

KENNEBEC RIVER CORRIDOR

Action Plan

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A Report of the Kennebec River Initiative

Prepared by the KRI project staff, under the direction of

The Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

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*** In addition to the maps printed for this document, a companion CD with large-format aerial maps is available upon request.**

Executive Summary

- **Only a well organized cooperative effort at conservation and land protection will preserve the Kennebec River as one of Maine's premier assets.**

The Kennebec River was, is, and will continue to be one of the State's most important and extraordinarily valuable scenic, ecological, fisheries, wildlife, recreational, cultural, and economic assets. From the East Outlet at Moosehead Lake to the sea at Popham, the Kennebec River is the central and enduring geographical feature that either directly or indirectly, unifies the people who inhabit its shores.

This asset is at significant risk of being lost to us again as it was in the long years of industrial and municipal sewerage discharges. Now, instead of being ignored because it stank and bubbled noxious fumes, it stands the risk of changing in ways that will bar the majority of us from enjoying and reaping the benefits of its many attributes.

The future of the Kennebec as the region's key natural and economic asset depends on undertaking a very large-scale and successful effort. This work will preserve the great value of the river and allow the people of Maine to preserve the sense of place the Kennebec provides.

Operating essentially independently, state and municipal governments, large and small land conservation and resource protection organizations, landowners, and individual lovers and users of the river have made an incredibly valuable start on this work. But, time and the pressures of uncoordinated development continue to march on. Much more needs to be done and quickly.

The key to doing more now and in the future depends on our ability to effectively organize the work of these and other organizations. The level of coordination required to be successful is unprecedented in the history of the Kennebec. Any plan for the Kennebec must focus, organize, coordinate and carry out the actions within the plan by assisting the various partners on working together. This effort must be funded adequately with public and private money and have a multi-year implementation timeframe. It must have a coordinating body that drives the effort and staff to support the many tasks. Protecting the river today is what will create new opportunities and increased value for tomorrow.

The Kennebec River Initiative is driven by the strong desire to both protect and use the river wisely. That we have this resource to protect is in many ways an outcome of our past neglect. Essentially, we have been given a second chance, and it cannot come at a better time. Mainers are more attuned than ever to the need to take bold steps to preserve the sense of place that makes Maine home and a magnet to newcomers.

I. Introduction and Methodology

The broad objective of the Kennebec River Initiative is to secure the future of the River as one of the State's most important scenic, ecological, fisheries, wildlife, recreational, cultural and economic assets, and in so doing, to foster the revitalization efforts of the municipalities on the river. This Kennebec River Initiative Action Plan is more than a strategy with general statements about the importance of the river and the need to preserve and expand the use of this unique natural and economic attributes.

The partners and participants in developing this Action Plan intended it to be a place based initiative designed to lay the groundwork for a series of real, on the ground accomplishments focused on the future uses of specific places. An important part of this process involved developing an information base about the lands along the river corridor and identifying areas with sensitive resources, recreation and access opportunities and locations appropriate for economic development.

The Kennebec River begins at the east outlet of Moosehead Lake. In its 170-mile journey to the sea it drops 1000 feet, and drains approximately 6,000 square miles, or about 1/5 of the State of Maine. Nine dams contain the flow and use the water to generate electric power. The Kennebec River Corridor is an area of approximately 1,540 square miles in central and coastal Maine, extending from Moosehead Lake south to Phippsburg and Georgetown on the Gulf of Maine. The Corridor includes the 47 towns with frontage on the Kennebec River. The Kennebec is a beautiful and storied river with a long history as a working waterway. Until recently the river received little attention as a venue for tourism and development. The Kennebec is considered by many to be the foremost river in Maine - if not New England - in terms of its scenic beauty, incredibly diverse and in places, robust fisheries, fascinating history, and the promise offered by its new revitalized riverside towns and cities.

The Corridor is facing increased development pressure and with it, challenges for land conservation and public access. There are several national, statewide and local land trusts working in the region and numerous recreational outfitters with strong interests in conservation. In many cases, coordination among their activities and the riverfront municipalities and businesses is lacking. The Corridor's cities and towns and the river would benefit from a more coordinated effort to both protect and develop this unparalleled natural resource.

Land conservationists and sportsmen have been interested in a corridor program for several decades. Momentum toward increased conservation efforts has built in the last several years, resulting in the State Legislature's designation of the Kennebec as a Historic Waterway in 2004 and the formation of the Kennebec River Initiative (KRI) in 2006. Volunteers from diverse organizations manage the KRI with an interest in the

river, including the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, the Maine Department of Conservation, Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine, Maine Rivers, the Natural Resources Council of Maine, and Trout Unlimited.

The project has identified areas best suited for protection, access, or development, and helped to stimulate the partnerships needed for ongoing protection and enhancement of the river corridor's assets and resources. With the participation of over 300 stakeholders representing diverse public and private interests, a place based Action Plan was developed over the course of 12 months in 2006 and 2007. The Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District managed the project and wrote this report under the direction of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments. The work accomplished through this initiative will lay the groundwork for preserving and enhancing the character and sense of place of the Kennebec River during the coming years.

For the purpose of organizing, project planning and community participation, the Corridor was divided into three sections: Northern (Moosehead Lake outlet south to Skowhegan), Central (Skowhegan/Norridgewock south to Augusta) and Tidal (head-of-tide at Augusta south to Phippsburg and Georgetown and the sea). The project organized public meetings in each of these three reaches to tap into local knowledge about the natural resource values, state of public access, and recreational uses of each river reach. Participants also identified specific areas that fell into one of several categories for possible future action - those important sites that need better protection going forward and / or restoration, sites suitable for improved and expanded public access, and areas that would be good places to focus new waterfront growth and development. The participants included representatives from 20 towns, 11 land trusts, 5 local trail groups, 9 businesses, and several State agencies. Additionally, the process of bringing these diverse groups and interests together to talk about the future of the Kennebec laid the groundwork for future collaboration.

Project maps were refined following the collection of information in the *Request for Proposals*, asking participants to supply information on needed programs and site-specific projects throughout the river corridor. These discussions revealed how much work is already being done thanks to the energy and commitment of national, state and local groups. It was also immediately apparent how much of an opportunity there is for combining these local efforts into something larger. Projects that linked up neighboring towns and different activities were enthusiastically embraced. The result is the comprehensive menu of projects contained in this Action Plan. The projects are organized into the following six program areas:

The six proposed program areas are:

1. KRI Coordination, Phase Two
2. River Access Improvement
3. Kennebec Trails

4. Corridor Protection & Restoration (*includes fisheries*)
5. Community-Based Waterfront Development
6. Marketing and Tourism

A project menu has been developed that offers the most flexibility for funding and implementation. Linkages up and down river and between project types are easily made. For example, a town interested in waterfront development might also invite partners working on a new trail spur or boat launch. At the same time, individual site-specific projects may also be pursued.

A number of bills passed by the 123rd Maine Legislature are supportive of the goals of the KRI and may help move some projects along. Implementation of these new state initiatives should be a top priority of the KRI partners, and follow-up on new funding opportunities should continue.

Funding of the first program, KRI Coordination, Phase Two is key if the keen partner interest and momentum built over the last year is to result in implementation of the projects. Ultimately, the success of the KRI depends on expanding participation to each of the 47 municipalities in the Corridor as well as the several dozen public, private, and non-profit organizations that are already working in the Kennebec. The reach committee meetings proved that interest in protecting the river's natural assets and in using those assets to support increased and compatible development is very strong.

The challenge is to corral this passion and energy into an effective action agenda. The Kennebec River Initiative is poised to continue to convene, facilitate, and coordinate the work of the various interests. The Kennebec River Initiative is ready for Phase Two.

II. Rationale for Action

Many people believe that the Kennebec, in its current state and with provisions for well-reasoned and compatible new uses, is a microcosm for the future of Maine – save the place, save the future. It was not always so; for many years the river was neglected and its critical role in the lives of the people living along its shores forgotten.

Eventually, a group of forward thinking people convinced others that a clean river was worth more than the convenience of using it as a dump for municipal and industrial wastes. The massive investments in restoration in recent decades present us with tremendous opportunities, a series of second chances, to take advantage of the river's potential.

The Kennebec River Initiative is driven by the strong desire to both protect and use the river wisely. The river today is the product of a series of unconscious compromises and pure dumb luck. That we have this resource to protect is in many ways an outcome of our past neglect. Essentially, we have been given a second chance, and it cannot come at a better time. Mainers are more attuned than ever to the need to take bold steps to preserve the sense of place that makes Maine home and a magnet to newcomers.

