

# South Portland Conservation Commission

## 2014 Annual Report South Portland, Maine

May 4, 2015

### 1. Introduction

**Mission.** The Conservation Commission serves as a research, advisory and advocacy group on environmental and conservation issues impacting the City of South Portland.<sup>1</sup> This broad mandate is translated into the following general powers and duties, as set forth in the City Ordinance<sup>2</sup>:

- a) *Keep records of meetings and activities and make annual reports to City Council;*
- b) *Conduct research in conjunction with the Planning Board on local land areas;*
- c) *Coordinate activities of conservation bodies organized for similar purposes;*
- d) *Keep an index of all open areas within the City, and where appropriate make recommendations on ways to protect, develop and use certain open areas in the City (including, but not limited to, acquisition of conservation easements);*
- e) *As necessary and appropriate, communicate information to the public on conservation issues (printed or electronic);*
- f) *Assist the City in promotion of its open space and park plans;*
- g) *Work on conservation and environmental activities referred to it by City Council; and*

**Finances.** The Conservation Commission does not submit an annual budget to the City Manager. On occasion, we have requisitioned funds under the City's \$2,000 committees and commissions account. The Commission is responsible for review and approval of funds requested for one City spending account. Under the City Ordinance Section 27-1526(f)(2), the Commission has joint signature authority and oversight along with the Director of South Portland's Water Resources Department for expenditures made from the Freshwater Compensation Fund (see Section 6 of this report for additional details).

In prior years, the Commission has been awarded grants for conservation-related projects in our community. During 2014, the Commission did not apply for or receive any outside grant support.

### 2. Commission Membership

In 2014, City Council passed revisions to the Ordinance eliminating the "associate commissioner" position and increasing the number of Commissioners from seven to 14. Commissioners are still appointed for terms of up to three years. Each City Council member is authorized to appoint two Commissioners.

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Ordinances, Section 2-76

<sup>2</sup> Code of Ordinances, Section 2-79

## South Portland Conservation Commission

Commission membership as of December 2014 was as follows (City Council appointment in parenthesis):

David Critchfield	(Morgan, Chairman)
Nathan Marles	(Fox, Vice Chairman)
Alison Spaulding	(Cohen, Secretary)
Monika Youells	(Cohen)
Sara Zografos	(Beecher)
Mitchell Sturgeon	(Linscott)
Will Fritzmeier	(Smith)
Bob Klotz	(Blake)
Patti Smith	(City Council representative, District 2)

During the first quarter of 2015, Nathan Marles and Will Fritzmeier resigned from the Commission. Nathan and his wife are moving out of South Portland to be closer to his wife's job, and Will decided his skills and interests would be put to better use by joining the Energy and Recycling Committee. Both were tireless, enthusiastic members of the Commission; we will miss them. The good news – City Council members have been equally enthusiastic in recruiting new Commissioners, and as shown below, we begin the year with Commission membership at an all-time high.

As of April 1, 2015, the Commission is comprised of the following:

David Critchfield	(Morgan, Chairman)
Suzette Bois	(Smith, Vice Chairman)
Sara Zografos	(Beecher, Secretary)
Charles McNutt	(Beecher)
David Schneider	(Morgan)
Alison Spaulding	(Cohen)
Monika Youells	(Cohen)
Mitchell Sturgeon	(Linscott)
Chad MacLeod	(Linscott)
Bob Klotz	(Blake)
James Melloh	(Blake)
Robert McKeagney	(Fox)
Meg Braley	(Fox)
Patti Smith	(City Council representative, District 2)

The Commission normally meets at 6:30PM on the first and third Mondays of every month. The meeting schedules and agendas are published on the City of South Portland website. All meetings are open to the public.

