

**A
STRATEGIC
CONSERVATION
FRAMEWORK**

for the

Maine Coast Protection Initiative

Working to increase the pace and quality of coastal land conservation

The Strategic Conservation Framework was finalized on:

April 1, 2005

Project Sponsors:



Over 70 organizations and partners participated in the development of the Strategic Conservation Framework.

www.protectcoastalmaine.org

For more information about the Maine Coast Protection Initiative, contact:
Amy Owsley, Maine Field Representative
Land Trust Alliance
aowsley@lta.org
207-729-7366

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
Mission	4
The Project.....	4
Implementation	4
Project Partners	4
OVERVIEW.....	5
Background.....	5
Mission	5
Vision.....	5
Project Purpose	6
Project Goals	7
Guiding Principles	7
Project Structure	8
MCPI and CELCP.....	9
CONSERVATION PRIORITIES	10
Assessment of Conservation Needs	10
Priority Coastal Resources.....	10
Approach to Further Work	11
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.....	12
Introduction.....	12
Goal 1: Conserved Lands	13
Goal 2: Land Trusts.....	15
Goal 3: Funding and Public Support.....	18
Implementation Schedule.....	20
Implementation Budget	21
Grant Programs.....	22
HOW TO SUPPORT MCPI	23
SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS	24
APPENDICES	25
A: State of Maine’s CELCP Plan.....	25
B: Planning Process - Steering Committee Decision-Making	25
C: Planning Process - Meetings	25
D: Planning Process - Participants.....	25
E: Assessment of Conservation Needs	25
F: List of Available Datasets and Maps.....	25
G: Sample Workplan	25
H: Capacity-Building Grant Guidelines	25
I: Implementation Grant Guidelines	25
J: Results of Priority-Setting - January 2005	25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission

The Maine Coast Protection Initiative (MCPI) increases the pace and quality of land protection by enhancing the capacity of Maine's conservation community to preserve the unique character of the Maine coast for the benefit of the people of Maine and beyond.

The Project

Over 70 organizations make up the MCPI coalition. The long term goals of MCPI are to create the following:

1. A viable network of conserved land that protects priority coastal and estuarine habitat, adequate coastal access to support commercial fisheries and recreational pursuits, and sufficient scenic viewsheds to preserve the unique character of the Maine coast.
2. Land trusts with sustainable, professional, and technical capacity engaged in proactive strategic land conservation and long-term stewardship.
3. Strong support and increased funding for coastal land conservation efforts.

Implementation

To meet these goals, coalition members are working together to devise specific tasks, determine the best strategies and partnerships, and create a time frame for implementing these strategies. Organizations interested in supporting the goals of MCPI are welcome to get involved in coalition and workgroup activities.

The current budget for the four year project (2004-2007) is \$1.49 million, of which \$647,000 has been raised. Fundraising will continue during 2005. This funding includes two grant opportunities: implementation grants and capacity-building grants. MCPI will not provide support for specific fee or easement acquisition projects. Implementation grants are available to any nonprofit organization or government entity with operations in Maine which is also a Supporting Organization of MCPI or is partnering with a Supporting Organization seeking to support strategies that further MCPI Goal 1 and/or Goal 3. For example, an implementation grant project may fill an identified data gap. At least \$100,000, and up to \$220,000, will be available for these implementation grants.

Capacity-building grants support MCPI goal two and are available to coastal land trusts seeking to move to a higher level of organizational or programmatic capacity. Three to five land trusts will receive grant funding and Land Trust Alliance staff support for an organizational assessment and the development of a tangible plan to increase conservation capacity. MCPI anticipates that \$350,000 will be available for these grants.

An MCPI website highlighting the MCPI Strategic Conservation Framework has been developed and can be found at www.protectcoastmaine.org.

Project Partners

Land Trust Alliance
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Maine State Planning Office
NOAA Coastal Services Center

OVERVIEW

Background

The land protected from development in the next 20 years will largely determine the character of the Maine coast forever.