One goal of the Kennebec River Initiative is to connect with people living all along the river to help them organize and coordinate their existing and future efforts. Protecting the river today is what will create new opportunities and increased value for tomorrow.

This Action Plan is the outcome of work by many interested people and reflects their strong desire to change the persistent dynamic in Maine regarding land use and abuse. The participants and others understand that our brand is our future and is entirely dependent on the place. Prosperity will not come from traditional development but from well thought out growth and preserving the sense of place that is the Kennebec corridor.

Phase Two of the Kennebec River Initiative is the next step, the step that will move the discussion beyond identification and definition to coordinated, collaborative action. The key factor is a long-term vision that builds a contextual framework for effective action with both long and short term efforts. This is not a simple or easy task in Maine where money is scarce and organizational capacity spread thin. The most exciting part of the Kennebec River Initiative is that people all along the river and throughout Maine are clearly ready to move beyond discussion to action. By using the information gathered about the river and the lands along its corridor developed by this project to protect specific crucial locations, enhance public access to the rivers resources to help guide appropriate growth, this vision will become a reality. We hope you will join us.

Acknowledgements

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Management Committee: Karen Tilberg, Kathy Eickenberg, and Bob Duplessie of the Department of Conservation, Bill Townsend and Bill MacDonald of Maine Rivers, Nick Bennett of Natural Resources Council of Maine, George Smith of Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, and Ken Young of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments guided the project.

Public and Private Participants: Over 300 people participated in the various public meetings and focus groups conducted during the project. Their contribution is invaluable.

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IV. Overview of the Kennebec

The Kennebec River stretches approximately 170 miles from its source at Moosehead Lake to the Gulf of Maine. The river drains a land area of 6,448 square miles, making it the third largest river basin in the state¹. The “Kennebec Corridor”, for this project is defined as the land area of all municipalities abutting the Kennebec. There are 47 towns in the corridor, totaling 1,543 square miles. The vast majority (35) of these municipalities are under the jurisdiction of the Maine DEP and the remaining 12, all in the Northern Reach, are under the jurisdiction of the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC).

In the Northern Reach, land ownership² consists of large parcels owned by pulp and paper companies and private investors along with smaller commercial, farm and in-town properties. The Central Reach is also characterized by some large landowners and farms are prevalent in this region. Some of the Corridor’s larger municipalities are found in this section of the Kennebec Valley as well as many small private lots. People who have boated on this section of the River often comment on the remote feel and appearance found in this section even though you are close to several larger municipalities. The Tidal Reach beginning inland at the head of tide in Augusta, flowing past Bath and on toward the sea is different in many ways than the other two reaches. While the upper section of this reach may have some similar issues and challenges as the other reaches, the influence of the sea on the land, water and especially the people is felt as one moves south of Richmond. While the majority of the property is privately owned, the Tidal Reach has more protected conservation lands and land trust activity than the other reaches.

The Kennebec basin extends through three ecoregions (McMahon 1990): the Central Mountains, Central Maine Embayment, and Casco Bay Coast. The corridor includes the three major forest types of Maine: spruce-fir, mixed hardwoods, and pine forests. The Kennebec River Corridor is home to at least 16 species of rare plants (Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) and Wildlife viewing opportunities abound in every part of the Kennebec Corridor. At least 60 bald eagle nest sites have been recorded in the Kennebec Corridor (MNAP) and eagles are easily seen fishing on the Kennebec. Osprey are also common in the Central and Lower reaches. Merrymeeting Bay, in the lower Kennebec, is a State-designated priority area for protection due to its ecological significance in the region. The Bay is important habitat for migratory birds and is renowned for duck hunting.

¹ US Geological Survey delineated HUC-6 watersheds

² Land ownership is based on general knowledge and digitized parcel data from some towns. A complete parcel map of the Kennebec Corridor was not undertaken.

The river supports a diverse aquatic ecosystem and fishery. There are dozens of fish species known, of which 30 are native species and 11 are introduced. Among the native fish species in the Central and Lower reaches are the endangered Atlantic salmon and Short-nose sturgeon. The river corridor supports important sport fisheries, especially striped bass, in the Central and Lower reaches, as well as black bass in several areas, and trout in streams of the Northern Reach. Brook trout, Rainbow trout, Brown trout and Landlocked salmon can be found in the mainstem in locations in the Central and Northern Reaches. Management of migratory fish species, such as alewives and American eel, includes provision for fish passage at dams on the river and tributaries.

There are nine dams on the Kennebec. The longest undammed stretch of the river is 60 miles, from the Fort Halifax dam in Winslow down to the sea. This section flows through Augusta, past Swan Island (See Swan Island information in Appendix) and Bath to the ocean. There are currently no plans to remove any dams on the Kennebec. The Sandy River Dam, however, was removed in 2006. One of the Cobbosseecontee Stream dams may also be removed. Removal of the Fort Halifax Dam on the Sebasticook remains a controversial issue; the dam owner is willing to decommission the dam however, a group of residents on the Sebasticook impoundment have opposed dam removal. The Maine Supreme Judicial Court issued a decision on August 7, 2007 upholding DEP's permit to remove the dam. The dam owner has now stated it will begin removing the dam after July 2008.³ (FPL – Fort Halifax Dam Removal Schedule)

The Kennebec has its own geologic history, stretching back to glacial time more than 12,000 years⁴, and the river also has a more recent history shaped by human use. As with rivers everywhere, the Kennebec has been a thoroughfare and a focal point of human activity. Our life history with the river can be broken into three general periods: pre-history to European settlement and war in the 1600s and 1700s, followed by a roughly 250-year period of prosperous but damaging development, and the present period of recovery leading to sustainable use of the river.

³ F. Allen Wiley, P.E., FPLE Director, Business and Regulatory Affairs – Northeast Region, to Dana Paul Murch, Dams & Hydropower Supervisor, Maine DEP, 17 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0017. 22. Aug. 2007.

⁴ The Kennebec as we know it today, i.e., with its source at Moosehead Lake, can be dated back to the Late Quaternary period, where there is evidence of a major terrain shift at Moosehead Lake, the outlet shifting from the Penobscot River to the Kennebec. (Kelley 2005)

Pre-history to European settlement and Statehood (1820)

Archaeological evidence estimates that the first human settlement in the Kennebec Valley was at least 13,000 years before present. Ancient home sites and burial grounds of the Wabenaki peoples⁵ have been found that date these tribes to at least 3,000 years ago in the Kennebec Valley. Whether they are directly descended from the earliest people has been debated. Petroglyphs, estimated to be more than 2,000 years old, are found painted on river rock in Embden. These are believed to be shamanistic images from a people related to the modern-day Abenaki (A. Speiss, pers. comm.)

The Abenaki, who call themselves "People of the Dawn" were at first welcoming of the European fishermen and traders but as disease spread and treaties were broken, tensions rose, leading to a series of attacks and reprisals on both sides. Intermittent war between England and France complicated alliances in the colonies for over 200 years. The native peoples aligned themselves either with the French or the English or attempted to remain neutral, depending on where they saw their best interest. There were a number of heated battles along the Kennebec. Native and colonist families were both victims in this struggle for land. Even before hostilities grew to this scale, European diseases had wiped out as much as 75% of the maritime population of the Abenaki by the early 1600s (Sultzman 97). After King Phillip's War there was widespread displacement and blending of the survivors from different tribal groups.

The 1724 massacre at Norridgewock, in which colonists and soldiers killed Abenaki families and the Jesuit priest, Father Râle, signaled the precipitous decline of visible Abenaki settlement in the Kennebec valley. By the end of the 18th century, the Kennebec Abenaki had all but disappeared. By some accounts the actual population residing in the Kennebec Valley had decreased to no more than 100 persons. However, it is also possible that a much larger population persisted in the area but had been largely dispersed and/or had learned to assimilate to avoid persecution. Over the course of the next hundred years, with more dispersal and intermarrying it became nearly impossible to say who was Abenaki. People of native origin had to switch to a completely different way of living on the land, one based on short-lived commodities that depleted the land and water. However, even after such destruction and dispersal, native tradition and spirit persist in the Kennebec.

Overall the Native American way of life on the Kennebec was very different from the past two hundred years of hard use of the land and water, which formed a unique and enduring identity of Mainers and their place in the world - but at great cost to the river, the land, and ourselves.

