



Lower Sandy Stream

## **Unity Pond Watershed Restoration Project: Phase 1**

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) includes Unity Pond on Maine's list of "impaired" waterbodies [(Clean Water Act Section 3039d) list, aka "the TMDL list"] because Unity Pond does not attain State water quality standards. Unity Pond has had a long documented history of water quality impairment. In 1998, the Maine Land & Water Resources Council designated Unity Pond as a "nonpoint source priority watershed" (Public Law 1997 Chapter 519 (38MRSA section 2013) due to algae blooms and a sensitivity to change.

The Watershed Improvement Financial Assistance Partnership (WIFAP) provides financial assistance to Maine Soil and Water Conservation Districts conducting Nonpoint Source (NPS) Watershed Projects to restore or protect lakes, streams and coastal waters that are polluted or considered threatened. The purpose of a NPS Watershed Project is to restore a body of water that is not currently meeting water quality standards, or to protect a body of water that is considered threatened.

Through the collaborative efforts of the University of Maine Waldo County Extension, Waldo County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a \$70,000 grant was received to begin work on the Unity Pond Watershed Restoration Project: Phase I. Unity College, Unity Barn Raisers and the Friends of Lake Winnecook will also be involved on this project.

Watershed sources of phosphorus loading to Unity Pond needs to be significantly reduced to restore the pond and to attain water quality standards. The purpose of the Unity Pond Watershed Restoration Project: Phase I is to establish a continuing stewardship in the watershed and to significantly reduce erosion and export of sediment and phosphorus loads to reduce the magnitude and duration of algal blooms in Unity Pond through the design and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP's).

The project is directed by a steering committee of organization and agency co-sponsor members. And will target several Nonpoint Pollution Source (NPS) sites identified by studies conducted over the last three years. The Project Coordinator, Shawn Biello, will be working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide technical and financial assistance at agricultural sites. This includes the construction of suitable manure storage systems and vegetated buffer strips at identified high priority sites within the Unity Pond watershed.

The project coordinator will also work with University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) to develop and implement a nutrient-based, sod management and pest control plan for highly visible public and private recreation facilities. Vegetated buffer strips will also be installed along the shoreline at designated recreation sites.



Twenty-Five Mile Stream and the outlet of Unity Pond

Unity College, through the Vibrant Community Project, will build water quality and watershed restoration exercises into related course curricula as a component for their service learning based programs. This will include landscape design and installation of vegetated buffer strips, water quality sampling and sample analysis. Unity College will contribute other services outlined by the project objectives as they relate to watershed restoration.

The project will assist towns and neighborhood communities in applying for financial assistance through the MDEP Small Community Block Grants for replacement of malfunctioning septic systems and installation of non-existing septic systems. The project also has provisions for installation of BMP's at several identified high priority NPS road sites in the watershed. The project will work with local organizations, agencies and landowners to promote watershed stewardship by offering hands-on workshops, educational information and activities related to watershed restoration and improving water quality. The Project Coordinator will meet with willing landowners and businesses to provide technical and educational assistance with site specific recommendations on low cost conservation practices. Some financial assistance and labor to implement conservation practices may be available to qualified landowners. Those interested in an on-site assessment may contact Shawn Biello – Project Coordinator at: P.O. Box 94, Unity, ME, at [sbiello@unity.edu](mailto:sbiello@unity.edu), 948-3744 or the Waldo County SWCD @ 338-1964 x3.