

Saco River Corridor Commission

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT SRCC-MAINE.ORG
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81 MAPLE STREET, CORNISH, MAINE

*“Communities working
together to protect our rivers”*





WHAT IS THE SACO RIVER CORRIDOR COMMISSION (SRCC)?

Recognizing that uncontrolled growth would continue to occur in Corridor towns, a group of local citizens developed a plan which would allow only orderly growth and would prevent haphazard and intensive development in Corridor lands. The plan they developed purposefully left administrative control in the hands of the people within the Saco River Basin, who would be closer and more sensitive to the needs of our communities. The Commission was established in 1973 through legislative action and is a regional level land-use regulatory agency dedicated to preserving the land and water quality within the Corridor for our use and future generations.

Mission Statement

The Saco River Corridor Commission is committed to protecting public health and safety and the quality of life for the state of Maine. The commission regulates land and water uses, protects and conserves the region's unique and exceptional natural resources, and prevents the detrimental impacts of incompatible development.

LAND-USE REGULATORY PROGRAM

Most development projects within the corridor require permits. The Commission conducts site visits, staff and Commission review, and consultation with other

relevant agencies regarding projects. Projects that comply receive permits valid for two years.



2. John Boland, the SRCC Compliance Evaluator, on a site visit for a subdivision application in the corridor. -Fryeburg, Maine.

The Commission's review is oriented to best meet the individual and collective needs of corridor municipalities and a large degree of cooperation occurs between local, regional, and state agencies who all work collectively to ensure the protection of southern Maine's exceptional natural resources.

The SRCC notifies all towns of proposed development projects in the Saco River Corridor. The staff assists applicants by answering questions about the permit application process and strives to assist all applicants with a significant degree of care! The Commission reviews applications and other relevant matters each month, which lessens and eliminates adverse environmental impacts within the corridor.

The priorities of the SRCC's Land-Use Regulatory Program are:

- To ensure the quality of reservoir drinking water.
- To ensure the visually scenic character and tourist economy of the Saco River Corridor.
- To ensure towns have the information necessary to make informed decisions.
- To conserve and protect the unique and exceptional resources of the Saco River Corridor.



DO I NEED A PERMIT?

The Corridor includes all lands within 500 feet of the Saco, Ossipee, and Little Ossipee Rivers, Balch Lake, and Lake Arrowhead; and lands up

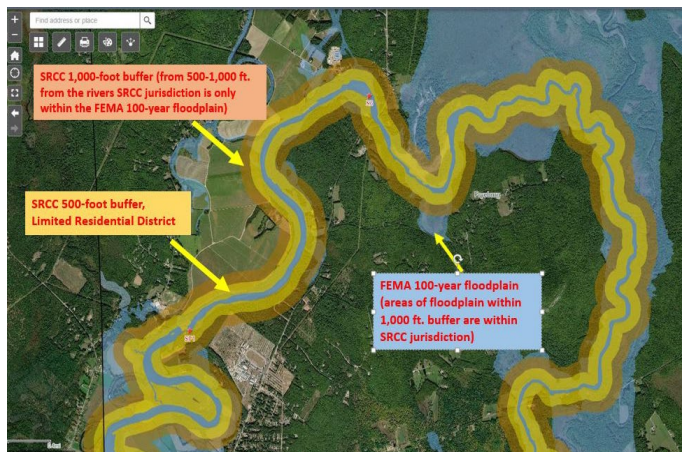
to 1,000 feet in areas where the 100-year floodplain extends into the 1,000-foot buffer area.

It is required by State Law to obtain a permit if you are proposing to develop within the Corridor. ***How do you find out if you're in the Corridor?*** Our staff is happy to assist with any questions, and our website includes an interactive ArcGIS Mapping Tool with digital parcels, Corridor jurisdictional areas, land-use districts, and other useful features.