The real and growing threat to the Maine coast has been clearly documented. The Maine State Coastal Plan reports that, although Maine's coastal zone comprises only 15% of the land area of Maine, 44% of Maine residents live in this limited area, and coastal communities have an average density five times greater than the rest of the state. Twenty-two plant species listed or proposed by the Maine Natural Areas program as endangered or threatened are strictly coastal plants, while more than 1900 known occurrences of endangered, threatened or special concern native species are located on or near the coast. Consumer demand for coastal and inland shoreline is at historic highs, resulting in increased development, rapidly rising shoreline property values, and reduced access to the coast. At the same time, there is an increased need for coastal access for recreational purposes and in Maine's working waterfront communities, where access to marine resources has been severely limited in recent years.

Several public and private organizations have recognized these critical needs and have established programs at the federal, state, and local levels that focus on coastal land conservation in Maine. These organizations have cooperated, collaborated, and coordinated on a wide variety of projects to achieve specific conservation goals, and have accomplished outstanding work in protecting Maine's coastal resources.

However, because development pressures continue to intensify, current efforts must be expanded. Many opportunities exist to create additional synergies and efficiencies among these efforts while also developing a more unified and influential voice on the need for more strategic coastal land protection over the next 20 years. The pace of land protection must be dramatically accelerated or many significant coastal resources and features important to the people of Maine will be lost in the patchwork of increased development and sprawl.

Mission

The Maine Coast Protection Initiative increases the pace and quality of land protection by enhancing the capacity of Maine's conservation community to preserve the unique character of the Maine coast for the benefit of the people of Maine and beyond.

Vision

It is 2025. The Maine coast thrives as a vibrant natural, recreational, and commercial resource because Maine's conservation community has worked together over the past 20 years to increase the pace and quality of coastal land conservation.

Despite development pressures, the Maine coast continues to be a landscape characterized by wild rocky shoreline and coastal islands, tidal rivers and estuaries, historic fishing access, working farms and forests, recreational opportunities, and scenic viewsheds. Treasured by the people of Maine and people from across the nation and world, this landscape hosts a diversity of fish, wildlife, and plant communities. As well, working landscapes along the coast contribute greatly to the economic vitality of the state.

A network of large and small places, conserved for all time, benefits Maine citizens and visitors through increased access to the ocean, safeguarded coastal scenic and cultural features, and protected habitat for native plants and animals.

Through the Maine Coast Protection Initiative (MCPI), coastal land conservation organizations have invested greater resources in building capacity for strategic conservation and land and easement stewardship. As a result, these groups have become strong and sustainable and more frequently collaborate with diverse public and private partners to leverage resources. They continue to add important lands to the network of protected coastal resources and to carefully attend to stewardship needs.

Decisions of these many organizations represent the diverse values and priorities of different coastal communities, while recognizing the strategic importance of protecting coastal resources with coastwide and national significance. By incorporating local priorities into a coastwide land conservation initiative, this collaborative effort has developed strong public support and significantly increased financial investment for coastal land conservation in Maine.

Project Purpose

In recognition of the critical need and many opportunities to increase the pace and effectiveness of coastal land conservation in Maine, the Maine Coast Protection Initiative was formed. Led by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), Maine State Planning Office (SPO), Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), and the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Coastal Services Center (CSC), a coalition of over 70 coastal organizations is working in collaboration to create and implement this Strategic Conservation Framework to protect Maine's priority coastal and estuarine habitats, recreational and working access to coastal and marine resources, and significant scenic and cultural features along the coast.

The Coalition has defined the scope of the "coast" to include areas within the state's Coastal Zone, which includes all towns that border tidal water, to the head of tide, and areas above head of tide that are important to diadromous fish¹. The Coalition is open to all organizations whose service area intersects with this geographic area or that share an interest in the high-priority coastal resources identified by the Coalition.

During implementation of the Framework, select land conservation organizations along the Maine coast will receive financial resources, technical assistance, training, technology, and group facilitation to translate the goals of the Framework into locally-driven, collaborative land protection plans and efforts. Organizations may be eligible to receive grants for implementation projects or capacity-building from the Land Trust Alliance. However, MPCPI will not provide support for specific fee or easement acquisition projects.

Current leadership and partial funding for MCPI is provided through 2007. During that time, the Coalition will work together to define statewide and regional conservation priorities, support a wide variety of coastal conservation efforts, enhance the capacity of coastal land trusts to be more proactive and strategic, and build stronger public support for and investment in coastal conservation work. It is expected that by mid-2007, the Coalition will conduct an assessment of the status of MCPI and decide if and how to move forward, including changes in scope, character, funding, and leadership.

