

Upstream & Downstream

Newsletter of the Sebasticook River Watershed Association

Spring 2007



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SRWA Calendar

SRWA Board
Meeting ~ June 4, 2006
6:00 pm
Kleinschmidt - Pittsfield

Spring Running
Festival ~ June 2, 2007
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Edwards Mill Park - Augusta

SRWA Annual
Kayak Raffle ~
Now until October, 2007
See any SRWA Board Member
for Tickets and Information

Current Projects

Mullens Woods

The Mullens Woods preserve is a 117-acre parcel located in North Newport. The Nature Conservancy received this abandoned farmstead in 1967 as a donation from the Hartwell family heirs. Their intent was to preserve a stand of old growth Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), which are located on the property. The buildings have since been razed and the fields are reverting to early successional mixed growth. In addition to the pine/hemlock, a plot of English Oak (*Quercus robur*) planted by University of Maine students is located on the property.

The SRWA, working in conjunction with MSAD 48, has recently acquired

Mullens Woods from the Nature Conservancy

Under the agreement MSAD 48 will hold the fee title while the SRWA holds a conservation easement. The two groups will collaborate to develop a utilization plan that will allow the area to be used as an outdoor lab while maintaining the unique characteristics of the property. Suggested ideas for the area include habitat restoration for grassland birds, develop singing lanes for American woodcock (*Philohela minor*), and maintaining a diversity of successional stages.



SRWA to Assist with Alewife Study

Recent improvements to fish passages at dams along the Sebasticook means that the annual spring run of Alewives from the sea to native spawning grounds in lakes throughout the watershed can occur with minimal intervention from man. These shiny river herring school up the river during May and early June. After passing over the Fort Halifax dam in Winslow they continue upstream past the Benton Falls and Burnham dams before entering the east and west

branches of the Sebasticook and spawn in Sebasticook lake, Plymouth Pond, Unity Pond as well as other areas. The Maine Department of Marine resources is conducting a study to determine how quickly the fish can migrate up the river and to which ponds various batches of fish enter. The study is conducted by surgically inserting metal tags in hundreds of fish as they enter the river mouth. Special detectors mounted on the fishways of each dam along the river can read the magnetic coding on each tag and thereby

track the timing of passage of each marked fish. The SRWA assists this effort by visiting each fishway and monitoring the conditions of the fishway during the study, and by working with the Nokomis High School science program students to monitor fish migration at the dam in Newport. For volunteer information, check out our "Volunteer Opportunities" section of the newsletter. Also, look for us at the Spring Running festival in Augusta on June 2, 2007.



China Regional Lakes Alliance

The mission of the CRLA is to protect and improve water quality in China Lake, Three Corner Pond, Three Mile Pond, and Webber Pond, and to benefit our local economy through Integrated Watershed Management. CRLA is seeking non-point source pollution control projects within the watersheds of the mentioned four lakes. Cost share funding is available for priority projects. Landowners pay for the cost of materials and free labor is provided by CRLA. For example, shoreline rip rap projects is eligible for cost share funding. Free advice is also available for other projects, such as driveway improvements. For more information, contact the CRLA at 445-2014.

Watershed Almanac

The river is home to many rare, threatened, and endangered species including the Tomah mayfly, the Yellow Lamp Mussel, and the Black Tern.

The Presidents Corner Changes for SRWA

As announced in the last issue of Upstream Downstream, Paul Mitnik has resigned as President of the SRWA. The Board of Directors would like to thank Paul for his hard work, dedication, enthusiasm and leadership and appreciate the time and effort he committed to the SRWA during his tenure. Alan Haberstock has been named as the acting President of the Association. We are looking forward to a productive year!!

Board Meetings are held the first Monday of every other month and we are looking for volunteer members to join our board. Please contact us at info@sebasticookriver.org for more information.

Vernal Pools In Maine

Maine has taken the forward-thinking step of becoming one of the first states in the nation to specifically regulate vernal pools (e.g., beyond existing wetland regulations) as a critical habitat worth protecting. Maine's Legislature passed the vernal pool protection law more than a year ago and it goes into effect on September 1, 2007. The Maine DEP will regulate the area within 250 feet of "significant pools", with the goal of maintaining at least a 75% forested area around each significant pool. Under this new state law, a pool is considered "significant" if it meets certain functional thresholds. Specifically, a vernal pool that has at least 20 spotted salamander egg masses, 10 blue-spotted salamander egg masses or 40 wood frog egg masses is considered significant. The presence of fairy shrimp or any an endangered or threatened species also qualifies a pool for protection. Vernal pools are typically isolated forest depressions, without inlets or outlets or perennial standing water. They have a specific hydroperiod that precludes species, such as fish, bull frogs and snapping turtles, that feed on vernal pool species. They provide critical breeding habitat for frogs, mole salamanders, invertebrates. Wood frogs and mole salamanders (e.g., spotted and blue-spotted salamanders) move significant distances from vernal pools into the surrounding forest, where shade, undisturbed duff, and dead woody material serve as vital micro-habitat. As a result of its gentle topography and abundance of soils derived from glacial marine sediments (clays) and basal tills (dense till with fragipans), which tend to perch water in isolated depressions, vernal pools are bountiful throughout the Sebasticook River watershed.

Events

Spring Running Festival June 2, 2007

The Spring Running Festival celebrates many aspects of the reborn Kennebec and Sebasticook rivers. The festival celebrates and promotes the historic, cultural and economic connections of Augusta to the spring herring run. This year's festival will take place June 2 from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM. The festival will be held at Edwards Mill Park in Downtown Augusta. Activities include:

- Fishing Rod Construction
- Fly Tying and Casting Instruction
- Demonstrations in Kayak Safety, Design and Fishing from a Kayak
- Aquatic Insects of the Kennebec
- Birding Walk...and more!

For more information, check out:
<http://www.springrunning.com>

Volunteer Opportunities

Alewife Migration Monitoring

The Maine Department of Marine Resources will once again be monitoring the upstream progress of the run with the assistance of the SRWA. If you would like to get involved, contact Brandon Kulik via email at info@sebasticookriver.org.

Board/Committee Members

The SRWA Board of Directors has a few vacancies that we wish to fill with bright, energetic people who love the Sebasticook River Watershed. If you know of good candidates or would like to join, please contact Alan Haberstock, acting SRWA President, via email at info@sebasticookriver.org.

For more information, check out:
www.sebasticookriver.org



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PO Box 486
Unity, Maine 04988-0486

Dedicated to the Stewardship of
the Sebasticook River Watershed

Membership Application:

- Student/Senior Citizen - \$5/yr.
- Individual - \$10/yr.
- Family - \$15/yr.*
- Business - \$50/yr.*
- Lifetime (Individual) - \$200
- Lifetime (Family) - \$300*

I would like to contribute an
additional \$_____

Please make checks payable to the
Sebasticook River
Watershed Association
and mail to the address below.

Sebasticook River
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P.O. Box 486
Unity, Maine
04988-0486

Check out our Web Page!
www.sebasticookriver.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

*If you would like to vote at our annual
meetings, please provide the name of a
representative for your business or
family: _____

If you are interested in volunteering for any
of our Committees, please indicate below:

- Conservation Committee
- Education and Special Events
- Fundraising and Membership
- Outreach Committee

All contributions are tax deductible under IRS
501 (c) (3) guidelines. We welcome inquiries
about donations of goods, services and land.