⁵ Wabenaki might describe the living descendants of the Kennebec natives more accurately than Abenaki in that the Wabenaki describes a linguistic and cultural group that includes the ancestors of the tribes that came to be called Abenaki, Penobscot, and Passamoquoddy. There had been such drastic reduction and movement of the Abenaki and intermingling with other tribes during colonial times that it is very difficult to find an identifiable group of Abenaki people today.

Economic Engine, late 18th to mid 20th centuries

The Kennebec River unlocked much of the economic growth in the region and contributed significantly to America's dominance of the sea trade as well as the expansion of settlements westward. The land and river was first exploited for fishing and farming. A major shipbuilding trade was established in the 1800s, based on the skill and initiative of the local fishermen and farmers, immigrant tradesmen, and an abundant supply of good lumber. Shipbuilding was concentrated in Bath but extended as far upriver as Augusta.

As Robert P. Tristan Coffin put it,

“Every man who had a farm with its feet in the Kennebec built himself a set of ways, borrowed his neighbors' adzes and mallets, got the oxen dragging down the long logs, and build himself a second house that could go out on the globe where the money was to be made.” (R. Coffin, Kennebec: Cradle of Americans)

By the 1850s, half of all American ships were built in Maine and many of these were from the shipyards at Bath and Merrymeeting Bay (Coffin). The largest and the last Bath-built square-rigged ship were launched in 1909.⁶ The City of Bath was not only a shipyard but a major port, shipping and receiving many tons of cargo a year. With the advent of rail, the ship building trades diminished and shifted to steel hull construction. Bath Iron Works was founded in 1889 and work continues today with on U.S. Navy contracts.

The River continued to be the economic engine of the region through the late 19th century and into the 20th. The wealth and vitality of the central and lower Kennebec corridor can be seen in the architecture of the towns. The ice trade, with major operations in up and down the river, was a chief source of wealth in these towns until the advent of refrigeration. The Hudson River was the only rival ice source of this size in the world. Granite continued to be quarried and shipped down the Kennebec. Mills of all kinds multiplied on the tributaries of the Kennebec as they did everywhere in Maine. A large variety of home goods, tools, dimensional lumber, footwear, and clothing were manufactured on the Kennebec and exported over the world. The characteristic large brick buildings that housed textile mills are found in Hallowell, Waterville, and Skowhegan.

A shift in industry over the 19th century was largely due to the dwindling lumber. Tall white pines were what fueled the shipbuilding industry and the building of houses and barns. The largest, the "King's pines" were reserved for English Navy ships masts. These pines occurred in large and easily accessible stands in the southern region. Only a few fragments of these old stands remain. As the white pine stands were exhausted and as settlers moved northwards, spruce became the next source of lumber. And when the larger spruce

⁶ Remnants of one of these huge sailing ships is displayed at the Maine State Museum in Augusta. The Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, on the site of an historic shipyard, is an excellent source of information on Maine's maritime past.

trees had all been cut, the mills turned to 'pulpwood', wood of any tree of small diameter. This is still the case today, although larger specimen pines and spruces can still be found.

Logging spread upriver in the 1800s. Log drives from as far north as the outlet of Moosehead Lake filled the river, rivaling the logging industry on the Penobscot. By 1892 well-known lumberman Joshua Gray's mill in Gardiner was exporting eight million broom handles around the world annually. The Kennebec and its tributaries were the essential resources for economic development from the mid-1700's until the demise of the log drives and the closing of factories in the latter half of the 20th century. The first paper mills on the Kennebec used imported cotton and linen rag as raw material to produce paper. The mills switched to low value wood to make the pulp. These pulp mills spewed out sawdust and chemicals and the water and river bottom became polluted and uninhabitable for spawning fish. By the turn of the century, eagles and ospreys, once abundant, had become a rare sight on the Kennebec.

While river-based industries caused a great deal of environmental damage, they also provided economic opportunities to countless families. The many textile and other mills on Maine rivers needed a large number of workers, and these positions were often filled by immigrants from French-speaking Canada. The mill workers went on to establish themselves in the towns and run businesses and farms. Today, French family names are common throughout Maine, and French is still spoken in the larger towns, such as Waterville. The Kennebec-Chaudiere corridor is an international cultural and touristy enterprise that recognizes the culture of Franco-Americans in Maine. The Old Canada Road, Route 201 from Bingham to Jackman and the Quebec Border, is now a federally designated scenic and cultural byway. (Parts of this route overlap with notable landmarks of Benedict Arnold's march to Quebec City.)

The incredible activity of the 19th and 20th centuries formed a regional identity of people on the Kennebec and left great memorials to Maine enterprise and courage. The challenge now is how to make the best of these attributes within the limits of what the river and land will support.

Recovery and Revival, 21st Century

By the late 20th century, the extractive resource-based economy of Maine had all but collapsed. The last log drives might have been lamented for cultural or historical reasons, it signaled the beginning of the river's recovery. An economy based largely on extraction of natural resources had exhausted itself. The manufacturing industries were also approaching their limits as foreign companies outcompeted local labor. By this time, effluent from industrial sources, such as slaughterhouses, rendering plants, and pulp mills, had heavily impacted the river. Sections of the central and tidal sections were unusable and residents complained of the stench. The deplorable condition of once great rivers like the Kennebec and Androscoggin spurred U.S. Senators Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin and Edmund Muskie of Maine to author the Clean Water Act in 1972, which was further strengthened in 1977. One of the first requirements was the treatment of municipal sewage

before it is discharged into a river. Commercial effluent sources were also regulated. As a result, effluent sources were reduced or eliminated. Industrial and municipal point sources continue to be monitored by the Maine DEP and citizen groups, but large industrial facilities are still the dominant sources of pollution on the Kennebec.

The river continues to be a significant source of hydropower generation. The Edwards Dam at head of tide in Augusta was removed in 1999. This was the first time the Federal Energy Regulatory commission (FERC) recommended a dam removed against the wishes of its owner. FERC ruled that the benefits of a free-flowing river outweighed the benefits of the dam and suggested the removal in order to return several sea-run species to their historic spawning grounds. In the end, the State of Maine, the federal government, dam owners on the Kennebec and Sebasticook Rivers, a coalition of environmental groups and the City of Augusta reached a settlement agreement and the dam was removed voluntarily. The comprehensive settlement agreement is called the Lower Kennebec River Comprehensive Hydropower Settlement Accord. A subsection of this agreement, the Kennebec Hydro Developer's Group Agreement (KHDG) continues to govern fish passage construction on the river today. Under the KHDG agreement, a stepwise schedule for construction of fish passage throughout the lower Kennebec watershed is required. Also under the KHDG agreement, permanent fish lifts were constructed at two dams on the Sebasticook River, and fish lift construction continues on dams along the main stem of the Kennebec. Thus, the KHDG agreement envisions a river where fisheries will be restored and hydro-generating capacity will remain largely intact.

To this point, the agreements governing hydropower and fish passage for the Lower Kennebec have been a success. Edwards dam removal and the after effects of this event garnered national attention. Since the dam removal, people who regularly fish the river marvel at the recovery of many species. At least 12 species of fish were reintroduced to 17 miles of river upstream of the dam site for the first time in 162 years. Biologists have been surveying fish populations in the opened section since 2002. Early results indicated an almost immediate expansion to historical ranges for many species and a very highly productive river. By 2005, there was more marine biomass (weight of sea-run fishes such as alewives, shad, salmon, and striped bass) in the Kennebec than in five other large river systems in Maine (KJ 8/15/05). Biologists and sportsmen agree that the ecological and recreational potential of the Kennebec is enormous. *[see Special Feature – Fisheries for detailed species accounts]*

The Edwards dam removal, occurring at the turn of the 21st century, perhaps also signaled an economic and cultural turnaround for the City of Augusta and neighboring communities. As the Kennebec becomes a beautiful recreational asset – free-flowing from Waterville to the sea, residents and tourists are making use of the waterfront. While the factories have shut down, the sturdy and handsome mill buildings themselves have recently emerged as a new aspect of economic development. In Augusta, a section of the old Edwards mill is

being readied for affordable housing. The mill at Skowhegan houses the athletic shoe manufacturer, New Balance. Redevelopers plan a conversion of the recently closed Hathaway Shirt Company mill in Waterville into offices, shops and residences. Although the old mills are being put to very different uses than that for which they were built, it is their location on the river that again makes them an asset and economic force.

These positive changes on the river of the last few decades hastened the river's recovery and turned it from a negative to a positive. Towns that turned their backs on the river began to turn their attention to waterfront development and public trail building along the scenic river.