By working through the Maine Coast Protection Initiative, Supporting Organizations can maximize their individual organizational strengths, leverage the collective strength of the many private and public entities in the Coalition, and address regional land protection needs in a coordinated manner.

¹ Diadromous fish migrate between freshwater and saltwater and include both anadromous and catadromous fish. Anadromous fish, such as alewife and Atlantic salmon, spend most of their adult lives in saltwater, and migrate to freshwater rivers and lakes to reproduce. The only catadromous species in the US is the American eel which spend most of their adult lives in freshwater rivers and migrate thousands of miles to spawn in the Sargasso Sea.

Project Goals

The Coalition has established three long-term Goals for the next 20 years that describe the results of the Coalition's efforts and are essential for achieving the Coalition's Vision for the Maine coast.

MCPI seeks to create:

1. A viable network of conserved land that protects priority coastal and estuarine habitat, adequate coastal access to support commercial fisheries and recreational pursuits, and sufficient scenic viewsheds to preserve the unique character of the Maine coast.
2. Land trusts with sustainable, professional and technical capacity engaged in proactive strategic land conservation and long-term stewardship.
3. Strong support and increased funding for coastal land conservation efforts.

Multiple Implementation Strategies support each Goal and are designed to move the Coalition towards the achievement of the Vision. Measurable Accomplishments identified for 2007 will allow the Coalition to assess progress towards each long-term goal.

Guiding Principles

To guide and inform the **process** of the Initiative, the Coalition agrees to:

- o Strive to think broadly and creatively about conservation needs along the entire Maine coast and about the identification and protection of coastal resources important to the people of Maine.
- o Seek to build a broad coalition of organizations and agencies with diverse interests in the Maine coast. Coalition-building will reflect a grassroots, bottom-up approach to coastal resource protection.
- o Be directed by a Steering Committee that represents the diverse interests of the Coalition. Goals and Implementation Strategies will reflect the assessment of coastal land conservation needs. The committee will strive for a consensual decision-making process (*See Appendix B*) and communications will be transparent.
- o Recognize that the many partners in this effort have locally-relevant priorities and values independent of those described in this Strategic Conservation Framework. The Framework will advance work of collective importance to this large coalition. An organization does not have to agree with every part of the Framework to participate in the Coalition.
- o Add value to existing conservation efforts, avoid duplication of effort, make use of current programs and plans, and support partner organizations through efforts that advance the goals of the Framework.

To guide and inform the **work** of the Initiative, the Coalition agrees that the Initiative should:

- o Promote strategic land conservation along the entire Maine coast by articulating and advancing a vision that helps to protect priority coastal resources, including habitat for coastal and estuarine species, important recreational and working access to the coast, and important scenic and cultural features.
- o Garner broad public support through significant education and outreach efforts that communicate the project goals to many decision makers along the coast.
- o Be sustained beyond the initial implementation period by creating new financial and technical resources for coastal conservation, significantly enhancing the capacity of the project partners, supporting and enhancing existing efforts and programs, and raising public support for long-term coastal land conservation efforts in Maine.

Project Structure

The Initiative is composed of three committees, including the Coalition, the Steering Committee, and the Executive Committee, as well as several workgroups that focus on specific topics. These committees are coordinated and supported by staff resources from the Land Trust Alliance. The responsibilities of each committee are described below.

COALITION COMMITTEE: The Coalition brings together people and organizations interested in the resources of the Maine Coast. These stakeholders have varied backgrounds, information, skill-sets and resources and wish to create, implement and sustain what will be a collaborative conservation effort that helps all partners achieve their conservation objectives over the long-term. Through the Coalition, the partners leverage each other's strengths and achieve landscape-scale conservation goals. Coalition meetings are working sessions in which participants create and implement the Strategic Conservation Framework, learn about and discuss relevant issues, share viewpoints, and build local connections with other partners of the Coalition. All interested organizations are welcome to join the Coalition by becoming Supporting Organizations. Participants in the Coalition are also welcome to join workgroups for areas of special interest. During the planning process, the Coalition met four times to brainstorm appropriate strategies, provide input and review progress. The Coalition is consultative to the Steering Committee. *(See Appendix C for a list of schedule of meetings and Appendix D for list of participants in the planning process).*