### **3. Officer Elections**

Pursuant to the City Ordinance, Commissioners vote annually to fill three administrative positions: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

Commissioners voted in February, selecting the following individuals to fill these positions for 2015:

- Chair                      David Critchfield
- Vice Chair                Suzette Bois

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- Secretary Sara Zografos

#### 4. Coordination with Other Organizations

The Commission did not conduct formal meetings with any outside conservation organizations or private citizens during 2014. The Commission has been a member of the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions (MEACC), with our own Alison Spaulding serving on MEACC's board of directors. Unfortunately, MEACC was dissolved in 2014 after its director resigned and no one stepped up to fill his vacancy.

#### 5. Commission Activities During 2014

The Commission focused on the following initiatives during the prior year:

- a) ***Trout Brook 604(b) Watershed Management Planning Process*** – The Commission provided input to the Water Resources Department Steering Committee for the Sections 604(b) and 319 planning grant programs funded by the U.S. EPA and managed by Maine DEP. Since the Commission first proposed that a Trout Brook watershed restoration project be undertaken, DEP and South Portland City Council have provided resources and financial support. The Commission's goal has not changed since 2001: Find and deploy resources to monitor the Trout Brook watershed, and to implement cost-effective corrective actions that will enable Trout Brook to achieve State Water Quality Standards and be removed from DEP's Urban Impaired Streams list.
- b) ***Mildred Street storm water outfall restoration*** – The Commission worked with Water Resources Department to develop a scope of work for and assessment and pre-engineering study to develop restoration options for this tidal salt marsh wetland area adjacent to the Fore River Greenbelt Trail. We expect the pre-engineering study to begin in 2015, with recommendations and a final report in hand by year-end, and design/build underway in 2016.

#### 6. Freshwater Wetland Compensation Fund

As of December 31, 2014, the Freshwater Wetland Compensation Fund ("Fund") balance was \$187,373.48. Total Fund additions through the Ordinance fee system through July 2014 were \$1,700.00.

During calendar year 2014, the Commission approved a \$5,000 freshwater wetland-related project funding proposal jointly submitted by the Water Resources Department, DEP and the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District. The money were used to pay for salaries and materials to support the Trout Brook Youth Conservation Corps' watershed improvement activities. This initiative dates back to 2012, when the Water Resources Department and Maine DEP staff began working on a plan to identify stream habitat modifications which would lead to significant measurable water quality improvements in Trout Brook (including stream bank stabilization, channel improvement, and stream bank re-vegetation, to name several).

All of the planned summer 2014 projects were completed within budget, and with only minor changes from original conceptual designs. According to the Water Resources Department, water quality trend data are not yet available to document whether these projects had significant ecological benefit on the watershed, but data gathering efforts are planned for 2015. The Water Resources Department prepared a project completion report (included here as **Attachment A** to this annual report).

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### 7. 2015 Planning

The Commission's mission currently falls into several broad categories as set forth in the City Ordinance:

- a) *Recordkeeping and annual report;*
- b) *Research on local land areas;*
- c) *Coordination with other conservation organizations;*
- d) *Indexing open areas, including recommending candidate areas for 'open space' management;*
- e) *Communication on conservation issues; and*
- f) *Other activities at request of City Council.*

Admittedly, with the possible exception of item "c" above, this is a somewhat vague mission statement. For this reason, beginning in late 2014 Commissioners began discussing the pros and cons of establishing more results-oriented objectives for the organization, along with some form of "report card" to measure progress by both the Commission and the City. The Commission is also aware that, besides being somewhat dated (drafted in 2002), the "Duties and Responsibilities" document linked to the Commission's web page is more focused on process rather than task-oriented objectives. We plan to review and update this document during the next year.

Given that the size of the Commission has increased from seven to 14 voting members, we've decided that it is the right time to consider some form of sub-committee structure. This will enable us to make the best use of time and talents of our membership, focus our mission, and better measure progress towards key objectives established by both the City Council and Commission itself. We believe this will enable us to avoid typical pitfalls that volunteer organizations face – large group inertia, "re-hashing news headlines", learning curve issues, mission creep, etc.

