2006

Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps
2006 Summary Report

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition
Presumpscot River Watch
Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/cbep-publications

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/cbep-publications/245

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu.
2006 Summary Report

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF

PRWC
Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership

Presumpscot River Water Conservation District

Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District
Presumpscot River Watershed Map
A Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is a crew of area high school students dedicated to installing environmental improvement projects adjacent to rivers, streams, and lakes within a watershed. They are directed by a crew leader who is college-aged or a college graduate. They work on a diversity of projects that include vegetative shoreline buffer plantings, trail maintenance and construction, river clean-ups, and many other best management practices. They work with local towns and governments as well as private landowners. One unique feature of a YCC is that all labor is carried out by hand; there are no power tools involved in their work. A field season typically lasts between 5-8 weeks during the summer months. YCC’s continue to show success throughout the state of Maine.

Despite recent improvements, water quality in the river remains degraded. As the river is cleaned up, development along the shoreline is resulting in a loss of vegetated buffers alongside rivers and streams. Increased runoff and erosion has altered stream channels and continues to degrade fisheries habitat. The Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps (PRYCC) will work to reverse these impacts.

An active coalition of partners is in place to guide watershed improvement projects. The Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition (PRWC) is made up of more than a dozen government and private organizations concerned with improving fisheries, mitigating impacts from watershed development, and preserving natural areas along the river. Several studies have identified specific problem areas for improvement. Referring to the Presumpscot Plan, the PRWC will guide the PRYCC toward high priority improvement efforts.

YCC’s promote stewardship among community members and projects yield tangible water quality benefits. Organizers also rave that YCC’s are an effective way to raise awareness, energize communities and inspire local youth to become environmental leaders.
As part of a larger project for the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, the PRYCC assisted with two projects at the site of the former Smelt Hill Dam. For the first project, they helped lay rip-rap, plant 350 plant plugs, and lay mulch all in an effort to mimic a natural streambed. This will allow water to flow to the Presumpscot without eroding the land as well as filter pollutants out that could otherwise lower the river’s water quality. The second project, entailed stabilizing an eroded storm water drainage ditch on adjacent property. The crew installed 2 yards of riprap to stabilize the bank and prevent further erosion. They also created plunge pools to collect runoff and prevent soil and other pollutants from entering the Presumpscot River.
Westbrook

East Bridge Street Trail, Portland Trails

This new trail, located directly on the Presumpscot River, was heavily eroded by ATV use. The YCC help stabilize the trail by filling eroded gullies with crushed stone to prevent further erosion. They also partnered with the Maine Conservation Corps to build bridges and level out the trail to prevent soil from running into the river.

Bicentennial Park, Town of Westbrook

As part of a Project Canopy grant that was awarded to the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, the YCC planted 52 mature trees in this park. The park is located directly adjacent to a stormwater tributary that flows into the Presumpscot River.

Riverbank Park, Town of Westbrook

Riverbank Park is located directly on the Presumpscot River, in downtown Westbrook. This park experiences heavy use which has caused severe erosion along the riverbank. The YCC installed three sets of infiltration steps, planted 25 trees and shrubs, mulched, seeded, and laid curlex. All of these practices will help reduce runoff into the river and allow plants to grow to help stabilize the shoreline as well as filter runoff. As a result, the park has easier and safer access to the river, all while helping to protect the water quality.
Windham

Route 35, Sappi and Department of Transportation

This site on Route 35 is a popular fishing spot where several trails leading to the river were eroding. By partnering with Sappi and the Maine Department of Transportation, the crew was able to plant 35 trees and shrubs. They also defined a commonly used trail and added mulch to cover exposed tree roots.

Covered Bridge, Town of Windham

This site is owned by a private landowner but is heavily used by the public as a recreational area. Due to this use, the bank was severely eroded, the soil was compacted, and many tree roots were exposed, causing both a safety and environmental hazard. The YCC installed (6) infiltration steps and planted 29 trees and shrubs to stabilize the bank.

Storm drain Stenciling

Storm drain stenciling is an educational and public awareness component of the YCC. It informs people that these drains flow directly to a waterbody. That means pollutants such as fertilizers, waste, and cigarette butts to name a few, will also end up in our waterways without being treated. The YCC stenciled drains throughout Windham and Westbrook.
The Gorham Parks and Conservation Commission is working to open the Tannery Brook Park in 2007. The PRYCC helped to construct and define trails for the proposed 16-mile trail network by sidehilling or leveling out areas to help prevent erosion as well as lopped, pruned, and laid wood chips along the new trails.

This site is located on the Presumpscot Estuary, where the Presumpscot River meets Casco Bay. The site posed a great challenge due to tidal influences, brackish water, and the site had extremely difficult conditions. The bank had eroded approximately 12 feet over the course of several years. The YCC laid curlex to stabilize the shoreline, planted 20 shrubs as well as native salt marsh grass. Infiltration steps were modified to accommodate the landscape.
## Accomplishments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation Practice</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mulch</td>
<td>26.5 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>33.5 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infiltration Steps</td>
<td>17 steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber Razor Blades</td>
<td>3 razor blades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffer Plantings</td>
<td>268 trees/shrubs/groundcover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>~4 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormdrain Stenciling</td>
<td>250 drains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash Clean-up</td>
<td>&gt; 100 lbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sediment Clean-out</td>
<td>5 tons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 projects in total over the course of 5 weeks!
Articles about the PRYCC

The PRYCC was highlighted in several newspapers around the watershed including: Gorham-Westbrook Gazette, Windham Independent, Lakes Region Weekly, and American Journal.
Thank you to all that participated in the 2006 Presumpscot River YCC!

**YCC Staff**

*Technical Director:* Lisa Vickers  
*Technical Assistance:* Betty Williams  
*Crew Leader:* Evelyn Lane  
*Crew:*  
Michael Coty (Windham)  
Jessica Curlew (Windham)  
Emma Deans (Gorham)  
Emily Myshall (Windham)  
Jeremy Lowell (Windham)  
Warren Taylor (Falmouth)  
Sam Tureff (Yarmouth)

**Program Funding and Support**

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Casco Bay Estuary Partnership  
Presumpscot River Watershed Coalition  
Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District  
Friends of the Presumpscot River  
Presumpscot River Watch  
Maine Department of Environmental Protection  
Town of Westbrook  
Westbrook Public Works  
Town of Windham  
Town of Gorham  
Gorham Lands & Conservation Commission  
Portland Trails

*Thank you to all that participated in the 2006 Presumpscot River YCC!*
"The song of the river ends not at her banks, but in the hearts of those who have loved her."

--Buffalo Joe

For more information or to nominate a site for 2007, contact:

Presumpscot River Youth Conservation Corps
35 Main Street, Suite 3
Windham, ME 04062
207.892.4700
mcraig@usm.maine.edu
Betty-Williams@cumberlandswcd.org