While the Kennebec River itself seems to be returning to a more natural, pre-industrial condition, the continued recovery depends on what is happening on land, in the river corridor. There is less to do in terms of toxic clean-up, as in other New England rivers,⁷ but more to do in protecting the working farms, forestland, and public spaces along the Kennebec. As the price of oceanfront as well as lakefront skyrocketed in the last few years, the river has become the next waterfront in the real estate market. Maine's population is growing for the first time in decades but this growth is almost entirely from newcomers, especially those of retirement age. Every one of Maine's 16 counties is now experiencing net growth from outside the state (Brookings 2006). While this influx of well-off newcomers is seen as a positive for the overall economy, it also presents challenges to preserving Maine's way of life and scenic and recreational assets.

Much of the future of the river and its future as a natural asset will be determined by land use and development related decisions made by the individual municipalities along the river. Many cities and towns along the Kennebec are looking at new development proposals, large and small, and to determine whether new proposal ideas fit into their communities.

One challenge is that different municipal land use regulation systems result in a hodgepodge of decisions lacking a regional context. The effect of a positive action can be offset by a decision in the next town or municipality up or down a river. Recent changes in the State's Comprehensive Planning regime will help, but are not the complete answer.

Conservation efforts organized by state, national and local land trusts also need to be organized in a regional context. Going forward, greater and more effective inter-municipal and municipal land conservation collaboration will be necessary to achieve KRI goals. Using the river as a focal point for a new and more productive level of regional action is critically important.

⁷ While the Kennebec is far less polluted than other rivers in New England that were more heavily industrialized, it has not completely recovered from past pollutants and flow changes. Lichter et al (2006) note that "Merrymeeting Bay is permanently shallower, its anadromous fish runs are vestiges of their former abundance, toxic substances remain in its biota and sediments, and it continues to receive excess nutrients from industrial and municipal sources."

V. The KRI Process

What and Who are the KRI?

The Kennebec River Initiative (KRI) is a collaborative effort aimed at securing the future of the Kennebec Corridor as one of the State's most valuable natural, economic, and cultural resources. The work accomplished through this initiative will lay the groundwork for preserving and enhancing the character and sense of place of the Kennebec River during the coming years.

The KRI is the result of several decades of continuous effort by diverse parties to identify common goals and form a collaboration. As early as 1971, Bill Townsend, when he was with the Natural Resources Council of Maine, wrote a detailed appraisal of the river's condition and the surrounding land use as part of a proposal for a corridor plan (Townsend 1971). Many of the recommendations to reduce pollution and restrict development on the river banks were addressed by subsequent legislation, notably the Clean Water Act of 1972 and Maine's Shoreland Zoning. Identifying priority sites for conservation and educating the public on the resource values continue to be goals for advocates of the Kennebec, as they were more than thirty years ago.

"[...] there has been considerable interest in, and even enthusiasm for, the concept of a corridor plan which would be of benefit to all of the people, not simply to a few speculators and the lucky people who were able to buy a piece of land sold as if it were a piece of cake while the getting is still good" (B. Townsend, Kennebec River Plan 1971)

While a pell-mell land grab on the Kennebec did not occur thirty years ago, it seems much more imminent today. The Kennebec has begun to attract the attention of realtors and developers as rivers in Maine become the last frontier for waterfront development.

With the support of many advocates in both the public and private sectors, the Kennebec River was designated a history waterway by the Maine legislature in 2003. The Resolve (121st Session, LD 680) set out the goals of the Department of Conservation (DOC) with respect to the Kennebec.

"Coordinate the management and promotion of state recreational, scenic and historic lands and easements with municipal and private recreational, scenic and historic lands along the Kennebec River [...and...] seek the input and cooperation of representatives of municipalities, land trusts, community groups, conservation organizations and businesses that benefit from a clean and healthy Kennebec River."

As a first step, George Smith of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine and Harry Vanderweide of the Maine Sportsman Magazine invited Karen Tilberg and Department of Conservation Commissioner Pat McGowan, to float and fish the Kennebec from Waterville to Sidney in 2004 and talk about the potential of the River. Following this inspirational trip, the DOC met with interested parties and convened a series of meetings in 2005 and 2006 to develop the scope of work for the Kennebec River Initiative. With much help from DOC

planner Katherine Eickenberg, Tilberg launched the Kennebec River Initiative (KRI), designed to “secure the future of the river as one of the state’s most important scenic, ecological, fisheries, wildlife, recreational, cultural and economic assets and to foster revitalization efforts of the river communities.”

Phase One of the KRI - resulting in this Action Plan - was made possible by funding from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund and the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund in 2006 to the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG). The members of the KRI Management Committee are the Maine DOC, the Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine (SAM), the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM), Maine Rivers, Trout Unlimited, and the KVCOG.

The KVCOG and Management Committee selected the Kennebec County Soil & Water Conservation District (in partnership with Somerset SWCD) to provide project direction and GIS support. The decision to hire a Soil & Water Conservation District - rather than a consulting firm - to lead the project reflects the importance placed on strong community involvement, natural resource planning expertise, and objectivity. The Kennebec SWCD's mission of resource utilization and protection is in tune with the KRI's goals. Ultimately the identity of the KRI includes all of the public meeting attendees, who each have a stake in the future of the river and helped define the goals and actions throughout Phase One.

What is our goal?

The Kennebec River Initiative recognizes the need for coordinated action to secure for the future the important scenic, ecological, fisheries, wildlife, recreational, cultural, and economic assets of the Kennebec River corridor. The first phase of the KRI will conclude with an Action Plan that will identify areas best suited for protection, access, or development, and the partnerships needed for ongoing protection and enhancement of the river corridor's assets and resources. Also produced is an accompanying video promoting the KRI concept and giving a visual history of the corridor and look forward to the future of this special resource.

How do we get there?

Kennebec Soil & Water, the KRI Project Director, worked with the KVCOG and the KRI Management Committee to ensure that Phase One of the KRI would be well publicized⁸ and generate a good deal of interest from professionals, landowners, and the general public. From the very beginning, the strategy of the KRI has been based on three key premises:

1) To be place-based. Dynamic mapping (with GIS) was used as a tool to spark discussion, broaden our knowledge base, and then sharpen project proposals -which are tied to specific locations as much as possible.

⁸ Publicity included feature articles in the Kennebec Journal, Portland Press Herald, and MaineBiz as well as smaller local publications, television appearances, and publicity via District and Management Committee correspondence.

(The original large-format aerial maps are contained on the accompanying *Kennebec Corridor Maps* CD and can be printed on request).

2) To invite everyone at any time. Phase One set out to be as inclusive as possible and to be well organized without being overly formal. The initial publicity prompted many questions and these were taken as expressions of interest from valuable participants. Those who may have been doubtful turned out to be some of the most energetic and positive voices. Public meetings together with smaller focus groups of professionals gave us maximum input. The degree of interest and participation from all corners was remarkably high throughout the project. A total of 295 individuals either attended one of the work sessions or communicated one-on-one with the project staff.

3) To be focused on actions. The approach and tone of the KRI is more pragmatic than academic and recognizes the need to strike while the iron is hot. The entire Phase One project was compressed to less than a year. Participants' time is used with great efficiency to avoid burn-out and dwindling attention. The focus from the start has been on actions - i.e., actual project proposals, rather than general recommendations. We informed participants from the beginning that the final product would be a menu of projects tied to potential funding. By designing project activities with the target in mind, the project benefited from great enthusiasm and concrete outcomes from the participants.

In the fall of 2006 the Management Committee organized the workplan and the Kennebec SWCD publicized the Kennebec River Initiative. The kick-off event occurred on the banks of the river in Augusta in December. During the month of January, the KRI held three River Reach Committee meetings along the Kennebec corridor. The three Reaches are: Northern (Moosehead Lake outlet south to Skowhegan), Central (Skowhegan/Norridgewock south to Augusta) and Tidal (head-of-tide at Augusta south to Phippsburg and Georgetown and the sea). Maps had been prepared in advance as tools for discussion. The information gathered at these stakeholder meetings helped us further refine the maps and identify the general interests of the group and the direction to take for the next set of meetings. While many of the discussion topics were common among the three reaches some, other themes emerged that were specific to particular reaches. For example,

- The Tidal Reach is unique among the three reaches because of its close connection to the sea and the influence of the tide on the hydrology and ecology of the lower river. This makes for a remarkably varied fishery in a relatively small area and diverse boating – from sailing ships in the bays, tour and power boats on the river, and canoes and kayaks on the main stem and in the backwaters. The Tidal Reach abounds in historical sites and destination towns.