The Commission plans to establish the following standing sub-committees during the calendar year 2015:

1. **Ecosystem Resources and Research** – Open Space, Freshwater Compensation Fund administration, community protection initiatives [Ordinance Powers and duties Section 2-79(d) and (f)].

This sub-committee will be responsible for: Managing the review/approval process for projects funded through the Freshwater Compensation Fund; initiating projects suitable for funding through the Freshwater Compensation Fund; coordinating with City Departments, citizens, and *ad hoc* committees on protecting and enhancing critical ecological habitat areas in the City; and research and advocacy on issues that might adversely impact key habitat areas in South Portland (freshwater and estuarine wetlands, shorelines, open space, streams and ponds).

2. **City Planning & Review** – Comprehensive Planning process, Planning Department development proposals review process, shoreline management [Ordinance Powers and duties Section 2-79(b)].

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This sub-committee will be responsible for: Working with the Planning Department staff to ensure that the Commission makes timely input on private development proposals in advance of the Planning Board review/approval process; working on Comprehensive Plan updates; ensuring that City GIS and related mapping tools depict freshwater and estuarine wetlands, and other critical ecological habitat accurately; assisting the City Sustainability Coordinator in achieving her key performance objectives.

3. ***Outreach*** – Grant applications, grant administration, emerging environmental issues, state/federal rulemaking potentially impacting conservation issues in South Portland [Ordinance Powers and duties Section 2-79(c), (e) and (g)].

This sub-committee will be responsible for: Applying for and managing grants; conducting preliminary research on ecological issues potentially impacting quality of life and habitat quality in the City; writing articles about the Commission's activities and/or conservation news events for the City's online newsletter, local newspapers, and other publications; coordination with other conservation organizations to establish and support effective community outreach/educational vehicles (including conferences, meetings, publications, etc.).

This is a step in a new direction for us, in an effort to make the most of our Commissioners' time, who serve on a completely voluntary basis. There's a lot of good and important work to be done, some of it urgent work. We have a diversity of views, which is a good thing, but we all share a common guiding principle – doing the right thing for the City concerning the environment and our natural resources.

As always, the Commission stands ready to assist and advise City Council members on conservation-related matters impacting South Portland.

Respectfully submitted,



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David H. Critchfield

Copy to Conservation Commissioners  
Copy to City Council

# South Portland Conservation Commission

## ATTACHMENT A

Trout Brook – 2014 Youth Conservation Corps Completion Report

## NPS GRANT SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Project Number: #2013RT08

Project Title: **Trout Brook Implementation, Phase I**

Report for the Period (check one) Nov.1 to April 30  May 1 to October 31  Year 2014

Grantee Name: City of South Portland

Grantee contact person: Kate McDonald, CCSWCD

Phone (207) 892-4700 E-mail: [kmcdonald@cumberlandswcd.org](mailto:kmcdonald@cumberlandswcd.org)

### I. Account Drawdown Information (estimate):

a.) Funds Spent this Quarter:	Federal \$ <u>37,072.35</u>	Non Federal Match <u>\$22,102.26</u>
b.) Total Project Cost:	Federal \$ <u>70,363.00</u>	Non Federal Match <u>\$48,072.00</u>
c.) Funds Spent to Date:	Federal \$ <u>53,168.06</u>	Non Federal Match <u>\$32,510.22</u>
d.) Funds Remaining (b-c)	Federal \$ <u>17,194.94</u>	Non Federal Match <u>\$15,561.78</u>

