



Maine Rivers
2016 – 2018 Strategic Plan
Final 1/8/16

Mission

Protect, restore and enhance the ecological health of Maine’s river systems.

Goals

- 1. Serve as Maine’s leading organization raising visibility of river-related news and information.**
- 2. Advocate for the health of Maine rivers with policy-makers at all levels.**
- 3. Support river-specific endeavors throughout Maine.**
- 4. Co-lead the China Lake Alewife Restoration Initiative.**
- 5. Scale up the organization to meet the sustained interest and demand for Maine Rivers’ statewide role.**

Goals and Strategies

1. Serve as Maine’s leading organization raising visibility of river-related news and information.

- A. Operate a communications hub for river-related news and information.
 1. Host a growing Facebook community with continually updated Maine, national and international river news; increase contributors, comments and likes.
 2. Send monthly e-blasts summarizing news, stories and events; upgrade e-blast graphics.
 3. Maintain a searchable website which serves as a resource on Maine river-related facts, highlights Maine Rivers priority projects, and provides extensive links to river-related organizations and information sources; enhance the depth of content for all audiences.
 4. Assess frequency and editorial guidelines for substantive print newsletters each year which serve as river policy reviews and highlight river restoration challenges, opportunities and successes.
 5. Develop and implement a plan for enhanced social media reach, connections and Search Engine Optimization.
- B. Publicize healthy river policy positions and advocacy opportunities to an extensive network of Maine River activists: lakes and watershed associations; land trusts and other conservation groups; alewife harvesters, lobstermen and other fishermen; anglers, paddlers and guides; river-related businesses; scientists, educators and students; and with others concerned with river health and fish passage.
- C. Publish a first “State-of-Maine Rivers” report as a high level brief on the health status of Maine rivers and watersheds.
- D. Organize or co-sponsor one or more workshops, symposia or conferences each year addressing highly relevant topics such as dam removal and fish passage, FERC relicensing and compliance, the economics of restoration, local river management and advocacy, and others.
- E. Gain regular media attention to Maine river issues, challenges, opportunities and successes by submitting feature story ideas, op-eds and letters-to-the editor and responding to the range of media “expert source” inquiries that arise.

2. Advocate for the health of Maine rivers with policy-makers at all levels.

- A. Build strong ongoing relationships and support policies and actions for healthy rivers on the part of state and municipal government, tribal entities, federal government, dam owners and hydro-power producers.
 1. Provide leadership for the Maine Stream Connectivity Work Group with state and NGO representatives to inform state policy and the work of river restoration practitioners.
 2. Communicate with Maine’s congressional delegation on a regular basis about priorities and positions that enhance the health of Maine rivers.
 3. Explore an annual or bi-annual Maine Rivers advocacy “Day on the Hill” in Washington, D.C.