STEERING COMMITTEE: The Steering Committee is a subset of the Coalition and represents the diverse interests of the Coalition. The Steering Committee directs the project, is empowered with decision-making authority and is responsible for seeking the advice and counsel of the Coalition in order to effectively guide the project over time. The expertise of this committee will be augmented by outside experts and workgroups. The Steering Committee also reviews and comments on requests for funding. During the planning process, the Steering Committee met on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to make decisions about project priorities and review the details of the Strategic Conservation Framework. *(See Appendix C for a list of schedule of meetings and Appendix D for list of participants in the planning process).*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Executive Committee is an administrative entity responsible for advancing the project between Steering Committee and Coalition meetings. This group crafts agendas, monitors budgets, helps supervise staff and contractors, and makes recommendations to the Steering Committee. The Executive Committee has intensive involvement in the project through meetings, phone calls, and emails. The Executive Committee is composed of the principal project sponsors: Maine State Planning Office, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Coastal Services Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Land Trust Alliance.

WORKGROUPS: Workgroups are responsible for implementing many of the strategies identified in the Strategic Conservation Framework. Each workgroup has a specific focus and includes Steering Committee members as well as participants from the Coalition. Membership in workgroups is open to any interested participant. In some cases, workgroups are formed around the membership of committees or groups which already exist in other organizations. Workgroups make recommendations to the Steering Committee.

During 2004, these committees worked together to develop the Strategic Conservation Framework. These committees will continue to work together during the 2005-2007 implementation phase of the Initiative to complete the strategies described in this Framework and move toward attainment of the long-term goals of the Initiative.

MCPI and CELCP

A critical funding source for specific coastal land protection projects that incorporate high-priority coastal resources is the federal Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). This program, established in 2002 by the Department of Commerce, provides funds to protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses, giving priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected, and that have significant ecological value.

To date, CELCP funding has been distributed through congressional earmarks, and targeted to specific coastal conservation projects. Two Maine projects have received \$2.8 million for acquisitions in 2004 and 2005. It is MCPI's hope that CELCP will become a permanent program with regular funding available on a competitive basis. Although MCPI does not directly fund land or conservation easement acquisition, the Initiative envisions relying on CELCP to help fund conservation priorities identified by MCPI. The Initiative anticipates building a strong funding relationship between the two programs that will be leveraged through funds secured from other public and private entities. The State of Maine developed a CELCP plan because of the significant overlap in the purposes of each effort. Maine's CELCP plan describes high-priority coastal and estuarine resources that should be protected, and creates the process and guidelines for coastal Maine land protection projects to qualify and successfully compete for federal CELCP land acquisition funding (*see Appendix A for this plan*).

CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

Assessment of Conservation Needs

Along the coast of Maine, a wide variety of organizations with a diverse range of goals and priorities are currently working to protect important coastal resources. One of the guiding principles of the Initiative is to build on, rather than duplicate, the work of these existing conservation efforts. As such, in Spring 2004 the Initiative analyzed coastal land conservation needs and priorities based on the conservation plans and projects of relevant federal, state, and coast-wide land conservation entities. This analysis identified priority resources and areas along the coast, and highlighted the need for further inventory, evaluation and prioritization of these resources and areas. (*See Appendix E for a summary of the organizations and the reports reviewed*).

This analysis of existing conservation efforts identified three common needs for any future strategic land conservation effort along the Maine coast:

- Protect the ecological integrity of watersheds surrounding coastal wetlands, particularly the natural communities supported within these watersheds;
- Increase the number of sites available for public access to coastal waters for recreational and commercial purposes; and
- Protect the scenic and cultural features that help to characterize the Maine coast and its communities.

Priority Coastal Resources

Based on this assessment of conservation needs, the Initiative identified the following resources as priorities for land conservation efforts along Maine's coast.

Habitat

For habitat, important conservation lands maintain healthy plant and animal populations in protected wetlands and riparian areas, important habitat for rare and endangered species, and large undeveloped blocks of land.

- Coalition participants from Beginning with Habitat developed this definition, which was reviewed and accepted by the Coalition and Steering Committee.
- The coastal focus areas of statewide significance identified by Beginning with Habitat will be adopted by the Maine Coast Protection Initiative.
- Additional work is necessary to identify, inventory, evaluate and prioritize conservation needs for coastal habitats where existing information is lacking (*see Implementation Strategy 1.1*).