### II. Short Narrative Summary of Work Performed in this Reporting Period:

- YCC Crew Leader and Crew hired (April/May 2014). YCC Buffer Plantings completed between June and August 2014. 96,050 square feet of buffers planted in 2014.
- YCC outreach completed—neighborhood canvassing, speaking with residents in neighborhoods where work was completed and public outreach at Hinckley Park and Mill Creek Park. 10% of signs distributed (not much interest from residents), pledge campaign not included due to lukewarm reception to signs and lack of door-to-door opportunities (public safety concerns due to recent burglaries in area).
- Extensive outreach to car detailing business to address NPS site. Ultimately this site was addressed by owner as an MS4 requirement (no grant funds used for construction).
- Preliminary outreach to golf course in June, CCSWCD to follow up next reporting period. Outreach to Down Home Farm to determine further stream protection needs. Down Home Farm wants to install a well for livestock rather than withdraw from the stream. Not eligible for NPS grant funding.
- Developed list for potential sites for remaining NPS funds. Based on progress on Phase II grant & opportunities in the watershed, most likely sites are: Pleasant Ave neighborhood, agricultural landowners upstream of Walnut Hill Equestrian Center, or further work on Walnut Hill Equestrian Center property (in conjunction with Phase II).

### III. Reason(s) for Delay and Revised Schedule for any Work Scheduled for Completion in this Reporting Period and Not Completed:

Due to challenges identifying & funding construction projects, we have not spent allocated grant funds on NPS sites. Some of these funds were used to expand the YCC Buffer program in 2014, and remaining funds will be used to address an NPS site in 2015 (options identified, in process of identifying site & solution). For this reason, we are requesting an extension to allow this work to occur in Summer/Fall 2015.

### IV. Brief Summary of any Significant Difficulties Encountered and Remedial Action(s) Taken This Reporting Season:

No difficulties to report

### V. Report any Changes in Key Project Personnel:

Patrick Marass left CCSWCD in July 2014. New project manager/point of contact is Kate McDonald, Project Scientist.

**NPS GRANT SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT** continued, for project #2013RT08  
 For Reporting Period May 2014 through September 2014. *Sections VI and VII not to exceed 2 pages combined*

VI. Use this sample format (boxes are optional) to explain important events for each workplan task. Reference deliverables in the text as appropriate. Explain any periods of inactivity.

Task #	Task Heading	WORK DONE	Task Status
1	Budget, Tracking, Invoicing, DEP Reports, and Hiring Project Consultant	In kind match and expenses tracked throughout period. Progress reports completed in October 2014.	Ongoing
2	Steering Committee Meeting Coordination & Participation	YCC Committee meeting held in February 2014 (not reported in last progress report); Classroom Meetings held on April 2 & April 3, 2014; and YCC Committee meeting held on June 12, 2014. Final Steering Committee Meeting held on 10/7/14.	Ongoing
3	Technical Assistance	Down Home Farm well not able to be funded with NPS funding. In process of following up with Purpoodock Golf Course.	Ongoing
4	Residential Targeted Outreach, Buffer & Rain Garden Installation, and Urban YCC	12 matching grants to install 565 feet of buffers (8 matching grants with 800 feet of buffer were proposed). For South Portland residents abutting Trout Brook, up to \$500 in plants and materials were purchased by the South Portland Conservation Commission. 3-day canvassing campaign within the neighborhoods where the majority of the YCC work took place to promote healthy Yardscaping practices and the benefits of buffer plantings	Complete
5	Outreach	The South Portland Stormwater Program Coordinator, YCC Crew Leader, and YCC Crew interviewed for South Portland Green Scene (public access) as well as for Casco Bay Stories project. YCC article in newspaper in August.	Ongoing
6	NPS Sites	Raymond Taylor not able to be funded with NPS funding. Final NPS site options list developed, Recipient to be determined in winter 2014-15.	Ongoing
7	Pollutant Reduction Estimates		Ongoing

I. Deliverables:

	<u>List of Deliverables (from workplan)</u>	<u>Date Sent to DEP/EPA</u>	<u>Status of Deliverable</u>
1	Contract, sub-agreements, semi-annual progress reports and one final project report (Task 1)	Grant Agreement – 2/11; Subagreement with City and CCSWCD – 10/14	Ongoing
2	Copies of all key press releases, postcards and project signs (Task 5)	Yard sign and press releases – 10/14	Ongoing
3	List of landowners who pledged to be Green Neighbors; copies of pledge forms; documentation of behavior change (Task 4)	Pledge drive not completed. Outreach materials and sign design provided as replacement deliverable in 10/14	Complete
4	Summary reports of conservation practices, including pre- and post-installation photos (Task 4)		Ongoing
5	NPS Site reports of projects, including pre and post construction photos (Tasks 4 & 6)		Ongoing
6	Pollutants Controlled Report at the end of year 1 and year 2. (Task 7)	12/31/13	Ongoing