- The Central Reach is notable for the wild and remote appearance of the river in close proximity to urban centers such as Waterville and Skowhegan. This section is also rich in historical sites and opportunities for on-land tourism. There are still many large farms in this section of the corridor, adding to the appeal and economic value of this area.
- The Northern Reach is the largest and most remote of the three sections. Its hydrology is controlled by the operation of dams, which has boosted the whitewater rafting and recreation businesses. Land ownership differs significantly from the other two reaches. Most parcels are very large; however, the scale and kind of future development is uncertain. The proposed Plum Creek⁹ development around Moosehead Lake may set the tone for development down the Kennebec and elsewhere in Maine.

After testing the group mapping exercise at the first meeting (Tidal), we found that the mapping should be more focused on a few obvious 'action categories' for identified sections of the river corridor, large or small. In working with the information from the Tidal meeting and with the groups in the other two reaches, we found that areas of land along or near the river could be grouped into several categories for recommended actions. The four original categories (protect, remediate, access, develop) were then combined into two and these came to be called Action Groups, which were the basis of the second set of meetings.



River Reach Committee Meeting at North County Rivers headquarters in Bingham – stakeholders putting significant locations and project ideas on GIS maps

⁹ A proposed 408,000 acre rezoning to accommodate luxury residential development on former timberland around Moosehead Lake. The project consists of 975 luxury house lots, a resort hotel, as well as some conserved public lands. It would be the largest rezoning in Maine history and the first project of this type and scale in the state. It continues to be a contentious issue for Maine residents with many arguments for and against. The proposal is currently before LURC.

The Action Groups

Action Group 1. Protection/Restoration: Maintain or increase protection of the existing state of an area by a variety of ways: e.g., conservation easements, open space and other credits, special districts, farmland easements. Restoration could include cleaning up past pollution at a site, repairing damage such as erosion from stormwater flows or heavy use, and/or restoring fish and wildlife habitat.

Action Group 2. Economic Growth & Development: Some areas lend themselves to waterfront development that would attract visitors. Stakeholders who want to see the river promoted for tourism pointed out the need for more lodging, restaurants and other attractions. The idea is to make the best use of built up areas and direct new development to appropriate areas.

Access is a theme that cuts across all of these categories. This is a broadly defined value that includes motorized and non-motorized access, e.g., marinas, boat-ramps, hand-carry launches, viewing areas, and walking or bicycling trails. Off-site access through text, audio and video was also seen as an important activity. The issue of marketing for specific uses (e.g., sport fishing, town visits) is closely tied to access.

Several dozen project ideas came out of the group discussions at the two Action Group meetings. The project staff examined these for opportunities to combine and connect ideas and interested parties. We discussed project concepts with key contacts to further develop these proposals. The result is a menu of project proposals described in Section III.

VI. KRI Action Plan

Rationale of the project proposals

The following menu of corridor programs and site-specific projects is largely the result of the Action Group meetings held in the spring of 2007. To make the list of 46 proposals more manageable we grouped related project ideas within corridor-wide programs and with them site-specific projects with reference to locations on the maps. The six proposed program areas are:

1. KRI Coordination
2. River Access Improvement
3. Kennebec Trails
4. Corridor Protection & Restoration (*includes fisheries*)
5. Community-Based Waterfront Development
6. Marketing and Tourism

These six different corridor programs are connected naturally. A town interested in waterfront development might also invite partners working on a new trail spur or boat launch. These possible linkages are noted in the different program proposals. We have attempted to lay out a project menu that offers the most flexibility for funding and implementation. Linkages up and down river and between project types are easily made (See the example of the "Fort-to-Fort" proposal). At the same time, individual site-specific projects may also be pursued.

Some of the projects within these programs are entirely new concepts while others are at various stages of development. Our hope is that KRI Phase Two will continue to bring partners together and move these projects along. We list KRI Coordination as our first proposal, in response to the demand we heard for overall coordination of the various efforts and a one-stop shop for the river corridor residents and visitors. However, the Action Plan is intended as a resource for any stakeholder to use at any time.

Funding amounts and other resource needs are approximate and will need to be refined. Two Catalogues are included as tools for grant writers and conveners – one for funding sources and one listing all the prospective partners. These are in the Appendices.

Example of a Combination Project

Project ideas are grouped thematically but lend themselves easily to a mix-and-match approach where there is keen interest from several different partners or towns. One example of a possible combination project is the Fort-to-Fort concept. The Fort to Fort Project takes two key historic sites, Fort Halifax in Winslow and Old Fort Western in Augusta, two key waterfront developments underway, Hathaway in Waterville and Arsenal in Augusta, and pieces of existing trail systems to make a combination package. The Fort-to-Fort concept combines all the elements of the Kennebec River Action Plan: river access (boat launches at Fort Halifax and downtown Augusta), trails (proposed Winslow to Augusta connector and Bond Brook trail), waterfront development (Hathaway and Arsenal site development underway), marketing, and land protection. Precedence and community support have been built up with the established Fort-to-Fort annual canoe and kayak flotilla and the recent purchases of two anchor sites - Hathaway Factory and Augusta Arsenal - by a well-known site redeveloper.

This combination project would bring multiple benefits to the community, such as:

- improved public health and family well-being through physical activity
- increased awareness and hence protection of historical and cultural sites
- closer connection of neighboring towns, leading to joint town planning and development
- an opportunity for expanded habitat corridors, linking significant habitat areas up and down the river and inland as well.
- trails and open space as a valuable amenity for both residential and commercial real estate development. Residents and workers are attracted to locales offering trails and river access.
- Recreational tourism increases in the area as the destination becomes larger; trails and landings are better known and connect over a larger area.

These benefits are passed on to visitors to the area. Another benefit is the linking of diverse, local interests across several communities on the river. Volunteer trail planners work with economic development contacts, land trusts, and historical experts. The Fort-to-Fort concept could be applied to many pairs or groups of towns along the Kennebec.

Supportive Public Policy

A number of bills recently passed by the 123rd Maine Legislature support the goals of the KRI and may help move some projects along. Their implementation should be supported by KRI partners, and funding opportunities followed up on. These policies include, for example, tax incentives for mill redevelopment (LD 780), a mechanism for towns to give farm support payments in exchange for medium-term easements (LD 1414), and direction to the DEP to remediate gravel pits along the Kennebec River (LD 1508). The list of bills recently enacted that are relevant to the KRI Action Plan can be found in the Appendices.

The Project Menu

The six program areas are described in the following pages, along with lists of priority site projects and any policy recommendations appropriate to these programs. Contact persons and other organizational matters may change as these programs and projects develop. The suggested lead organizations and contact persons are listed here as a start.

It should be noted that the proposals in this project menu reflect the public input received during the Reach Committee Meetings, Focus discussions and Action Group Meetings held during 2007. The job of the authors of the KRI Action Plan is to serve as the messenger for this information. The Project Menu is a compilation of ideas and proposals that will need various types of funding for them to be completed. The funding Catalogue (Appendix F) provides a comprehensive list of State and Federal money sources as well as private foundations that are available to assist with funding for implementation of KRI projects.

Program Proposal #1

KRI Coordination Phase Two

Program Goal

The KRI Phase Two will:

1. Develop a Self-Sustaining Institutional Framework for coordinating KRI projects identified in the Action Plan
2. Be a convener to link potential partners and begin programs and projects in the Kennebec Corridor that are ready for implementation.

Lead Organization(s)

Phase Two of the KRI will be managed by the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) with assistance and funding from the Maine Department of conservation (DOC)

Partners

All of the lead organizations plus other project partners as they arise.

Program Activities and Outcomes

The KRI should be organized into the following programs managed by State agency or non-profit contacts and assisted with paid office staff:

1. KRI Website. Start with a web portal with this report and maps showing recreational and tourist destinations as well as the jurisdictions of different agencies and numbers to call. Set up a volunteer network and alert to connect area volunteers with any number and kinds of projects.
2. River Access Program - *see below*
3. Trails Program - *see below*
4. Land protection and restoration - *see below*
5. Waterfront development - *see below*
6. Marketing and tourism - *see below*

Activities & Goals for Year One (2008):

- In the short term, expand the current KRI website. In the near future, give KRI a permanent internet home with a stand-alone website.
- Establish the Kennebec River Council.
- Convene and facilitate place-based action networks.

