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Source: [Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association](#)

Advocacy article for Sheepscot Log Newsletter Summer 2006

SVCA Advocates Advocacy

Board reconfirms SVCA's long-time commitment to advocating for the Sheepscot River.

By Mike Herz and Honor Fox Sage (past and present SVCA president)

For more than 36 years, the SVCA has been an advocate for the protection of the Sheepscot watershed. Like most land trusts, the bulk of this work is done by cooperating with willing land owners to place conservation easements on their properties or, if necessary, by purchasing particularly important shoreline properties that contain critical habitat for Atlantic salmon and endangered plants or require other protection. However, the SVCA also believes that there are times when it is necessary to speak out when issues such as subdivisions, highway plans, pipeline crossings or sludge spreading could adversely affect the Sheepscot River.

While to some, Advocacy can mean marchers with picket signs, we feel it also means being the voice at public hearings that asks the questions that may be overlooked or even brushed aside. The SVCA believes that one of the most effective advocacy tools is having a seat at the table with the other stakeholders. For example, SVCA staff and board members advocate for the river as members of the Wiscasset By-pass Task Force and Gateway One Committees as well as numerous town planning boards. In addition, together with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, we are monitoring the progress of the clean-up of Mason Station and have recently called for a public hearing on the proposed Point East marina development, not because we oppose it, but because it is one of the largest projects ever proposed for the river and as such we believe deserves broad public discussion.

The SVCA was formed to protect the Sheepscot watershed. Over the years, we have advocated for minimizing impacts of major development proposals such as the Maine Yankee nuclear power plant and siting of the Davey bridge to reduce impacts to river resources; an improved protection policy for safe operation of asphalt plants in gravel pits that have the potential to pollute groundwater aquifers; and for relocating an oil storage and transfer facility to a safer location.

SVCA Board members recently performed an in-depth review of our advocacy efforts – historic and current– to determine their effectiveness and to consider future priorities. As a follow-up to that discussion, you will soon receive a survey that specifically asks for members' opinions about advocacy issues. Your input will help us set priorities, so please be sure to complete and return the survey at your earliest convenience. And, always, thanks so much for your membership support.