

## Many Rivers One Estuary Symposium brings together stakeholders and researchers



On November 17, one hundred stakeholders, researchers and students gathered for a day long symposium “Many Rivers One Estuary – Translating Knowledge into Action”. The symposium was a component of the Sustainability Solutions’ Partners project “Ecological and economic recovery and sustainability of Maine rivers, estuaries and coastal fisheries.” This project which brings together researchers from Bates College, Bowdoin College, and the University of Southern Maine is investigating the status and potential for ecological recovery in the Kennebec and Androscoggin Rivers and their common estuary, the Kennebec Estuary. The symposium was planned and held collaboratively with the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust and supported by the Sustainability Solutions Initiative and the Merrymeeting Bay Trust.

During the summer of 2011, Phil Camil, Eileen Johnson, and Undergraduate Research Assistant Michelle Kaufmann of Bowdoin College conducted interviews with 40 stakeholders throughout the Androscoggin and Kennebec watersheds in order to identify emergent questions and concerns associated with river quality and restoration measures. The symposium incorporated panel talks that directly addressed these topics.

The day included a keynote presentation by Andrew Fisk, former Director of the Land and Water Bureau at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and currently Executive Director of the Connecticut River Watershed Council. Panel discussions, moderated by SSP team members John Lichter, Theodore Willis, David Vail, Beverly Johnson, and Karen Wilson explored a range of topics including “Connecting nearshore to freshwater fisheries”, “Quality of Place: Connecting rivers to economies of local communities”, “Water Quality, restoration and fish passage”, and “Sustainable Partnerships-Researchers and Stakeholders”.

The goal of the symposium was to highlight the range of research projects and initiatives taking place throughout the two watersheds, to connect stakeholders to one another, and to inform stakeholders of the research projects. Discussions were moderated by team members who served as panel moderators. The symposium also provided the opportunity to identify the critical research questions that stakeholders face. The presentations will be available on the project website by mid-December:

<https://research.bowdoin.edu/rivers-estuaries-and-coastal-fisheries/>

A session at the Maine Water Conference “Maine Rivers: Promises, Partnerships, and Progress” will build upon the themes raised in the symposium and report back on interim progress made on areas identified as concerns.



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