Coastal Access

For working access to coastal and marine resources, important conservation lands protect access to tidal waters for people who make their living from traditional water-dependent uses, as defined in

Maine's shoreland zoning regulations, and/or who depend on this access to and from marine resources to earn a living.

- Coalition participants from the Working Waterfront Coalition, State Planning Office and Department of Marine Resources developed this definition, which was reviewed and accepted by the Coalition and Steering Committee.
- Additional work is necessary to inventory, evaluate and prioritize conservation needs for coastal working access (*see Implementation Strategy 1.2*).

For recreational access to coastal and marine resources, important conservation lands protect access to and along tidal waters for people who participate in recreational activities.

- Coalition participants from the Department of Conservation and State Planning Office developed this definition, which was reviewed and accepted by the Coalition and Steering Committee.
- While some initial work has been done to inventory and evaluate conservation needs for coastal recreational access, additional work is necessary to finalize this inventory and to evaluate and to prioritize those needs (*see Implementation Strategy 1.2*).

Scenic and Cultural Features

For scenic and cultural features, important conservation lands protect the inherent beauty of natural resources, safeguard scenic viewsheds, represent the unique history and characteristics of coastal communities, and evoke community emotion and commitment.

- This definition was developed with Coalition input but must be reviewed and may be revised by a workgroup during implementation.
- Additional work is necessary to develop a methodology for identification, inventory, and evaluation of scenic and cultural features, and to prioritize the conservation needs for scenic and cultural features (*see Implementation Strategy 1.3*).

Approach to Further Work

The Initiative recognizes that each land conservation organization sets its own conservation objectives, as defined by organizational mission and community needs. Therefore, not all of these resources will have the same priority to every land conservation organization or local community. By working together and thinking strategically about how to protect important coastal resources, Supporting Organizations can achieve a diverse landscape of conserved lands that includes all these priority resources.

Organizations in Maine currently lack the data necessary to fully map their coastal resources. To do this, locally-driven data collection, prioritization processes, and projects will need to be supported as described in the Implementation Strategies. The expectation is that local planning efforts will incorporate knowledge available about priority coastal resources with community knowledge about local and/or regional conservation needs. Resulting maps will define focus areas based on broader conservation needs, rather than parcel-specific opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Introduction

The work of the Initiative between 2005 and 2007 will be guided by this Implementation Plan. In early 2005, the Coalition will begin to implement the strategies described in this section of the Framework. The current total budget for the four years of project funding is \$1,492,000, which includes staff resources and grant funds dedicated to the implementation of these strategies.

Each year, the Steering Committee should review the Framework and review the implementation strategies, schedule, and budget to adjust as needed, particularly if the Coalition identifies important additional and/or different directions or activities on which MCPI should focus.

The Goals, Measurable Accomplishments, and Implementation Strategies of the Implementation Plan were developed during working sessions of the Coalition and were reviewed and refined by the Steering Committee through several iterations.

Goals describe the long-term results of the Coalition's efforts along the Maine coast. Each of the three Goals are stated within the context of the Vision for 2025.

Measurable Accomplishments define what the Initiative will achieve by December 2007 and will allow the Coalition to assess progress towards each long-term goal. These indicators are quantifiable and are limited to results over which the Initiative has direct control.

Implementation Strategies describe how each Goal will be addressed and are designed to move the Coalition towards achievement of the Vision. It is expected that work on all strategies will occur by December 2007. The following details are defined for each strategy:

- **Contributing Entities** will be involved in the tasks related to each strategy. These could be one or more of the following: Workgroup, Coalition Volunteer, Grant Recipient, or MCPI Staff. For each strategy, a specific organization will be named as the convening or lead organization. This organization will be responsible for coordination and completion of the workplan, including confirmation of target timeframes and identification of contingencies.
- **Target Timeframe** is the estimated number of months necessary to complete this strategy, from beginning the workplan to completing all activities. This is an initial estimate and will need to be reviewed and revised when workplan is completed.