Grantee Signature:

Name:



Position Title: Kate McDonald, Project Scientist

Date Submitted to DEP Agreement Administrator: 11/12/14

Agreement Administrator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Accepted: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Date the “accepted” Progress Report was forwarded to DEP Augusta Office: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Date Received from DEP AA: ___/___/___ Entry Code: _____
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# MEMO

TO: Fred Dillon, Stormwater Program Coordinator, South Portland Water Resource Protection Department

FROM: Ryan Messier, Youth Conservation Corps Crew Leader, Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District

DATE: September 3, 2014

RE: Trout Brook Project Summary

Project Name	Address	Work Done	Linear Footage	YCC Days	Match		Material Cost
					Cash	In Kind	
Beirne	2 State Avenue, Cape Elizabeth	Removed weeds and kitty litter, planted highbush blueberries	L: 23'6" W: 14'7"	1	\$286.16	\$481.00	\$286.16
Draper	6 State Avenue, Cape Elizabeth	Did their own planting	L: 18'11" W: 16'8"	0	\$0.00	\$733.00	\$159.00
Ruarke	8 State Avenue, Cape Elizabeth	Did their own planting	L: 43'8" W: 9'9"	0	\$0.00	\$1,240.00	\$350.00
Begin	10 State Avenue, Cape Elizabeth	Removed weeds, planted	L: 37'3" W: 16'5"	2	\$518.62	\$481.00	\$518.62
Wellborn	12 State Avenue, Cape Elizabeth	Did their own planting	L: 23'4" W: 9'11"	0	\$0.00	\$234.00	\$223.00
Tordoff	225 South Richland Street, South Portland	Removed leaf litter from stream bank, removed weeds, planted	L: 25'1" W: 12'4"	2	\$424.91*	\$847.00	\$424.91

Marcucci	229 South Richland Street, South Portland	Removed leaf litter from stream bank, removed weeds, planted	L: 49'4" W: 5'6"	2	\$445.51*	\$586.00	\$445.51
Ladd	45 Boothby Avenue, South Portland	Removed weeds, planted, installed rip rap, installed coconut rolls	L: 73'5" W: 7'11"	3	\$611.21*	\$813.00	\$611.21
Kieran	41 Boothby Avenue, South Portland	Removed weeds, planted, installed infiltration path, installed infiltration steps	L: 40'10" W: 8'11"	2	\$352.72*	\$811.00	\$352.72
Marles	18 Sawyer Brook Circle, South Portland	Did their own planting	L: 52'9" W: 4'7"	0	\$446.00*	\$676.00	\$446.00
Keenan	142 Highland Avenue, South Portland	Removed weeds, planted, installed coconut rolls	L: 48'8" W: 20'6"	2	\$531.83*	\$481.00	\$531.83
Bouchard	16 Brenton Street, South Portland	Removed bamboo, installed geotextile fabric, planted	L: 33'3" W: 9'9"	2	\$359.37*	\$481.00	\$359.37
Joyce	4 State Avenue, Cape Elizabeth	Removed weeds, planted	L: 21'5" W: 18'8"	2	\$271.37	\$749.50	\$271.37
Ferguson	349 Ocean Street, South Portland	Removed weeds, planted	L: 22'11" W: 9'10"	1	\$139.54*	\$406.00	\$139.54
Matthews	17 Boothby Avenue, South Portland	Removed weeds, planted, installed coconut rolls	L: 51'0" W: 4'9"	1	\$258.04*	\$406.00	\$258.04

\* = South Portland Conservation Commission funds