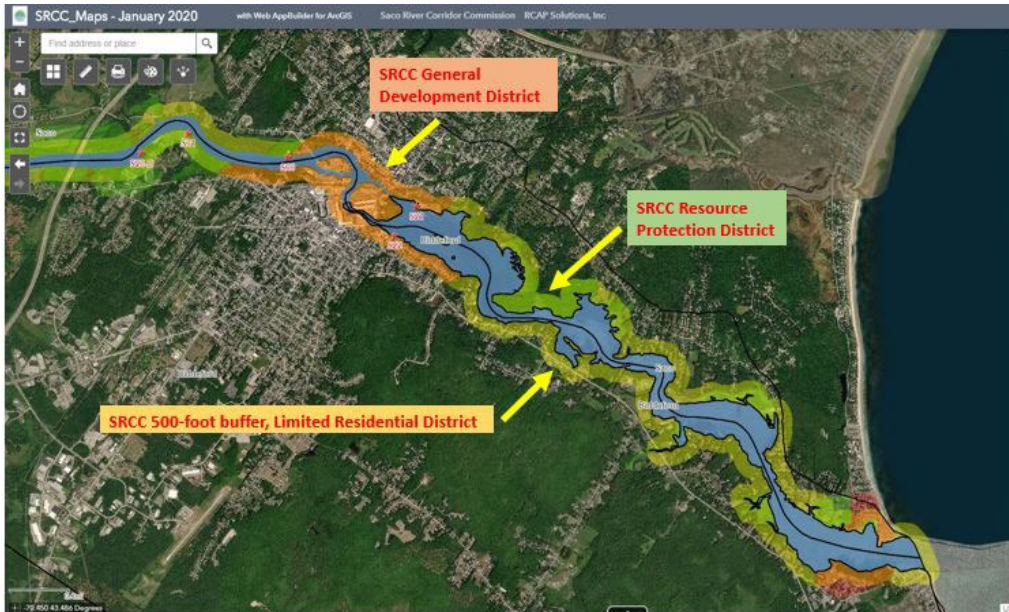
Corridor Member Municipalities: Acton, Baldwin, Biddeford, Brownfield, Buxton, Cornish, Dayton, Denmark, Fryeburg, Hiram, Hollis, Limerick, Limington, Newfield, Parsonsfield, Porter, Saco, Shapleigh, Standish, and Waterboro.

ARCGIS CORRIDOR MAPPING TOOL

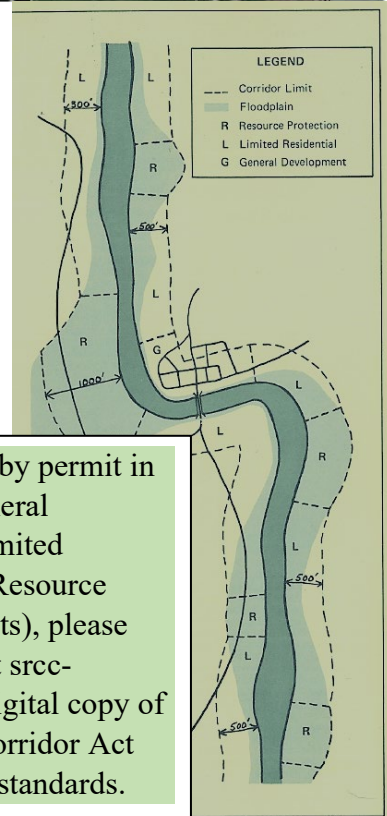
The SRCC created a new digital ESRI ArcMap CIS system by incorporating the original Corridor maps. The digital maps are accessible on the SRCC website complete with FEMA Flood Maps, Tax Map parcels, jurisdictional areas, and other informational layers integrated from other state and federal maps.



NEW SRCC ARCGIS MAP SYSTEM



- ✓ Type an address into the search bar function.
- ✓ Navigate to the layers feature to turn layers off or on.
- ✓ Red stars indicate locations for over 37 annual water quality monitoring sample sites!



DISTRICT CATEGORIES

General Development District

Limited Residential District

Resource Protection District

[Click here](#) to access the map system!

For uses allowed by permit in each district (General Development, Limited Residential, and Resource Protection Districts), please see our website at srcc-maine.org for a digital copy of the Saco River Corridor Act and performance standards.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REGULATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORRIDOR?

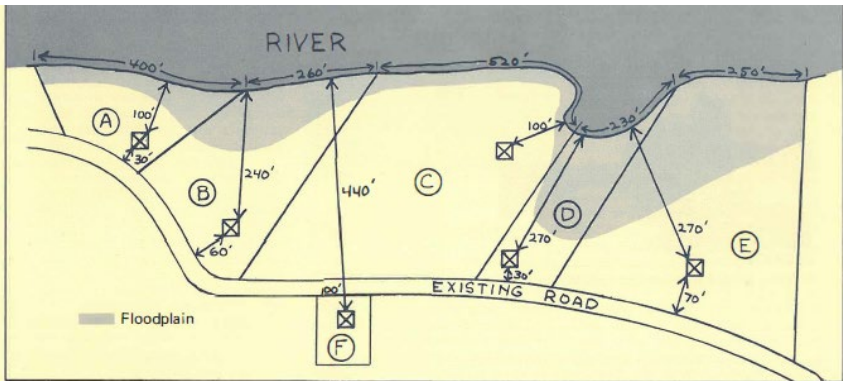
Maintaining the integrity of our rivers and lakes is vital for our communities and the quality of life we pass on to our children. The river has supplied the needs of many people over the years by acting as a source of power for industries, a recreational resource for people of all ages, and a source of drinking water for several cities; including Biddeford, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, Old Orchard Beach, Saco, and part of Scarborough. By controlling incompatible development, we help to preserve these qualities which the river supplies to all of us.



