

New Meadows Watershed Partnership

The mission of the New Meadows River Watershed Partnership is to protect, improve and maintain the vitality of the ecological and economic resources of the New Meadows and its watershed.

General/Background Information*

- ◆ New Meadows has a ~26 sq. mile watershed spanning five towns and two counties
- Most land use within the watershed is residential, particularly in Sagadahoc county, with <2,000 residents in the watershed
- It is a tidal embayment, not a river or an estuary, since there is little freshwater input
- Tidal restrictions, namely Bath/Brunswick Road constructed in 1937 and Route 1 causeway in 1960s created “lakes” in the embayment.
- Tidal range south of Bath Rd. is ~ 9 ft. while in the “lakes” it is <1 ft.
- As of 2002, NM mudflats produced ~8% of Maine’s total shellfish landings annually
- An increasing number of oyster aquaculture sites are being established in the midriver

Town	% of Watershed
Bath	1%
Brunswick	11%
Harpwell	9%
Phippsburg	48%
West Bath	33%
Total	100%

Water Quality*

- Water quality is excellent in Lower New Meadows, but degrades moving northward toward the Lakes; poorest within the Lakes.
- Annual anoxic conditions (0 dissolved oxygen) documented in the 28 ft. “deep hole” of the lower “lake” during the warmest time of year. May occur due to lack of vertical water circulation in the deep hole, combined with high organic deposition.
- The Lakes may function as a source of nitrogen to the Upper NM due to anaerobic microbial decomposition of organic matter from algal blooms in deep hole area.
- Anoxic events are believed to be the cause of fish kill events in the lakes, such as the pogie kills in the early 1990’s.

Key Events

NMWP has worked to open shellfish areas, remove overboard discharges, monitor water quality, assess the tidal restriction at New Meadows Lakes, and coordinate ongoing science and community outreach to inform planning and decision making for the watershed.

1998 Casco Bay Estuary Project assessed impact of overboard discharges on shellfish harvesting areas

1999 New Meadows River Watershed Project initiated

2000 Upper Watershed Survey conducted

2002 State of the New Meadows River completed (Christopher S. Heinig)

2002 Strategic Plan finalized

2002 Lower Watershed Survey conducted

2003 Boat Tour held with municipal officials

2004 Watershed Management & Action Plan completed, replacing strategic plan

2008 Action Plan updated

2009 Community Survey of Upper New Meadows

2016 Community conversations to gather local priorities

2017 Planned spring public forum to address issues in the entire watershed and update Action Plan.