

Watershed Management Plan
Development:

**Tier One Management Issues &
Proposed Tools**

Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Study

August 1, 2005

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Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Study Watershed Management Plan - Tier One Management Tools Overview July 22, 2005

Introduction

As a follow up to the March 31, 2005 Land Use Commissioner's Summit the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Study Committee has been refining a strategy to move forward on key watershed management issues as described at the summit. These top issues include riparian corridor protection, habitat fragmentation, increases in impervious surfaces and stormwater management.¹

The Committee left the Summit with a host of insightful questions and issues to research and analyze regarding the management issues and what the proposed management tools might specifically mean to each community. Over the last 3 months the Committee has been working on its "homework" that has led to this update. A part of this process has included meetings with the staff and land use board chairs in each community to have further discussions on the recommended actions. Their input to date is incorporated into what is provided here.

Building on Good Work

As discussed at the Summit, the communities of the Eightmile River Watershed have done a tremendous amount of good work to protect the watershed's outstanding resource values through actions such as adopting net buildable area requirements, implementing conservation subdivision guidance and aggressively pursuing open space acquisitions.

These recommendations being made by the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Study Committee are intended to build upon the community's strong efforts and fine tune the management of the special resources of the Eightmile River Watershed. Through such actions we will be able to present the strongest possible case for Wild & Scenic designation to Congress by showing that adequate local protections are in place to protect the areas outstanding resource values.

Tier One and Tier Two Management Issues

Management issues and recommended actions in the Eightmile River Watershed Management plan will be divided into two tiers.

Tier One issues and actions are the high priority items that we are asking communities to work on first. While we recognize there is not time for local commissions to act on these recommendations within the remaining timeline of the Study process, we are asking for a commitment from each commission to work on the adoption of the recommended actions over the next six to twelve months. The final recommended actions will be established based on the input and preferences of the local land use commissions.

¹ At the Summit we had presented three issues. Since that time we have separated the issue of "Habitat Fragmentation and Increases in Impervious Surfaces" into two separate issues.

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The Tier One Management Issues and Actions include:

Management Issue #1: Riparian Corridor Protection

Recommended Action: Adopt a River Protection Overlay Zone for all perennial streams and rivers in the Eightmile River Watershed that provides a 50 foot setback on small headwater streams, and a 100 foot setback on larger streams.

Management Issue #2: Habitat Fragmentation

Recommended Action: Commit to making protection of important habitat blocks an open space conservation priority and be a partner in pursuing federal funding to support such types of acquisitions.

Management Issue #3: Increases in Impervious Surfaces

Recommended Action: Each community commits to a maximum impervious surface goal of 10% for any local watershed and 4% for the Eightmile River Watershed as a whole. In addition, each community supports working with the Eightmile River Committee to refine the current and future impervious surface modeling, assess the potential for increasing imperviousness in each town and adopts appropriate tools to address limiting impervious surface. The East Haddam model is one recommended approach.

Management Issue #4: Stormwater Management

Recommended Action: Three actions have been identified including: (1) Require the design, implementation and maintenance of all new stormwater systems to be consistent with the 2004 CT DEP Stormwater Quality Manual; (2) Complete a Stormwater Management Plan for each municipality's stormwater system as described in the State's General Permit for Small Municipal Stormwater Systems; (3) Adopt The University of Massachusetts guidance for watercourse crossings, an approach that is used by the Army Corps of Engineers (New England Region).

Also, we are asking each community to consider adding a goal statement into their Plans of Conservation and Development that supports the Eightmile River Watershed, its outstanding resource values and the implementation of the watershed management plan. See "Draft Language Proposed to amend to the Plan of Conservation & Development".

Tier Two items are longer-term actions local communities can make to further protect watershed resources. The tier two recommendations will be presented in the full watershed management plan draft in late August.

Support

It is recognized that the implementation of the above actions take human and financial resources as well as time. It is the intention of the Eightmile River Study Committee that if a Wild & Scenic designation occurs and funding becomes available, top funding priorities will be to support local communities in the implementation of the tier one actions.

Draft Language Proposed to amend to the Plan of Conservation & Development

The following language is proposed to be added into the Plans of Conservation and Development for the towns of East Haddam, Lyme and Salem during their next review of their Plan or sooner if possible.

Goal: The town supports designation of the Eightmile River Watershed as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. The town will act in partnership with the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Stewardship Committee in implementing the Eightmile River Watershed Management Plan in order to achieve the long-term protection and enhancement of the watershed's Outstanding Resource Values.