***SRCC staff and Corridor citizens conduct site visits for projects above.**

THE AGGREGATE LIMIT SYSTEM

One of the most important standards in the Act is known as the "aggregate system" and is applied to single family residences and accessory structures (such as garages) in the Limited Residential District. Under this standard the lot on which a residence is proposed must have at least 100 feet of frontage on the river, and the combined river frontage and setback of any building must be no less than 500 feet. In addition, the buildings cannot be in the 100-year floodplain. The diagram below illustrates the aggregate system.



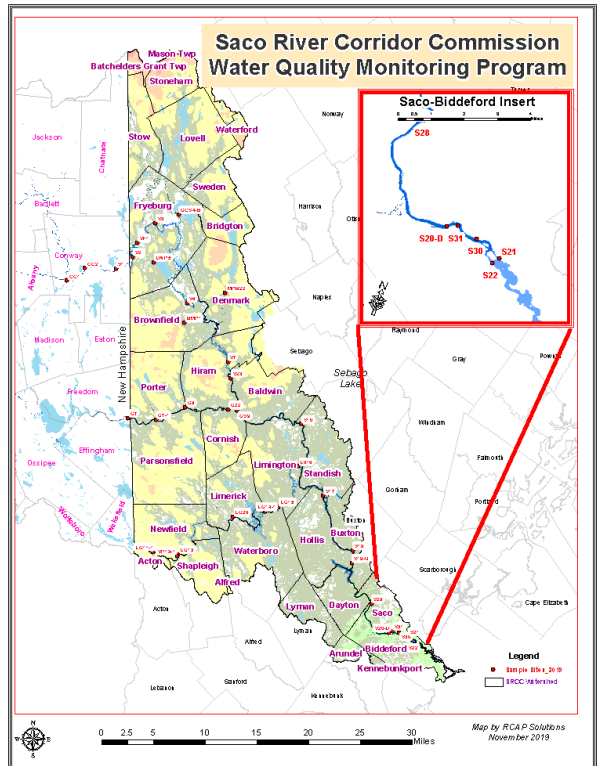
Lot A meets the "aggregate" (400 feet of frontage + 100 feet setback = 500 feet), the minimum 100-foot setback requirement from the water and 30-foot setback requirement from roads. Lot B meets the "aggregate" (260' + 240' = 500'), Lot C exceeds the "aggregate" (520' + 100' = 620'), Lot D meets the "aggregate" (230' + 270' = 500'), and Lot E exceeds the "aggregate" (250 + 270' = 520').

The system also applies to lots such as Lot F, on the opposite side of an existing road. In this instance, one measures frontage along the road plus the setback from the river. Lot F exceeds the "aggregate" (440' + 100' = 540') and meets all setback requirements.

In each instance, the buildings are not in the 100-year floodplain, and the setback is measured from the closest point of the river, regardless of property boundaries.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING (WQM) PROGRAM

The Saco River Basin covers approximately 1,700 square miles: 863 (552,000 acres) in Eastern New Hampshire and 837 (536,000 acres) in southern Maine. In 2001, the Commission initiated a volunteer water quality monitoring program, conducting biweekly monitoring and thousands of individual tests to maintain minimum State water quality classification standards and ensure the viability of our drinking water supplies.



The priorities of the SRCC's Water Quality Monitoring Program are:

- To ensure quality drinking water.
- To ensure the rivers water quality through the collection of data, land use planning, and the study of the impacts of development.
- To ensure towns have the information necessary to make informed decisions concerning land use within the corridor.
- To ensure the viability of recreational and economic resources within the corridor.

Become a Volunteer!