The development of a detailed workplan will be the first task in the implementation of each strategy. (see *Appendix G for a workplan template*). The convening organization is responsible for developing a workplan. The completion of workplans will occur in stages, as described in the following table:

<i>Stage 1</i>	<i>Stage 2</i>	<i>Stage 3</i>	<i>Stage 4</i>
General responsibilities and target timeframes identified	Specific lead organizations identified	Workplan developed with timeframes and contingencies confirmed for near-term Strategies.	Executive Committee and MCPI Staff review workplans to identify conflicts or synergies
Identified in Framework	Completed during Implementation		

Goal 1: Conserved Lands

Goal

A viable network of conserved land that protects priority coastal and estuarine habitat, adequate coastal access to support commercial fisheries and recreational pursuits, and sufficient scenic viewsheds to preserve the unique character of the Maine coast.

Reasoning

Because both land protection funding and land trust capacity to acquire and steward conservation lands are limited, it is prudent and necessary to focus financial and organizational assets on the highest priority coastal resources and lands. This focus will allow the Initiative to maximize the ability of Coalition organizations to protect these vitally important resources before they are developed.

The Initiative strongly supports and encourages additional coast-wide, regional, and local strategic conservation planning to help conservation organizations and local communities achieve their conservation objectives and to protect high-priority coastal resources.

During 2004, the Initiative reviewed coastal land conservation needs and priorities based on existing plans and reports of federal, state, and coastwide conservation entities to try to identify high-priority coastal habitat, recreational and working access to the coast, and scenic/cultural features. The review found that:

- extensive and high-quality information and analysis is already available about many habitats of statewide significance. However, the review also discovered gaps in information about coastal habitats that need to be filled.
- much less information is available about coastal access, particularly working access, and about scenic/cultural resources important to Maine's coastal communities. As a result, additional analysis is needed to identify, evaluate, and prioritize these resources so that land conservation organizations can effectively incorporate this information into their own plans.

Coastwide, regional, and local strategic conservation planning efforts should be supported by the Initiative with information, data, maps, models, expertise, technology, and grants. In addition, an advanced understanding of land protection techniques will be needed and new tools developed to successfully implement these strategic land conservation projects.

Measurable Accomplishments for 2007

1. Coastwide reference map in place outlining focus areas for conservation of high-priority habitat, coastal access, and scenic/cultural features. Non-sensitive and relevant data sets made available to all coastal stakeholders.
2. Best practices of strategic land conservation principles and practices made available to all coastal stakeholders. At least 50% of coastal land trusts have used these resources to develop (or update) and implement local and regional conservation action plans that advance coastwide conservation priorities.
3. Each land trust which receives a major capacity-building grant has a completed conservation action plan that incorporates priority focus areas and at least 75% of their active projects advance their action plan and help create the viable network.

Implementation Strategies

The following strategies describe how the Coalition will attain this goal:

#	Implementation Strategy	Contributing Entities	Target Timeframe
1.1	Adopt coastal priorities of Beginning with Habitat and support a process to supplement and refine coastal focus areas and address coastal habitat gaps.	Coalition Volunteers, Grant Recipient, Workgroup	12 months
1.2	Support a process to (a) define and map existing public and working access; (b) identify areas with a shortage of access; and (c) prioritize areas for additional access.	Grant Recipient, Workgroup	12 months
1.3	Support a process to (a) define meaning and methodology for scenic/cultural features; (b) support efforts to use this methodology in 3-5 regional areas to identify, evaluate, and prioritize at regional level, and (c) create process to review regional priorities to identify statewide coastal priorities which would then direct MCPI resources.	Workgroup, Coalition Volunteers, Grant Recipient	18 months
1.4	Develop and implement proactive local and regional conservation action plans that will work to protect high-priority coastal resources, including those identified by the Initiative.	Grant Recipient, Coalition Volunteers, MCPI staff	ongoing
1.5	Conduct Strategic Conservation Learning Circles to develop effective model processes and training materials for delivery to interested stakeholders.	MCPI staff, Coalition Volunteers	18 months
1.6	Convene coastal practitioners and scientists, and facilitate roundtables and public forums to advance understanding of the relationships between land protection measures and marine resource management in a coastal landscape.	Workgroup, Coalition Volunteers, MCPI staff	18 months