- B. Stay abreast of municipal state, tribal and federal legislative and regulatory activity through ongoing relationships with Maine’s Environmental Priorities Coalition, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Maine’s Tribes, American Rivers, River Network, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, and the national Hydropower Reform Coalition.
 1. Rollbacks in state policies, regulations and programs: Participate in Environmental Priorities Coalition to respond to rollback attempts and advance positive initiatives.
 2. Implementation of EPA Clean Water Act 2015 rules: Support continued EPA human health water quality criteria for tribal waters in Maine, as well as Maine’s delegated authority to implement and develop water quality standards under the Clean Water Act.
 3. Hydropower legislation: Monitor policy initiatives and respond to potential impacts on Maine rivers.
 4. Endangered Species Act: Monitor implementation of the ESA and the activities the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission (AFMSC); advocate for policies and actions that support restoration of the full suite of diadromous fish.
- 3. Support diverse river-specific endeavors throughout Maine.**
 - A. Cobbossee: Partner with the Gardiner “Upstream” volunteer group on advocacy related to FERC relicensing of the American Tissue Dam and other efforts to improve fish passage.
 - B. Kennebec: Participate in a coalition with Natural Resources Council of Maine, Trout Unlimited and Atlantic Salmon Federation on legal challenges to NOAA’s Interim Species Protection Plan.
 - C. Marsh Stream: Monitor The Nature Conservancy analysis of the Frankfurt Dam and consider advisory roles that may emerge.
 - D. Mousam and Kennebunk: Partner with the Mousam and Kennebunk Rivers Alliance, Wells Reserve and Sierra Club to build for support for restoration efforts, including removal of the three lowest dams on the Mousam.
 - E. Penobscot: Respond to opportunities for collaborating with the Penobscot Indian Nation and NGOs to advocate for the removal of the Mattaceunk Dam.
 - F. Royal: Provide leadership with community members, The Nature Conservancy, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership and others to remove the Bridge Street dam and create fish passage through the town of Yarmouth.
 - G. St. Croix: Partner with NRCM and other allies to ensure past achievements in improved fish passage are not undermined.
 - H. St. John: Provide technical and strategic advice to advance the leadership efforts of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians on habitat improvements in Maine and fish passage advocacy in New Brunswick.
 - I. Union: Partner with Downeast Salmon Federation to organize and coordinate outreach activities to improve fish passage.
 - J. Others: Seek opportunities to support diverse river initiatives throughout Maine. Use a “decision-matrix” including but not limited to the following factors:
 - Ecological value
 - Geographic location
 - Complements/expands types of river health projects
 - Policy implications, possible model for others
 - Short and longer term resources required
 - Likelihood of return on investment

4. Co-lead the China Lake Alewife Restoration Initiative.

- A. Work with Maine Department of Marine Resources and Sebasticook Regional Land Trust to coordinate a Community Steering Committee and Funding Partners Network. Implement:
 - 1. Regional communications and citizen engagement plans.
 - 2. Funding plans with government, foundations and individual donors.
 - 3. Financial systems for complex, multi-party revenue and expense management.
- B. Develop and implement a staged logistics and permitting plan for the removal or creation of fish passage on six dams on the China Lake outlet stream.
 - 1. Masse Dam and Sawmill: removal
 - 2. Lombard Dam: removal
 - 3. Box Mill Dam: acceptable plan
 - 4. Ladd: install technical fishway
 - 5. Outlet: install technical fishway
 - 6. Morneau: acceptable plan

5. Scale up the organization to meet the sustained interest and demand for Maine Rivers' statewide role.

- A. Implement a board growth and succession plan to increase from 12 members to a full complement of 18 members reflecting river advocates and experts statewide.
 - 1. Confirm board member roles and create an annual board member agreement.
 - 2. Maintain the current Executive/Governance Committee, Finance Committee and Advocacy Committees; engage the entire board in its fundraising role; establish task forces as needed.
 - 3. Develop an excellent orientation process for new board members.
 - 4. Implement regular annual performance reviews with the executive director.
 - 5. Set annual calendars of meetings including a board retreat.
 - 6. Monitor progress and update the strategic plan annually.
- B. Conduct a compensation and personnel policy review and adjust accordingly.
- C. Enhance financial management forecasting and reporting.
 - 1. Establish policy for administrative overhead and how it is to be reflected in proposals.
 - 2. Implement monthly reporting to Executive Committee and quarterly reporting to full board.
 - 3. Revisit levels for discretionary spending and signing authority of Executive Director.
 - 4. Create rolling 3-year budget projections.
- D. Grow from 1 FTE staff to 2.5 – 3 FTEs to fully meet the goals of the strategic plan.
- E. Develop and implement a fundraising plan to increase the annual operating budget from \$110,000 in 2015 to the range of \$250,000 by 2018 and grow the operating reserve from \$12,000 - \$25,000.
 - 1. Maintain and grow the annual fund.
 - 2. Increase capacity for grantseeking and major gifts.
- F. Merge current database and electronic communications systems into one integrated relational database with all Maine Rivers contacts.
- G. Implement upgrades and increases in technology, equipment and office space in line with the needs of a growing organization.