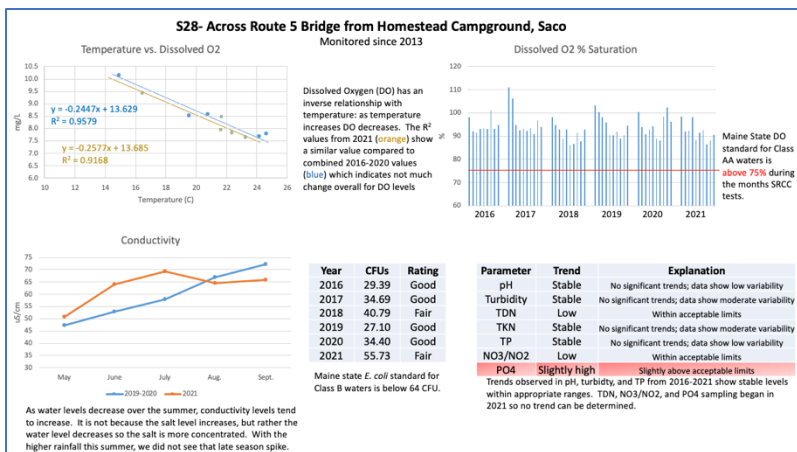
The Commission's water quality program stretches into New Hampshire in cooperation with the Green Mountain Conservation Group (GMCG). Together, the programs encompass two watershed, two states, and 26 towns, making the Regional Interstate Volunteers for the



Ecosystems and Rivers of the Saco "RIVERS."

The SRCC has collected over 21 consecutive years of water quality data and well understands the corridor's strengths, problems, and trends.

WATER QUALITY TREND ANALYSIS REPORTS



The SRCC analyzes collected data for trends and potential trouble areas and provides annual reports on water quality for every sample site.

In recent years, the SRCC's water quality monitoring program identified sites where certain parameters are approaching the lower limits set for Class A waters, indicating diminishing water quality at these sites. These reports provide critical information that give towns the power to make informed decisions regarding land use. [Click here to visit the SRCC website for annual water quality reports for all sample sites.](#)



Sample Site 28 - Saco, Maine



SRCC WQM Volunteer

LONG-TERM WATER QUALITY TRENDS

In 2021, the SRCC and FB Environmental Associates completed a Mann-Kendall trend analysis of water quality in the Saco River Basin at over 52 sample sites, analyzing over 20 years of data collected by volunteers and staff. The report includes an overall analysis of significant

trends (improving or declining) in water quality throughout southern Maine. This report has allowed the SRCC to adjust nutrient sampling based on identified trouble areas

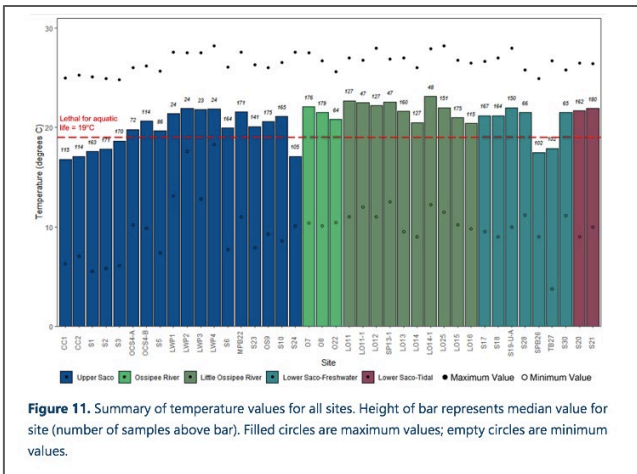
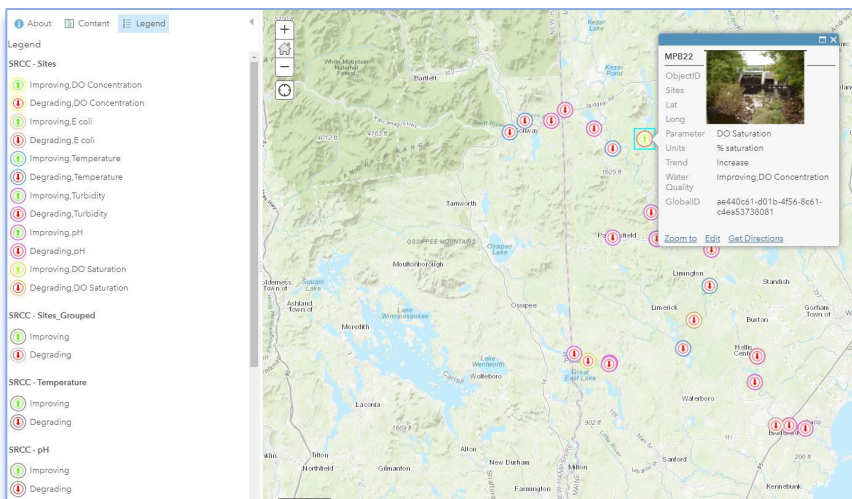


Figure 11. Summary of temperature values for all sites. Height of bar represents median value for site (number of samples above bar). Filled circles are maximum values; empty circles are minimum values.

for more specific and individualized monitoring at each sample site.