Goal 2: Land Trusts

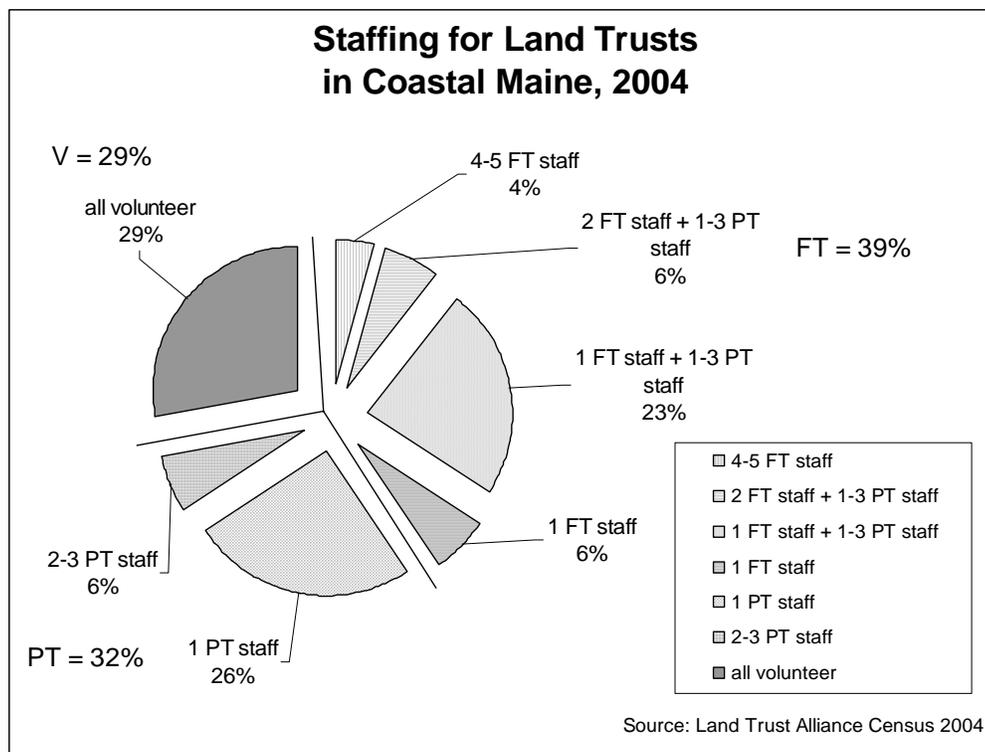
Goal

Land trusts with sustainable professional and technical capacity engaged in proactive strategic land conservation and long-term stewardship.

Reasoning

The land protected over the next 20 years will largely determine the character of the Maine coast forever. As a result, coastal land trusts need to dramatically accelerate the pace of land conservation along the coast. This can only be achieved by significantly enhancing the current capacity of coastal land trusts so that they grow into strong and durable organizations with the long-term capacity to protect and steward these lands. These land trusts recognize and respond to community needs and have strong relationships with municipalities and other groups in their service area.

Currently, nearly 50 coastal local land trusts serve a particular town or region with the support of their members as well as staff and/or volunteers. Each land trust has a unique mission and specific conservation objectives. Only 10% of coastal land trusts have more than two full-time staff, while 60% rely entirely on the dedication of volunteers or part-time staff.



Many of these organizations face significant and varied challenges to actively lead proactive and strategic land conservation efforts in their respective communities. They will need significant resources to enhance their organizational abilities so that they can continue to protect and steward the lands most important to their community needs. Land trusts can increase their capacity for strategic land conservation, in part, by striving to improve practices related to organizational development and land protection, and by learning and implementing new tools and strategies for increasing the pace of land protection.

To maximize the effectiveness of the Initiative's initial funding for capacity-building activities, the Initiative will direct most of its capacity-building funds towards 3-5 land trusts or collaborative efforts. In addition, a portion of capacity-building funds will be available as grants to other coastal land trusts to support specific capacity-building projects.

One of the important tools for strategic conservation planning is the ability to analyze, interpret, and communicate geographic information on maps. Local land trusts have a wide variety of knowledge about and experience with Geographic Information Systems [GIS] and may rely on volunteers or seek ad-hoc assistance from larger organizations. Additional and/or enhanced capacity for GIS and related technologies will give local land trusts consistent access to the type of assistance and products that are tailored to the needs of their organization.

Local land trusts can also enhance their capacity through effective collaborations with other conservation entities, municipalities, and other groups, as well as through voluntary land trust mergers and consolidations where appropriate and feasible.