- Distribute the Action Plan (Action Plan, Summary, video, maps) to decision makers and funders
- Designate a lead person for each of the 6 program areas
- Make contact with each of the major funders (See Funding Catalogue)
- Take the lead or assist in getting at least 6 proposals (programmatic or site-specific) out the door this year
- Write job description for two full-time paid staff: 1. Web site and GIS specialist. 2. KRI Programs Coordinator

Estimated funds needed = \$11,000 (Does not include funding the staff positions or the 6 proposed projects)

Estimated value of match = \$8,000

Activities & Goals for Year Two (2009):

- Funding is secured to continue staffing
- Permanent office space is set up
- Program leaders are reporting monthly to KRI steering committee. Benchmarks are set for each of the 6 programs (see details under each program)
- KRI database of active contacts has expanded from 300 to 500 individuals
- Volunteer database and web alert is set up
- KRI and partners send out at least 10 proposals to funders per year
- At least 6 funding contacts (formal, informal) per month
- At least 2 press items per month
- Web site contains tourism and recreational maps & other information resources (who to call, volunteer needs, etc)
- First Annual Report published

Estimated funds needed = \$90 - \$120,000 (2 Full time employees \$100K, office space \$6K, operating costs \$10K-\$15K)

Estimated value of match = \$9,000 - \$15,000

Activities & Goals for Year Three (2010):

- Sustainable funding is secured (through membership, town contributions, long-term grant or donations, or federal designation, e.g., National Heritage Corridor)
- KRI and partners send out at least 10 proposals per year
- Recruit additional staff if needed

- Invite public assessment of website, staffing, and program activities
- Consider moving to non-profit (501(c)(3) status with Board and bylaws.

Estimated funds needed = \$120K - \$160K (depending on numbers of staff positions)

Estimated value of match = \$8,000 - \$12,000

Program Needs

- An agency or non-profit contact person to lead each of the 5 topical programs. Program leaders should have expertise and connections in that program and ability to engage local communities, businesses, and funders. A great deal of grant writing and partnership building is needed.
- **At least two paid staff persons are needed:** 1) a full-time GIS specialist and web site manager, and 2) a full-time program coordinator to work with the committees and partners in the 5 programs.
- Office space for staff and for meetings of the committees will also be needed.

Contact person

Ken Young, KVCOG

Program Proposal #2

River Access Improvement

Program Goal

1. Provide one stop shop for information on ownership and management of public boat launches.
2. Facilitate improvement of boat launch sites
3. Establish new launch sites (either trailer or hand-carry)

Lead Organization(s)

DOC with towns/municipalities, Work with the Boating and Fishing Access Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

Partners:

[Contact: George Powell (DOC), Leon Baker (IF&W), Bobby Van Riper (IF&W), member-based groups such as Maine BASS or Trout Unlimited

Program Activities & Outcomes

1. **Boat launch inventory:** make readily available to the public basic information on public boat launches: location, condition, ownership, who to call for maintenance; make regular updates to list. **(Continuous)**
2. **Coordinate** land owners, volunteers and relevant agencies for regular maintenance or major improvements to sites. **(Continuous)**
3. **Promote recreational use** of the river with a boaters' map and guide suitable for both motor-boaters and paddlers anywhere on the river. **(Year One, updates thereafter)**

Program Needs

- Boat launch inventory is a volunteer effort; new launches (such as Bath) will require funds. Map and guide could be done in conjunction with Maine Tourism Bureau and Appalachian Mountain Club. (Estimated cost of map-guide is \$50,000).
- Volunteers to assist with boat ramp maintenance
- Ideas for funding and other types of assistance: Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund
- Maine DEP Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP), Maine BASS Federation Conservation Program, DOC Boating Facilities Division, Trout Unlimited, Town recreation/public works budgets, Land for

Maine's Future, Riverfront Community Development Bond (on ballot Nov. 2007), Transportation bond (approved in election 6/12/07)

- Linkages with other programs: See Kennebec River Trails

Program Contact:

George Powell, DOC; Craig Taylor (volunteer, resides in Fairfield)

Site-Specific Projects

<i>Project Name & Location</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Waterville Boat Launch Map 7, Waterville	Need from Mike details about the Waterville site, condition, cost, owner: Florida Power & Light	Mike Lessard
Moscow Boat Launch Map 12, Moscow	Improve the boat launch and facilities; install new dock and boat ramp. Cost estimated at \$40,000. Need interested persons to perform the labor and upkeep. Central Maine Power and Florida Power & Light are potential partners with the town. Town manages the access road but FPL is responsible for the launch site	Ernie DeLuca, Florida Power & Light
Hinckley Boat Launch	Ramp is difficult to use because of low water. Hinckley launch is maintained by Florida Power & Light. You run out of ramp before the steep drop off.	Craig Taylor
Skowhegan Boat Launch Map 8, Skowhegan	In Skowhegan (maintained by MDOT) there is a big rock right where you can ram it with your propeller or trailer, and the approach road has huge pot holes which haven't seen grader for at least ten years.	Craig Taylor
Fort Halifax Improvements Map 6, Winslow	Winslow Recreation Department would like to develop the Fort site to include outline of entire fort, rebuild parts of the fort. Provide more parking. Friends of Fort Halifax Committee would be involved. See also Fort-to-Fort Tours project proposal. What's Needed: Most research has been done and there is a general plan. \$100,000 is the approx. cost of the entire project. Boat landing would be a small part of this.	Elery Keene, Friends of Fort Halifax, 872-5231 Lee Breton, Winslow Recreation Dept., 872-2776

Seven-Mile Stream Map 5, Vassalboro	Currently there is no official river access on the east side from Winslow down to Augusta. If possible, develop an access area for boats, picnicking, fishing access at end of Mill Hill Road. Partners would be DOC & Town of Vassalboro. What's Needed: First obtain ROW to the area and determine if the land could be purchased for protection. Parking would be located before railroad crossing, to avoid having to take vehicles across tracks. Town and DOC should assess the accessibility of the site for various watercraft. Alternate site: Seven Mile Stream	Town of Vassalboro Mike Vashon - Town Manager Paul Mitnik - Codes
Bath waterfront Map 2, Bath	Obtain riverfront access in downtown Bath. A parcel with 190+ feet of river frontage is on market for \$1.2 million. Smaller parcels could be found. If land transaction is successful there would need to a willing land-holder, preferably the state.	Town of Bath
Access on Lower East Side Dresden to Georgetown Maps 3, 2, 1	Access is lacking	Bobby Van Riper, IF&W
Embden Map 10	Potential hand-carry site at the Embden/Solon Bridge on Route 201A	Craig Dennis Somerset Trout Unlimited

Program Proposal #3

Kennebec Trails

Program Goal

A connected land and water trail system for the Kennebec Corridor. Program would provide information to the public, and assist individual groups and planning and building trails.

Lead Organization(s)

None yet identified. KRI Phase Two could serve as an interim "Department of Trails" until an organization steps into this role.

Possible Partners

MaineWatch; Towns; Local land trusts (to acquire land for trails or viewshed protection); Maine Dept. of Conservation

Program Activities and Outcomes

1. **Compile maps** of the existing and planned trails into one corridor trail map. (Note: MaineWatch is currently writing a feasibility study for a large part of the corridor (Augusta to Bowdoinham and Augusta inland to Monmouth. Report is about one year from completion and includes detailed mapping. Contact: Tom Reeves)
2. **Find funding** and other needed resources to help local trail groups acquire, build, and steward their trails.
3. **Promote** the trails to residents, visitors, and vacation companies. The KRI website is an excellent medium for this.
4. **Link** land trails to water access and canoe trails. Link trails to waterfront development and broader land use planning.

