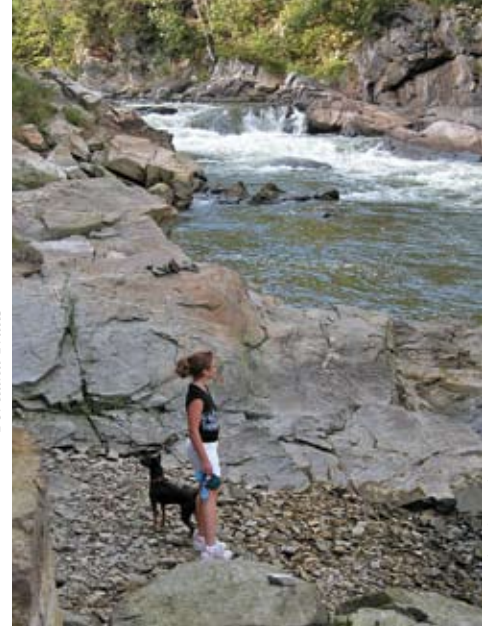




Portland Trails

By preserving small “pocket” parks and creating effective trail linkages, Portland Trails (a 16-year-old land conservation and trails group) has established a network of inviting green spaces accessible to more than 250,000 people in the Portland metro area.



Portland Trails

Conserving Land in the Heart of Your Community

“Portland Trail’s extensive network of biking and walking trails is a cornerstone of our quality of life and is a key selling point for residents, businesses, and tourists alike. Without doubt, Portland’s investment in trails and open space will pay off for generations to come.”

— James Cohen,
Portland City Councilor

While it’s often large conservation successes in settings like Maine’s north woods that garner news

headlines, the projects that provide the most tangible benefits for Maine residents often lie close to home – in some of Maine’s most densely populated coastal towns and cities. Many communities are enriching the lives of residents and stimulating economic growth by conserving accessible, in-town parks and pathways.

Portland has discovered the far-ranging rewards of having a network of accessible natural spaces and pedestrian paths. Residents routinely use the trails for walking and biking, improving their health and well being. Students use the trails to reach their schools and many have participated in service-learning projects and trail building. Local and regional businesses such as L.L. Bean and Wright Express have joined Portland Trails’ Adopt-a-Trail Program and support stewardship activities.



This “green necklace”, with more than 27 miles of recreational paths, has helped Portland win national accolades. Outside Magazine, citing the trails, called it “Hip, Smart and Packed with Adventure”, and National Geographic cited it as one of the country’s “10 Great Adventure Towns.”

“We believe that our contributions to Portland Trails represent an excellent investment in the quality of life in our community because Portland Trails is providing safe and convenient places for people to enjoy some outdoor exercise—so valuable in maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle.”

— Janice Hutchings,
Anthem Blue Cross
and Blue Shield



Portland Trails

“Portland Trails was fortunate to have some great partners on this project—including the City of Portland, the Land for Maine’s Future Program, federal agencies, foundations, and private individuals. We discovered the single most effective strategy in pushing the Presumpscot River Preserve project past political roadblocks was taking stakeholders for walks on the land, through the woods and along the River.”

— Roger Berle, Board President,
Portland Trails

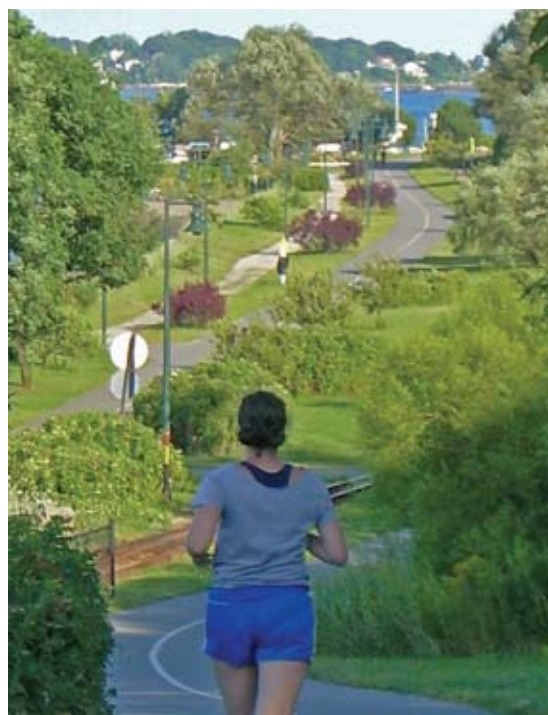
HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

- ✓ **Communicate the benefits of in-town land conservation.** Portland Trails used a “vision map” depicting its goals to help mobilize community support for its efforts.
- ✓ **Get town leaders out on the land.** There’s no better way to explain the benefits of open space than having someone experience the outdoors!
- ✓ **Forge partnerships with businesses and municipal officials.** Portland Trails works with the City of Portland and numerous area businesses, for example, on a worksite promotion effort that encourages employees to exercise on its trail network.
- ✓ **Be proactive.** Help your community complete or update its comprehensive plan to incorporate outdoor recreational resources, and make sure that local ordinances are consistent with that plan.
- ✓ **Learn from the experts.** Contact Portland Trails (www.trails.org) the Town of Brunswick (www.brunswickme.org), or other municipal officials that have launched successful initiatives to create greenways and enhance the appeal of in-town living.
- ✓ **Team up with your local land trust** (see www.mltn.org for a list of trusts) to identify trail opportunities and potential sites that merit protection.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- *Parks and Open Space: Making In-Town Living Attractive*, an educational brief by GrowSmart Maine (online at <http://www.growsmartmaine.org/docs/Parks-and-Open-Space.pdf>)
- *Charting Maine’s Future: An Action Plan for Promoting Sustainable Prosperity and Quality Places* (<http://www.brookings.edu/metro/maine>)
- Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance, National Park Service, 14 Maine Street, Suite 302, Brunswick, ME 04011, <http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/>
- Project for Public Spaces (www.pps.org)
- Healthy Maine Walks (www.healthymainewalks.com)
- *The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space – How Land Conservation Helps Communities Grow Smart and Protect the Bottom Line* (www.tpl.org)
- *Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space – Parks for People* (www.tpl.org)

More information about this project and the Maine Coast Protection Initiative can be found at www.protectcoastmaine.org.



Portland Trails

“As the search for quality places grows in importance, Maine possesses a globally known “brand” built on images of livable communities, stunning scenery, and great recreational opportunities.”

— *Charting Maine’s Future: An Action Plan for Promoting Sustainable Prosperity and Quality Places*,
October 2006, page 6