

Area covered: **DOWNEAST SALMON RIVERS/COBSCOOK BAY, MAINE**

Title of Forum: **Washington County/GPAC Watershed Forum**

Convener: Steve Koenig, Director & Peter Steenstra, Chair, Education Committee
Salmon Habitat and River Enhancement Project (SHARE) Education Committee
P.O. Box 466, Cherryfield, ME 04622
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Date of Forum: January 17, 2003

Place: Machias, Maine

- *Number of Attendees:* Approximately 50 representing SHARE members, local, state and national governments; non-governmental organizations such as the Watershed Councils for Dennys River, East Machias River, Machias River, Pleasant River and Narraguagus River, Cobscook Bay Resource Center, fishermen, professors at the University of Maine Machias, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point,, land trusts, scientists and businesses. 300 were mailed invitations.
- *Media coverage – public education:* Local and regional print coverage before and at the event by Downeast Coastal Press, Quoddy Tides, Machias Valley News Observer. Soni Biehl, the coordinator for the Forum also mailed out the GPAC questions to a large group of citizens as well as some classes in local schools.
- *Was there good exchange of information from the general public to scientists and scientists to public?* Yes, there was a very good exchange. There were displays from 23 organizations at the Forum.
- *As a result of forum, do more public and land-based managers understand concept of the Gulf of Maine watershed than before?* Yes, SHARE's work in previous years has led to significant public understanding of the importance of "watersheds" - now there is there understanding about the larger Gulf of Maine watershed.
- *As a result of forum, do more public and land-based managers understand concept of the "water cycle" than before?* Yes.
- *How was the matrix completed?* Individuals filled out at forum. Citizens who had bene mailed the questions and students filled out the matrix individually. At the Forum, attendees highlighted three issues to be brought to the Summit.
- *Any follow-on activities?* The Passamaquoddy Tribe has requested that the GPAC forum coordinator (Soni Biehl) write a curriculum for the *50 Ways to Save the Gulf of Maine*. The watershed councils meet each month and work continues.

Key Priority Issues Identified For Washington County, Maine from the presentations

- Directors of the five endangered salmon river watershed councils about their important riparian and stream protection activities such as:
 1. 1000 foot corridor easements: 58 mile and 30,000 acre easements on the Machias River by International Paper, Atlantic Salmon Federation and State of Maine in 2 phases.
 2. Correct culvert placement (removing "hanging culverts) so that water flow can be maintained. Replanting raw banks and eroded areas.
 3. Water quality: learning about: seasonal variations (more acidic in the Fall), overboard discharge, toxics from landfills (including Superfund landfill (PCB), forestry harvesting, road building and maintaining, irrigation and pesticide spraying for blueberry fields.
 4. Lower Ph affects gill formation. Salmonids cannot survive if less than 5.0 Ph. The Machias River is 4.2Ph.
- Representatives from the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point and Cobscook Bay Resource Centerspoke about their study "Identifying Pollutants in Species Regularly Consumed by Native Americans in Passamaquoddy Bay Region." They talked about red tide and green slime algal blooms and how they have identified and corrected threats that allowed 2000 acres of clam flats in area to open.
- UME Machias Professor Kraus spoke about need for regional centers for data documentation and sharing information as well as trained volunteers for water quality monitoring.
- Maine Dept of Environmental Protection spoke about threats to Downeast Rivers: persistent toxics, air pollution and loss of habitat and biodiversity.

Major Conclusions – Top issues affecting the health of the DE Salmon/Cobscook Bay watersheds

1. Acid/toxic deposition
2. Desire for sustainable commercial fishing: depletion of numbers of fish; habitat changes; loss of native species; introduction of invasive species.
3. Lack of community capacity to gather necessary information needed to make informed decisions.
4. Positive notes: Integrated pest management being practiced more often; riparian zones being developed; and land trusts are being created.