office, Bonnie Pothier (Environmental Liaison)
* **6/25/2019 Steering Committee Meeting at North Conway Water Precinct**
  + Convened Data + Analysis Committee
  + Presented **Summary of Committees** (see handout for details)
  + Attended by NRCS-NH State Conservationist, Rick Ellsmore
* **9/5/2019 Steering Committee Meeting at Saco River Corridor Commission**
  + Updated by USEPA’s Ted Lavery on ME+NH water quality data merge
  + Updated by NRCS on conservation outreach effort in Maine
  + Presented draft “realistic budget” with “ownership tasks”
  + Attended by acting NRCS-ME State Conservationist, Edwin Martinez-Martinez
* **12/5/2019 Annual Meeting of the SWC Steering Committee at UNE-Biddeford**
  + Updated Steering Committee on:
    - Committee-led actions in progress and pending (see SUMMARY OF COMMITTEES on separate document/file)
    - Involvement in the Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) network
  + Provided presentations from key partners within the watershed
  + Recognized Chris Feurt, Emily Greene + other key individuals from UNE, MWC, Poland Spring, SRCC, USEPA for their continued efforts
  + Attended by:
    - NRCS-ME State Conservationist, Juan Hernandez
    - UNE’s new Dean of the College of Arts + Sciences, Jonathan Millen
    - Senator King’s Office, Bonnie Pothier (Environmental Liaison)

**ADDITIONAL EVENTS** attended by Staff + Steering Committee members are also tracked and included in the following accomplishments in 2019.

* **3/28/2019 Maine Sustainability + Water Conference** 
  + Developed/delivered Saco Watershed track
    - Raised visibility of the watershed within Maine
    - Provided staff + presenting steering committee members an opportunity to network with other watershed groups
  + Began discussions with NRCS-Maine re: outreach opportunity
    - Conservation/stewardship to landowners in watershed
    - Discretionary funds from Maine NRCS
* **4/11/2019 Androscoggin River Watershed Council** 
  + Attended annual meeting through scholarship/grant from Poland Spring
  + Collected information and ideas to grow Saco Watershed Collaborative
    - Website
    - Bylaws
    - Marketing Materials
    - Annual Meeting
    - Sponsors
* Other events attended by staff to raise the visibility and leverage network opportunities for the Saco Watershed Collaborative (SWC) include the following list of conferences and sessions. Events where a SWC-specific information/presentation was provided are indicated in bold font.
  + **3/15/2019 NH Water + Watershed Conference**
  + 5/16/2019 NHDES Drinking Water Source Protection Conference
  + **9/18/2019 Collaborative Leadership training at Harvard Forest**
  + **11/13/2019 RCP Network Gathering at UMass-Amherst**

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES** accomplished by Staff + Steering Committee members are also tracked and include the following accomplishments in 2019.

* **“Realistic budget” developed** 
  + Basefunding tasks identified
  + Prioritized list of additional tasks provided:
    - with order-of-magnitude estimates for partners to consider sponsoring, executing, etc.
    - to Sustainability Committee
* **Additional partner support committed**
  + MaineDEP (Rob Mohlar) provided **guidance on database management**:
    - An update (3/22) and training (5/22) to Development + Anaysis Committee for WRDB, a non-proprietary database
    - Assistance to USEPA throughout summer 2019 to manage the data merger described below
  + USEPA assisted with **merger of ME + NH water quality data**
    - Project estimated at $10K+ in consultant or staff time
    - Project contained 90,000+ lines of data to manage
    - Data + Analysis Committee
  + USDA NRCS-ME offered roughly $20K in discretionary funds for **landowner outreach campaign re: conservation** 
    - To be included in 2020 fiscal year/budget
    - To launch the Stewardship Committee
  + Poland Spring sponsored **informational poster + brochure**
    - To completed in early 2020 by Bill Duffy/Northern Geomantics
    - To target students/teachers (poster) + landowners (brochure)
    - To be overseen by EOC
  + Maine Water Company interested in working new GIS professor/grad student to **expand resiliency study**
    - Included 1-mile corridor along Saco River identifying threats
    - Initially completed by SMPDC + GPCOG
  + USEPA/DEP awarded Technical Assistance for **emergency exercises/training/meetings with first responder communities**
    - Delayed by Government shutdown in late 2018
    - Picked up by New England Environmental Finance Center (included in NOAA grant)
  + New England Environmental Finance Center + Center for Blue Economy embarking on **community resiliency study to translate climate uncertainty to climate risk for water resources infrastructure in Saco Estuary/Bay communities**
    - NOAA-sponsored grant led by Charlie Colgan + Martha Shiels at USM
    - Several members participating in this effort
  + Grant award from Harvard Forest/New England Landscapes to **develop a municipal outreach tool + schedule** using their NELF Explorer model in early 2020
    - Developing visual graphics + science-based messages
    - Engaging + inspiring municipal audiences within the watershed
    - Protecting water quality + ecosystem services
  + Maine Brewshed Alliance continues to be interested in **collaborating with SWC to reach member + non-member breweries** on our common goals (i.e., maintaining water quality to brew good beer)
    - Met with Kristin Jackson several times throughout 2019
    - Developed a list of breweries within the watershed (in ME + NH – no NH equivalent at this time)
    - Forged relationships with local breweries:
      * 8/15/2019: Run of the Mill (Saco) attended UNE boat tour and hosted brewery tour boat trip
      * 12/12/2019: Banded Brewing (Biddeford) hosted a meet-and-greet event with Maine Brewshed Alliance ambassadors and representatives from The Ecology School
  + UNE Leadership being consulted on how we can maximize SWC’s:
    - place on campus (“maintaining UNE student/professor involvement” = number one priority from Steering Committee at Annual Meeting on 12/5/2019)
    - visibility using UNE’s resources (Communication’s liaison, etc.)
    - partnership with UNE (repository for newly aggregated database)
* **Outreach to watershed groups and organizations**
  + Green Mountain Conservation Group
  + Upper Saco Valley Land Trust
  + Androscoggin River Watershed Council
  + Penobscot Indian Nation
  + Natural Resources Council of Maine – Maine Brewshed Alliance
  + Eastern Trail Alliance
  + SMPDC + GPCOG
  + Additional RCPs in Maine + throughout the Northeast
    - Downeast Conservation network (Bob DeForrest, Maine Coast Heritage Trust)
    - Upland Headwaters Alliance
    - Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea
    - Sebago Clean Waters initiative
* SWC = Member of Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) Network
  + Invited to participate in regular Coordinator calls + committees
  + Received scholarship to attend training 9/18-9/20 in Harvard Forest in MA
  + Attended/presented at RCP Network Gathering 11/12-11/13 at UMass-Amherst
  + Connected to large landscape-scale initiative, North East Bird Habitat Initiative, headed up by Maine Audobon and Highstead Foundation
* Saco River Corridor Commission support
  + Attend meetings regularly (at Dayton)
  + Outreach to City contacts re: LR 2204
* Four (4) Committees supported
  + Larger group = **Steering Committee** (see SUMMARY above)
    - All convening partners, members, and stakeholders
    - Synonymous with “the Collaborative”
  + 3 active subcommittees (see SUMMARY OF COMMITTEES in separate document/file)
    - **Sustainability Committee** ensures long-term viability/sustainability of the Collaborative
    - **Data + Analysis Committee** provides recommendations for new, and maintains an inventory of existing, data sets to properly inform the Collaborative’s actions + stakeholders
    - **Education + Outreach Committee** develops/compiles consistent messages + branding for the watershed + the Collaborative
  + 1 inactive subcommittee = **Stewardship Committee** (to be launched in early 2020)