

## Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association

The Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association celebrated its 40th anniversary as a land trust in 2009 with a festival on the Barth farm in Alna, the site where the founders took their first steps to protect and preserve the land and waters they loved. Current owners Joe Barth and Doreen Conboy hosted the daylong program of nature hikes, kids activities, paddle trip, cookout, music and other activities. The Barth farm itself, along with the Bill Weary property directly across the Sheepscot - a total of 524 acres, were brought under protection in 2009, culminating a 10-year long process of grant applications and negotiations by SVCA staff.

SVCA, based in Newcastle, continued its cooperation in 2009 with the Boothbay Region Land Trust and the Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance, using documentation of important natural resources of the entire Sheepscot watershed from Freedom to Southport, to enable the three groups to focus their land protection efforts and use their resources more effectively.

Environmental advocacy is an important part of SVCA's mission and the organization continues tracking new proposals for harnessing water flow in the Sheepscot for power generation, as well as consulting with MDEP on potential pollution sites in the watershed, and continuing its participation on the Wiscasset bypass task force.

SVCA Staff and volunteers spent much of the summer and fall taking readings and measurements of tributary streams in the watershed, working in conjunction with the Sheepscot River Watershed Council in a project supported by the Maine Department of Marine Resources and private foundations. The assembled data will be used to guide stream restoration efforts in years to come with the goal of cost-effectively increasing fish access to habitat currently blocked by barriers such as culverts and dams.

SVCA's Water Quality Monitoring program is in its 16th year. Volunteers in 2009 sampled test sites throughout the watershed every other week during the summer. The data collected helps guide not only SVCA's river-protection efforts but also those of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) and the former Atlantic Salmon Commission, now a part of the Bureau of Sea-Run Fisheries and Habitat.

In October SVCA opened to the public its first preserve in Jefferson, and its seventh in the overall watershed, the 150-acre Stetser Preserve on Egypt Road, donated by former resident Janet Stetser. SVCA volunteers worked through the summer to lay out a mile-and-a-half loop trail through the property's hilly woods and build a series of bog bridges near the entrance, along with a small parking area and an information kiosk.

SVCA organized numerous other events during the year, from paddling trips and bird and nature hikes on its preserves to talks on insects and turtles, workshops for woodland owners, and a presentation on ticks by a Maine Medical Center biologist. Members volunteered many hours in trail cutting and maintenance work on SVCA's seven preserves, located throughout the watershed.

SVCA's Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping services were utilized by towns and non-profits throughout the midcoast region.

SVCA is a membership-supported land trust and advocacy organization founded in 1969 and dedicated to conserving the natural and historic heritage of the Sheepscot River watershed. It now protects more than 3,000 acres and 15 miles of riverfront. The Association deeply appreciates the support it receives from the citizens of Edgecomb. For more information, contact us at 586-5616, 624 Sheepscot Road, Newcastle, ME, 04553, e-mail [svca@sheepscot.org](mailto:svca@sheepscot.org), or visit us online at [www.sheepscot.org](http://www.sheepscot.org).

Respectfully submitted,  
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