

## Workshop Aims to Protect and Manage Northeast Water Resources

### The Challenge

As more and more forest land is developed, vegetative cover declines and the area of impervious surfaces, such as roadways and parking lots, increases. This results in a decrease in water quality and increase in the volume and speed of storm water runoff. This change and the accelerating pace at which it's happening impairs the ability of natural resource managers to protect water resources for uses such as drinking water or recreation.

Complicating matters, there are few forums currently available for forestry professionals to gain the latest scientific information and technology they need to protect the rapidly changing watersheds they care for.

### The Solution

To address the problem, members of the U.S. Forest Service State & Private Forestry Northeastern Area Durham Field Office staff worked with the Maine Forest Service and a coalition of other State, Federal, and non-profit partners to host a three-day workshop called "Protecting and Enhancing Watersheds," in Portland, Maine, June 5-7, 2007.

Organizers designed the workshop to mitigate the negative impacts of land use change to water resources. Another related goal of the workshop was to educate forest watershed managers about new natural resource references and tools available to help keep water quality high.

The workshop organizers also sought to get State Urban and Community Forestry and Stewardship staff people to work together across program lines to protect and enhance watersheds.

"We wanted to give natural resource professionals and municipal leaders the tools and training to do their job better," said Forest Resources Management Group Leader Rob Clark.

### Resulting Benefits

Thirty-five people attended the event from across the seven Northeast States. Participants included Federal, State, and nonprofit natural resource managers, as well as industry consultants.

*Bringing together diverse audiences to discuss the importance of water resource issues.*



Attendees tour greenroof project at Portland public school.

The workshop served to pique attendees' interest in natural resource management issues, strategies, and techniques. It also provided guidance for the attendees about mitigating water resource impacts by using techniques to prioritize critical watersheds. Attendees also learned skills to influence decision makers' opinions and shape policies and practices for protecting water resources.

Part of the training focused on three new manuals concerning urban watershed management that served to enhance technology transfer.

### Sharing Success

The workshop brought together diverse audiences with narrow fields of interest and focused their attention on an important natural resource issue. Following the event the organizers produced a DVD of some of the presentations, to share the lessons learned with other natural resource managers. A resource "Toolkit" was also provided that included a variety of reference materials and tools. There are now plans to move the workshop's content to the Web to share it with colleagues across the globe.

Some of the workshop's key messages are now being repeated in related professional circles across the Northeast and incorporated into State agency presentations. Already, workshop attendees have used the training to develop grant proposals and revise policies that will benefit watersheds in their States.



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