

PRESERVING ALAMOOSOOK LAKE AND TODDY POND

Background:

- Narramissic Watershed Coalition (NWC) was created to address the potential abandonment of the dams. The NWC includes the towns of Orland, Surry, Penobscot and Blue Hill as well as the Toddy Pond Association and Alamoosook Lake Association
- The NWC has engaged its communities through resident and business surveys and by hosting town resident input meetings

What we learned from our residents:

- Of the 700 survey respondents, over 80% voiced support for preserving the lakes
- Of all respondents, nearly 80% favored sharing the cost of dam ownership and operations between town property tax revenues and lakefront property owner contributions
- A preference for a 50/50 split of the cost emerged

What we learned from our businesses:

- Of the 28 businesses that responded to the survey, 93% indicated that the loss of the lakes would negatively impact their business
- Nine businesses said they would be likely or somewhat likely to close if the lakes were lost

Other findings from the NWC research:

- Estimation of lake level drops connected to water release (approximately 8 Ft)
 - This drop in water level would eliminate the public boat launches on both lakes
 - Initial finding indicates current shoreline locations could move 450' to 1,200' in certain areas of the lakes
- Rough estimate of Town property tax revenue loss associated with water release
 - Orland - \$500K
 - Surry - \$200 - \$300K
 - Penobscot - \$250K
 - Blue Hill - \$48K
- Economic Impact: In addition to an estimated \$50 million reduction of waterfront property value, release of the lake water would result in the potential loss of \$9 million of revenues in the local economy
- Safety Impacts: Elimination of the lake water would negatively impact local fire department's ability to fight household, vehicle and business fires since water used to suppress fires is drawn from both lakes

Proposed Solution: Authorized by bipartisan legislation the *Alamoosook Lake Watershed Management District* and the *Toddy Pond Watershed Management District* were created

Responsibilities of the newly created districts

- Acquiring, owning, maintaining and operating the dams
- Preparing an annual operating and capital budget
- Holding public meeting(s) to discuss the district's annual proposed budget
- Conducting elections of trustees for the waterfront property owners
- Responsible for all administration requirements of the district: Financial management, recordkeeping, public communications and contract management
- Proactively assessing watershed improvements, courtesy boat inspections, water quality and invasive plant species monitoring

District Powers:

- Creation of operational rules for the management of the district
- Deliver an annual request to the town(s), subject to voter approval, to fund a portion of the districts operating and other costs
- Levy and collect an assessment on the waterfront property owners to fund a portion of the assessed amount by the date such payment is due
- Enter into cooperative agreements with watershed management districts, municipalities and entities for the purpose of planning, operations and maintenance, watershed improvement and for other purposes determined by the district

Governance:

- The affairs of the district shall be managed by the board of trustees, referred to as "the board", made up of a combination of trustees appointed by the municipal officers of the Town(s) and trustees elected by the lakefront owners; referred to as "the waterfront owners"

Adoption and Implementation:

- For the District to be formed, the voters of each town will be asked to approve participation. At least one municipality must vote to form the district for it to be implemented.
- The voters will be asked to approve the first year's funding for operations and maintenance of the dam
- If a town's voters opt not to approve funding, that town's share of the budget will shift to the lakefront owners

Next Steps:

- The NWC is working with an engineering firm to develop an independent cost estimate for the operations and management of the dam(s). The findings will be made public this summer
- Significant public outreach will be undertaken to educate residents on the proposal. This will happen over the summer in preparation for a vote this November