Program Needs

- Tax breaks or other incentives for those property owners providing access or protecting views
- Ideas for funding and other types of assistance: Power companies
- Grants for public health and recreation, Linkages with other programs

Program contact:

Peter Garrett, Mesalonskee Trails

Site-Specific Projects

Project Name & Location	Description	Contact Person
<p>Messalonskee Trails Expansion Map 6</p>	<p>At this point the Messalonskee Trails Master Plan includes 24 miles of trails of which about 6 miles are built. Goal is increased public access east and west shores of Kennebec from Fairfield/Benton south to Waterville and Winslow, plus east side of Messalonskee stream and north side of stream from Oakland to the Kennebec River at the two-cent bridge in Waterville. This trail could link with Waterville Head of Falls, Hathaway Creative Center, and future footpath to Augusta</p> <p>What's Needed: Needed funding is \$7 to \$8 million over time. We also need landowner cooperation and strong interest from the public.</p>	<p>Peter Garrett, Mesalonskee Trails</p>
<p>Augusta-Winslow Rail Trail Maps 5 & 6</p>	<p>Link Augusta to Winslow via a trail on the rail right-of-way.</p> <p>What's needed: present idea to the towns; building a trail next to an active railroad is more expensive. Long-term lease from the railroad is another option.</p>	<p>Tom Reeves, Kennebec Rail-Trail</p>
<p>Forks Area Scenic Trail (FAST) Map 13</p>	<p>The trails provide a scenic and recreational activity for motorists traveling on the Old Canada Scenic Byway. A scenic trail along the Kennebec River (5 miles), Dead River (5 miles) and Moxie Falls (3 miles). The trail is partially constructed as of 2007. There are different uses planned for different sections: hiking, biking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing. One section is non-motorized, another allows ATVs. Project partners include Forks Area Chamber of Commerce, Kennebec Snow Riders and Maine Huts & Trails System</p> <p>What's needed: Estimated \$50,000 to \$100,000 . We also need trail building materials for bridges and bike surfaces, volunteers for clearing and excavation in some places.</p>	<p>Bob Haynes, Old Canada Road</p>
<p>Bingham-Embden Multi-Use Trail Map 10</p>	<p>Protect the trail from truck use.</p> <p>What's needed: Install barriers to truck traffic; improve compliance through signage and other education</p> <p><i>Supportive State policy: See LD# 455, An Act to Restrict Use of Trails Designed for All-terrain Vehicles. (enacted in June 2007)</i></p>	<p>Ann Dorney, Kennebec Valley Trails</p>

Cobbossee Corridor Bike/Pedestrian Path	Complete bicycling and pedestrian paths within the Cobbossee Stream Corridor and connect to the Kennebec Rail Trail. Build paths, trailhead. City's goal is improved pedestrian safety and recreation.	Jason Simcock, Gardiner Economic Development
Map 4, Gardiner	What's needed: Estimated cost of \$1,500,000.	
Bond Brook Trail System	As part of its Open Space and Recreation Plan, City would like to build a public trail that connects lower Bond Brook at the Kennebec to the trails at the Univ. Maine Augusta.	Leif Dahlin, City of Augusta
Map 5, Augusta	If the land transaction is carried out, the project would also need a volunteer force and money (<\$100,000) to build the trail and significant community outreach to deal with ATV incursions and erosion problems in Bond Brook.	
Kennebec River Canoe Trail System	Provide maps, campgrounds, information for people who want to go on multi-day canoe trips on the river and large tributaries. Could be modeled on Androscoggin river trip.	Dan McCaw, ASC
Maps 5 to 13	What's needed: Purchase of land for campgrounds and put-ins or else property easement or landowner permission.	

Program Proposal #4

Kennebec River Protection & Restoration

Program Goal

Promote riverfront and stream restoration and protection through land acquisition, easement, and voluntary landowner programs. Educate the public on wildlife habitat protection. Restore and protect specific sites in the corridor.

The KRI will promote projects that:

- Protect natural resources and corridor values (habitat, aesthetic & cultural values, fisheries, etc.);

**Includes recommendation for Kennebec River fisheries management plan*

1. include the townspeople in the project area
2. increase public access in appropriate places (land and water)
3. maximize partnerships among land conservation and other groups

Lead Organization(s)

KVCOG, County Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Partners

Department of Conservation; Maine Farmland Trust; Maine DEP (currently developing a river monitoring protocol for volunteers); Land for Maine's Future; Maine DIFW; Bureau of Sea Run Fisheries and Habitat; Regional/National Land Trusts: The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, New England Wildflower Society, Forest Society of Maine; Local Land Trusts: Somerset Woods Trustees, Kennebec Land Trust, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, Kennebec Estuary Collaboration, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine

Program Activities and Outcomes

Appendix A contains a site chart to further define projects

1. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Department of Marine Resources with the Bureau of Sea-Run Fisheries work with an experienced planning consultant in preparing the Kennebec fishery management plan.
2. Use website or other means to educate public and visitors on Kennebec wildlife. Educate sportsmen on endangered species; e.g., short nose sturgeon, Atlantic salmon, Barrow's goldeneye duck.
3. Build a network of volunteers trained in basic water quality monitoring to produce data useful to DEP and other agencies. Provide the public with directions for reporting suspected violations.
4. Organize volunteers for stream clean-ups. Encourage towns to waive dump fees for clean-up days.
5. Improve ATV enforcement throughout the corridor.
6. Remediation of old gravel pits and better regulation of active gravel pits

7. Promote voluntary land conservation programs through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), local Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), Maine Forest Service and Maine Farmland Trust
8. Work with the State Planning Office and State Office of GIS to map all protected lands, public or private. *See* recent State policy: LD #277 An Act to Require Mapping of Conservation Easements, Purchases and Gifts (enacted in June 2007)
9. Assist partners in acquiring fee ownership or easement on priority lands. The KRI list of priority lands can be used

Program Contact

Ken Young, Director, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

Site-Specific Projects

<i>Project Name & Location</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Kennebec fishery management plan Entire River	Looking at all sections of the River to establish specific recommendations for improving this diverse fishery. This comprehensive report will greatly supplement the other proposed fisheries habitat work, surveys and inventories included in this plan. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Department of Marine Resources with the Bureau of Sea-Run Fisheries work with an experienced planning consultant in preparing this document.	George Smith (SAM)
Remediate Gravel Pit in Madison Map 9	Remediation of a specific gravel pit site. Restore failing bank at the gravel pit. What's Needed: Estimated cost of \$20,000	Town of Madison
Protect Embden Petroglyphs Map 10	Ancient petroglyphs are accessible from Evergreen Campground but not well protected. Protect petroglyphs from vandalism with signage and policing. These are some of the most important petroglyphs in the northeast. What's Needed: Interpretive signs and parking lot. Protect the property around the site. Private parcel may be for sale – look at assessed value of property.	Ann Dorney

<p>Erosion Control on the Sandy River Map 9</p>	<p>Stabilize current bank erosion sites and prevent future bank erosion as well as river sand removal.</p> <p>What's Needed: DEP (and/or USACE) to work with towns and landowners to address river bottom sand mining (illegal).</p> <p>NRCS or SWCD funds and technical assistance to fix failing river banks.</p>	<p>Somerset SWCD Franklin SWCD</p>
<p>Save the Kennebec Gorge Maps 13, 14</p>	<p>Protect a 1,000 foot minimum buffer on either side of the river from Harris Station to the Forks Bridge.</p>	<p>Susie Hockmeyer (Northern Outdoors)</p>
<p>Fish Passage Assessment (Northern Reach)</p>	<p>Identify and remove impediments to fish spawning habitat in the tributaries, especially hanging culverts. Many of these road culverts were installed after the 1987 flood so they may be too high and are also due for replacement. Could get funding or other assistance from Eastern Brook Trout Initiative or NRCS Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP).</p>	<p>Mary Gallagher, IF&W</p>
<p>Maps 9 through 11</p>	<p>What's Needed: IF&W is leading this project. Would also need an organized group of volunteers, mapping assistance, communication with towns.</p>	<p>Craig Dennis, Trout Unlimited</p>
<p>Carp Sport Fishery Map 5 and south</p>	<p>Attract tourists (especially British and European) to fish for carp in the Kennebec.</p> <p>What's Needed: Work with DMR to carry out stock assessment of carp: locations, numbers and size. Invite foreign anglers to test the potential of this sport fishery and give pointers to local guides. Organize a pilot fishing event, a "carp exchange"</p>	<p>Greg Ponte</p>
<p>Riverbank Restoration, North Anson Map 10</p>	<p>Exclude cattle from the river at transmission crossing in North Anson restore eroded streambanks. There may be similar sites elsewhere, e.g., where the Sandy meets the Kennebec.</p> <p>What's Needed: Sign up farmers with USDA Farm Bill programs: EQIP, WHIP</p>	<p>Somerset SWCD NRCS Somerset Office</p>

