

BROWNFIELDS SUCCESS IN NEW ENGLAND

Middle River Conservation Project

WASHINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, MAINE



Property Details	
Property Address:	Middle River, Machias, ME
Property Size:	141 acres
Former Uses:	Farm, pasture, hay fields
Contaminants Found:	None
Current Use:	Recreation, habitat conservation
Current Owner:	Downeast Coastal Conservancy
Project Partners	
Downeast Coastal Conservancy Land for Maine's Future Washington County Council of Governments Maine Department of Environmental Protection	

Funding Details	
Land for Maine's Future:	\$2.8M
Matching Funds :	\$5M
EPA Brownfields Assessment Funding:	\$5,000
Project Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Assessment key to securing conservation funding • 141 acre parcel part of 1,000 acres proposed for protection • The Middle River provides habitat for the endangered Atlantic Salmon • The project protects river habitat and enhances recreational opportunities, such as fishing, camping and kayaking 	

Drivers for Conservation: The Middle and Machias Rivers provide some of most productive Atlantic salmon habitat in the United States with high quality spawning and nursery habitats in several of their tributaries. The rivers and their frontage also provide exceptional recreational opportunities for fishermen, paddlers and hikers. Recognizing the value of this unique watershed, the Downeast Coastal Conservancy and several other partners, launched a \$1.9M “Two Rivers” campaign to protect 1,000 acres and 4.5 miles of river frontage.



Property History: The Middle River project site was once occupied by the historic St. Regis Paper Company farm that pastured draft horses involved in the company's logging drives. The property was later sold to a private landowner and operated as a family farm. Abutting land uses included a utility company pole yard, town landfill and a wastewater treatment plant. The Site is easily accessible to downtown Machias and the residential district, and is bordered by the Downeast Sunrise Trail. Recent uses of the land include hiking, picnicking, wildlife observation, and a staging area for the Machias 4th of July fireworks.

Project Results: No significant environmental impacts to the property were identified from potential on or off-site contaminant sources. The Two Rivers campaign has been highly successful, protecting hundreds of acres of river frontage. Conservation of this land is expected to stimulate growth in local tourism with benefits to camp grounds, fishing guides, canoe/kayak rentals and associated hospitality services.

Project Timeline	
1940s	Early Site development as farmland
May 2012	Kick-off of “Two Rivers” campaign
September 2012	Completion of Phase I ESA
2013	Public access improvements initiated by the Downeast Coastal Conservancy