Saco Watershed Collaborative
NH Water and Watersheds Conference
March 15, 2019
Emily Greene
Outreach Coordinator
egreene@une.edu
1,700 square mile watershed
2 states
More than 23 municipalities
Headwaters: White Mountains National Forest
Saco Estuary
“Living Laboratory”
Ecological Hotspot
Drinking Water Source
“Working Class Watershed”
Collaborative Learning Guide
Guide for Ecosystem Management
Dr. Christine B. Feurt
Collaborative Learning

1. Integrative and Community-based Ecosystem Management
2. Knowledge is created *together*
3. Engages non-scientists and local knowledge
4. Knowledge $\rightarrow$ *action*
The “Social Contract” of Collaborative Learning

1. Safe space to share ideas
2. Respect expertise in the room
3. Learn by doing with self-reflection
4. Iterative process
5. Mindful of adult learning principles
Engage the Kaleidoscope of Expertise
Saco Watershed Collaborative 2016-2019
Recognizing the Stewardship Network

December 2016:

1. Who are you?
2. What do you do?
3. What are your values and perceptions of the Saco Watershed?
4. How can being a part of a Collaborative help you achieve your organization's goals?
From the 2016 Workshop: Identified Five Action Priorities

Sustain the Saco Watershed through:

1. Land conservation
2. Best Management Practices
3. Protection of aquifers and waterways from pollution
4. Restoring degraded waters
5. Engaging and inspiring governments and citizens
Building Partnerships across the Saco Watershed

2016-2019:

1. Field trips to understand work being done in the watershed
2. Quarterly Meetings
3. Monthly Conference Calls
5. Annual Conference
6. Professional, peer to peer and community outreach
7. Partners can share information and knowledge with their networks
8. Preliminary Collaborative Assessment by the University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS)
Membership of the Saco Watershed Collaborative (2016-2019)

- Attaining Sustainable Solutions
- Belstar Orchards
- Biddeford Conservation Commission
- Brookfield Renewable Energy
- City of Biddeford
- City of Saco
- Cole Harrison Insurance
- EPA – Region One
- FB Environmental
- Fiddlehead Environmental
- Friends of Sebago Lake
- Furman, Gregory, Deptula
- Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, Wells Water District
- Laura Calandrella
- Lovewell Pond Association
- ME CDC Drinking Water Program
- ME Geological Survey
- ME Dept. of Environmental Protection
- Maine Geological Survey
- ME House of Representatives
- ME Natural Areas Program
- Maine Water Company
- NH Dept. of Environmental Services
- North Conway Water Precinct
- Poland Spring
- Power Engineers
- Residents of Saco Watershed
- Rumery’s Boat Yard
- Saco River Corridor Commission
- Saco River Recreational Council
- Saco Valley Land Trust
- Senator Angus King’s Office
- Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative
- Southern ME Planning and Development Commission
- The Ecology School
- Trout Unlimited – Sebago Chapter
- University of Michigan
- University of New England
- University of Southern Maine
- Upper Saco Valley Land Trust
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service
- US Geological Survey
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve
- York County Invasive Aquatic Species Project
- York County Soil and Water Conservation District
Development of the Action Plan in 2017:

1. *Engage* and *inspire* governments, organizations and citizens to take action to sustain water in the Watershed.
2. *Protect water quality* through pollution prevention and restoration of degraded waters.
4. *Promote* and *enforce* low impact development (LID) strategies, stormwater and wastewater best management practices, and land use development that protect water.
We really like field trips…
Field Trips

- Discover the Headwaters Success Stories (North Conway, NH)
- Maine Water Company: Drinking Water Facility Tour (Saco, ME)
- Highland Farms (Fryeburg, ME)
- Poland Springs (Fryeburg and Denmark, ME)
- Saco Estuary Boat Tour (Saco, ME)
- River Bend Farm (Saco, ME)
- Silver Maple Forest Floodplain (Fryeburg, ME)
- Saco River Canoe and Kayak Paddle (Fryeburg, ME)
- White Mountains National Forest (Jackson and Conway, NH)
- Massabesic Experimental Forest (Lyman, ME)
University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability

- Need for more watershed collaboration
- 20 selected
- 70 to 75 global proposals
- Advisor: Julia Wondolleck
- 4 Masters students
Project Goal

To inform ongoing discussions about ways to enhance communication and collaboration in the Saco River Watershed by providing an independent and nonpartisan assessment of current issues, activities, and aspirations for the watershed.
University of Michigan SEAS
Project Objectives

**Identify:**
1. Major issues confronting a watershed.
2. Individuals and parties in a watershed.
3. Values and visions, perspectives and level of interest in developing a Collaborative.
4. Transferable lessons from other collaboratives that might apply to the Saco Watershed Collaborative.
Method

1. Literature Review on collaboration
2. 52 Interviews with watershed residents
   Values, aspirations, issues, purpose, and structure
3. Developed case profile of existing watershed collaboratives
What do People Value in the Saco Watershed?

1. Recreation (58%)
2. Clean water (42%)
3. Biophysical attributes (42%)
4. Aesthetic qualities (38%)
5. High quality water for drinking and irrigation (33%)
University of Michigan SEAS Recommended Priorities for Collaboration

1. Improve overall **communication** in the Watershed.
2. Bolster network and information-sharing
3. Coalition and capacity-building
4. Public education
5. Advising local & state governments
6. Advocating for policies/legislation
7. Ecosystem-based decision making
8. Coordinate conservation efforts
9. Addressing issues that span multiple jurisdictions
Challenges to the Collaboration

1. Scale: 1,700 square miles
2. Scope: Avoid being a “mile wide and an inch deep”
3. Time and staff availability
4. Different Perceptions, Values and Opinions
5. Representation by different stakeholder groups
6. Compiling and synthesizing available data
Successes of the Saco Watershed Collaborative

1. Leadership
2. Science-based collaborative approach: Collaborative Learning
3. Collective impact approach
4. Consistent partner engagement
5. Consistent student engagement and involvement
6. Communication and coordination
Upcoming Events

• Field Trips
  • May
  • June
  • July
  • August
  • September

• Quarterly Meetings
  • March
  • June
  • September

• Annual Meeting in December

Photo Credit: Andy Tolman
Connecting with the Saco Watershed Collaborative

- Basecamp: Access by invite
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Saco Watershed Story Map
- Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission: Saco River Drinking Water Resiliency Project
- Saco Watershed Collaborative
- Saco Watershed Collaborative Action Plan
- University of Michigan SEAS Preliminary Assessment
- Coming hopefully soon….UNE platform
Who to Contact

Outreach Coordinator
  • Emily Greene egreene@une.edu

Project Manager
  • Robyn Saunders robyn@attaining.me

Program Managers
  • Drs. Christine Feurt and Pam Morgan
  • cfeurt@une.edu and pmorgan@une.edu