<p>Channel Restoration at Solon</p>	<p>Restore constant flow in the Eastern channel below Williams Dam in Solon. (new channel below dam does not support fish; old channel near Fall Brook has better bottom habitat but experiences very low flows, occasionally dries up completely)</p> <p>What's Needed: Would require some in-river engineering to rehydrate the original channel. Would need cooperation of the regulators (USACE, DEP), Florida Power & Light, and CMP (landowner on shore)</p>	<p>Craig Dennis, Trout Unlimited</p>
<p>Waterbird Preserve at Fort Halifax Map 6, Winslow</p>	<p>Several factors make Barrow's goldeneye a vulnerable species: hunters often confuse it with the similar species, Common goldeneye; Barrow's goldeneye nests in trees, making it dependent on wooded riverfront, and it congregates in small but dense flocks at the same location each winter and spring. Hunter education is needed to properly identify waterfowl species. Another option is to create a wildlife preserve that protects their breeding habitat.</p> <p>What's Needed: Public awareness of threats to the species and need to protect; landowner and/or land trust interest in forming a preserve. This could be an outright preserve (no access) or limited access, i.e., access on foot permitted but no hunting allowed. The preserve would benefit many other plant and animal species as well.</p> <p>Recent State policy: Barrow's goldeneye added to list of State threatened and endangered species June 2007 (see LD #366, enacted in May 2007)</p>	<p>Jay Adams, Augusta Birding Club</p>

Program Proposal #5

Community-Based Waterfront Development

Program Goals

Revitalize the towns and cities through site redevelopment and public amenities

The KRI will promote projects that:

1. have strong community support and control
2. fit the character of the river
3. bring revenue/jobs to the local economy
4. utilize regional coordination (where possible), linking areas up and down the river corridor

Lead Organization(s)

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG), partnering with towns

Other Partners

Chambers of Commerce; Project developers, e.g., Niemann Capital, brownfield development companies; Maine DEP; Local land trusts and trail groups

Program Activities & Outcomes

1. Assist towns in identifying parcels best suited for development or redevelopment
2. Coordinate riverfront development projects with larger tourism and marketing efforts as well as land conservation and trail building
3. Assist interested towns in coordinating and scheduling their various riverfront festivals for maximum exposure and attendance.

Policy Recommendation

All development projects (any that disturb ground) should be reviewed by the Maine Historical Preservation Commission (MHPC) to determine whether these are sites of historical and cultural significance. As many as 150 towns in Maine have contacted the MHPC in the past to make this determination. The Kennebec Corridor towns are encouraged to write this policy into their town codes and call on the MHPC to assist in reviewing projects. Contact person: Arthur Spiess, Ph.D. (MHPC)

Program Needs

- Estimated funds needed: Funds will be needed on a town by town basis as each project will vary in scale and scope. The potential of monies from the Rivers Bond (approved in November 2007) exists for these types of proposals.

Program Contact

Ken Young, KVCOG

Site-Specific Projects

Project Name & Location	Description	Contact Person
Reclaim Statler Mill Site Map 5, site of Statler Tissue Mill, Augusta	Reclaim and redevelop this riverfront brownfield site in Augusta. What's Needed: EPA has already invested \$1.5 million to investigate and clean-up. What remains to be done to make the site useable? The parcel (>30 acres) could be taken by the City for non-payment of taxes. However, City Council has organized a committee to look into this. Committee will determine highest and best use and if liability and cost of clean-up is low, they would be interested in acquiring the site and inviting proposals brownfield developers.	Mike Duguay, City of Augusta
Gardiner Waterfront Development Map 4, Gardiner	Complete boardwalk and parking improvements. City has partnered with DOT to do some erosion control work in the Cobbossee Stream Corridor. *Gardiner recently established a new zoning district, "Waterfront District" could be a model for other municipalities What's Needed: Remaining activities estimated at \$250,000	Jason Simcock, City of Gardiner
Benton Gateway Revitalization Map 7, Rte. 139 in Benton	Relocate commercial auto repair and other small businesses; replace with residential/recreational or other uses. Town of Benton could form partnerships with KVCOG, CDBG, Maine Bond Bank What's Needed Need preliminary studies and code enforcement. Persuade some of the businesses to relocate and other property owners to sell shore property and redevelop for Visitor Center location and new housing (elderly or income-based) Project expected to cost less than \$200,000	Rick Lawrence, Town of Benton
Hathaway Creative Center Map 6, Waterville	IN PROGRESS	

Augusta Arsenal IN PROGRESS

Map 5, Augusta

Run of River IN PROGRESS

Whitewater Park

Map 8,
Skowhegan

town will improve parking lot below south dam and launch ramp for hand carry (white water kayaks and canoes)

will make artificial obstacles to enhance whitewater

will need some control of who can use site for safety purposes in high and cold water; site should at least be gated. have permits and maps; needs bathymetry of river below launch; SWT and town need about \$1,000,000.

Greg Doore

Skowhegan Road
Commissioner

474-6911

Program Proposal #6

Marketing and Tourism

Program Goal

Promote the Kennebec River Corridor as a tourist destination and help project partners (towns, businesses) coordinate recreational and touring activities.

KRI supports activities that:

1. fit the character of the rivers and towns
2. develop the local economy
3. increase the awareness of ecological, scenic and cultural values.

Lead Organization(s)

Maine Office of Tourism

Partners

Regional Tourism Associations; Municipal Economic Development and Recreation contact; local businesses, especially tour operators and inn-keepers

Program Activities and Outcomes

1. Activity Inventory. Make available a list of activities on the Kennebec. This would attract tourists and also help the hospitality and touring businesses plan tours and outings.
2. Historical focus. Gather together scattered literature and write a thread of history for the entire Kennebec.
3. Convene a group of key service providers to develop some guiding packages. Model this effort on the "cooperative competition" by the large resorts in the North who operate in this way for snowmobile touring.

Program Needs

- A person to organize cooperation between businesses and coordinate marketing activities for potential tour packages. This could be a role for KRI staff.
- Estimated funds needed: \$5,000 - \$10,000
- Monies needed for coordinating programs, printing and distributing materials. Businesses that are involved with tour packages will be asked to contribute annually for services. As tourism increases in the region, more business will see the benefits of these efforts.
- Assurance of quality. Hotels, B&B's, restaurants, fishing and paddling guides, ground transportation, bike and kayak rentals, and campgrounds all need to be assessed for quality and reliability.
- Coordination of these different service providers. Some well organized and persistent tour providers are needed to step in and do the work of scheduling the services of these different businesses for tourist groups of different sizes.

Program Contact

Phil Savignano, Maine Office of Tourism

Site-Specific Projects

<i>Project Name & Location</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact Person</i>
Tri-Fort Tours Maps 6, 5, 3, & 1	Attractions: Fort Halifax, Old Fort Western, points in Hallowell, Gardiner, Richmond, Fort Popham Project Description: Develop and market a "fort-to-fort-to-fort" package for tourists. Tour can be historical, recreational or both and is both land and water based. What's Needed: Interest and involvement of key investors, hoteliers or in-keepers. Tourists should only be invited once lodging and other amenities have been organized as part of the package.	City of Augusta: Mike Duguay, Leif Dahlin, Rex Turner City of Hallowell: Gerry Mahoney
Kennebec River Paddling Trips (All sections of the river)	Provide safe, organized paddling trips for tourists and local people. Promote enjoyment and appreciation of the river. Trips could be modeled on Androscoggin Source to Sea event but not be limited to a one-time event. A group of paddlers can be matched with a guide and go for any length of the river at any time. What's Needed: Local volunteers or paid guides who know the river and are trained in outdoor safety.	Don Nodine
Carp Sport Fishery Map 5 and south	Attract tourists (especially British and European) to fish for carp in the Kennebec. What's Needed: Work with DMR to carry out stock assessment of carp: locations, numbers and size. Invite foreign anglers to test the potential of this sport fishery and give pointers to local guides. Organize a pilot fishing event, a "carp exchange"	Greg Ponte
Kennebec River Visitor Information Center Map 5, Litchfield	A kiosk at the new Maine Turnpike rest stop in Litchfield will serve as a physical location on a heavily traveled route (I-95) where tourists can gather printed information on lodging and activities, natural and historical attractions. What's Needed: Contact with the Turnpike authority; funds to set up and take care of information kiosk.	Maine Office of Tourism & Maine Turnpike

Fishing specific marketing with printed material and brochures

Targeting appropriate venues such as out of state sportsman's shows and outdoor events with material specific to the Kennebec fishery. What's Needed: Contact with area guides, informational blurbs on Kennebec fishery, photos, printing and distribution costs.

Maine Office of Tourism; Sportsman's Alliance of Maine

Kennebec River outdoor writers event

Invite outdoor writers to participate in a Kennebec River "Fish Tour" that includes days on the water with knowledgeable guides, use of the Corridor's best amenities (restaurants, B&B's, etc.) Model after successful event held by the Upper Andro. Anglers Alliance.

Kennebec guides, Kennebec Corridor businesses and area chambers of commerce

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