*Figure 11 identifies 6 sites with significant increasing trends (degrading water quality) in temperature. Visit the **SRCC website** for the 20-year water quality analysis report and significant identified trends in water quality in the Corridor.*



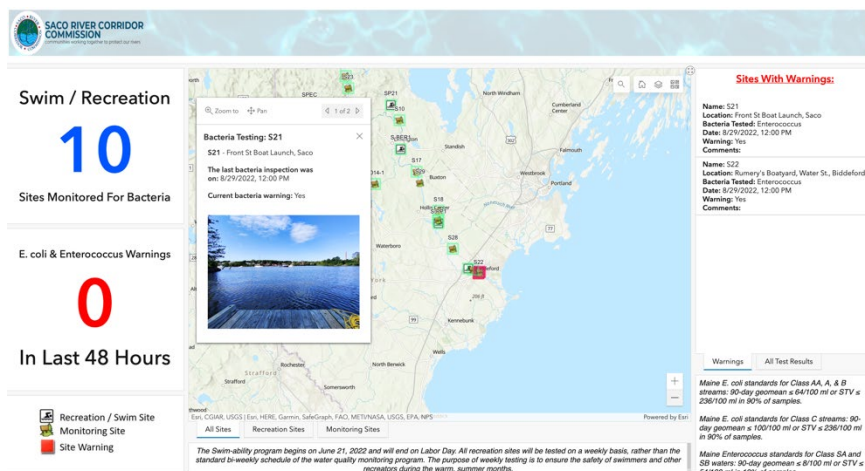
Water Quality Monitoring “Swim-ability” Program

To monitor the rising bacteria levels across the Corridor more closely, the SRCC applied for and received a grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund (MOHF) to purchase advanced *E. coli* and Enterococcus testing equipment from IDEXX to implement “in-house” bacterial analysis on a broader scale. The WQM program now includes bacteria monitoring at over 31 sites of its total 43 sites.



The SRCC notifies towns in the program of the bacteria levels on a weekly basis and when levels exceed acceptable state limits, towns can post advisory warnings or close the affected swimming area. The SRCC thereafter collects daily samples to reevaluate swimming conditions. In 2022, the SRCC developed a swimming dashboard for the website that displays weekly bacteria levels at these sites with advisory warnings.

NEW WATER QUALITY MONITORING BACERTIA DASHBOARD



A new digital dashboard allows immediate access to the public through personal interaction with the data and production of real-time water quality analysis at each sample site.

WATER QUALITY BACTERIA ANALYSIS

We can sample your pond, lake, stream, or other waterfront property for *E. coli* or *Enterococci* bacteria at a fraction of the cost required by local analysis labs.

The SRCC is now offering this new

service as an extension of our seasonal Water Quality Monitoring

Program. Using state of the art equipment from Maine's IDEXX

Corporation, we are able to offer both *E. coli* and *Enterococci*

analysis at an affordable price. The seasonal program runs from May

to September and, individuals, businesses, or other organizations can

request sampling for a single event *or* multiple events throughout the

season. Our prices include the cost of supplies, shipping, and labor

hours. ***Find more about this service and the costs on the flyer on our website.***





ENVIRONMENTAL DNA ANALYSIS

The SRCC was awarded a second grant by the MOHF to better identify the source of *E. coli* contamination. We can use eDNA from an environment that shows high levels of *E. coli* to get a better idea if that *E. coli* came from a human. We can look for specific

human derived DNA sequences, such as other gut bacteria or human viruses that have spent millions of years co-evolving in humans. We can also use the *E. coli*'s own DNA to determine if it came from a human. We do this by looking at the *E. coli*'s phylogenetic subgroup – a genetic tree that is the result of millions of years of co-evolution – and determine its likelihood that it came from humans.

Using both the eDNA and the bacteria's DNA gives us multiple data points we can use to determine with higher probability whether the *E. coli* either came from humans or not. We all want clean water to recreate in, especially at our favorite swim spots.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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