Measurable Accomplishments for 2007

1. Each land trust which receives a major capacity-building grant has completed an organizational self-assessment guided by LTA and the results indicate that they have fully implemented LTA Standards and Practices.
2. Seventy-five percent of coastal land trusts have access to and can use reliable data and/or mapping services to support strategic conservation work.
3. Maine's Conservation Easement Registry includes 100% of all easements held by coastal land trusts.
4. With MCPI's support, a new land trust merger or a new land trust affiliation has occurred resulting in a long-term change to the entities' organizational structure.
5. With MCPI's support, a new collaboration among land trusts has occurred resulting in greater or enhanced professional and technical capacity for land conservation.
6. Land trusts that receive MCPI grants and/or technical assistance have at least 50% of their active land acquisition projects in the coastal zone within one of the identified focus areas.

Implementation Strategies

The following strategies describe how the Coalition will attain this goal:

#	Implementation Strategy	Contributing Entities	Target Timeframe
2.1	Focus capacity-building grants and staff resources on a limited number of recipients (3-5) while assuring broad-based geographic distribution of funds along the coast. Funding and staff resources will be directed to efforts that promote (a) greater regional focus, and/or (b) collaboration, and/or (c) sustainable capacity.	MCPI Staff, Workgroup, Grant Recipient	24 months
2.2	Allocate some portion of capacity-building funds for smaller grants to other coastal land trusts to support specific capacity-building projects.	Workgroup, MCPI Staff, Grant Recipient	12 months
2.3	Assess GIS and other mapping technology needs of local land trusts for mapping, analysis, and planning services, and create and enhance capacity to address those needs.	Workgroup, MCPI Staff, Grant Recipient	9-12 months
2.4	In areas where regional consolidation is viable, provide resources and support discussions for interested land trusts.	Workgroup, MCPI staff, Grant Recipient	12-24 months
2.5	Provide financial and other support to strengthen Maine's Conservation Easement Registry, coordinated by MCHT, to provide data required to help assure long-term responsible stewardship.	Grant Recipient, MCPI Staff	6-12 months

Goal 3: Funding and Public Support

Goal

Strong support and increased funding for coastal land conservation efforts.

Reasoning for Support

The Maine coast is a world-class resource that deserves recognition and meaningful protection. The Initiative should work to raise public awareness of the threat to the Maine coast and assist key decision makers in government, business, and other organizations to truly recognize and understand the incredible value of the priority resources in coastal Maine and the critical need to protect these resources during the next 20 years. The Initiative recognizes that not everyone agrees with this perception and it will be important to communicate the value of coastal conservation from a variety of perspectives.

Support for land conservation and the work of land trusts comes from the local level in the form of land owners who willingly work with land trusts and individuals who become land trust members, volunteers, and/or financial donors. By helping land trusts broaden and deepen their base of support, the Initiative can help ensure that conservation efforts and activities have a lasting influence on Maine's citizens and their coast.

In addition to local support, many regional, statewide, and national conservation organizations and agencies provide essential financial, technical, and informational support for Maine's local land trusts. This broad support is rooted in the commitment of voters, taxpayers, and private donors who may not have a direct connection to Maine's coastal resources but understand the importance of protecting these features. Consequently, a broad base of general public support is critical to maintain and enhance the political and financial commitment to coastal land conservation in Maine.

To protect enough land over the next 20 years to truly safeguard the priority resources that characterize Maine's coast, a dramatic increase in funding is necessary for fee and easement acquisition, monitoring, stewardship, and defense, and for land trust operations. Without such funding, it is unlikely that the Vision of a protected Maine coast can be achieved. Since the MCPI spans a large geographic region along the coast and involves many stakeholders from multiple perspectives, the Initiative should be able to develop a broad-based comprehensive fund-raising strategy that will generate significant additional funds that are not available to individual organizations.

Measurable Accomplishments for 2007

1. The MCPI Coalition includes at least 100 supporting organizations with a collective membership of at least 100,000 individuals. The primary mission of at least 25% of the supporting organizations is not the protection of land through fee and easement acquisition.
2. Decision-makers in government, business, and other organizations advance funding and policy support for coastal conservation efforts and publicly recognize MCPI as a model for cooperation and collaboration among coastal stakeholders.
3. A sustainable source of grants for capacity-building and land conservation work is established through a collaborative network of public and private funders convened by MCPI.
4. An annual increase in federal, state, and/or local funding for land conservation for which MCPI has advocated.

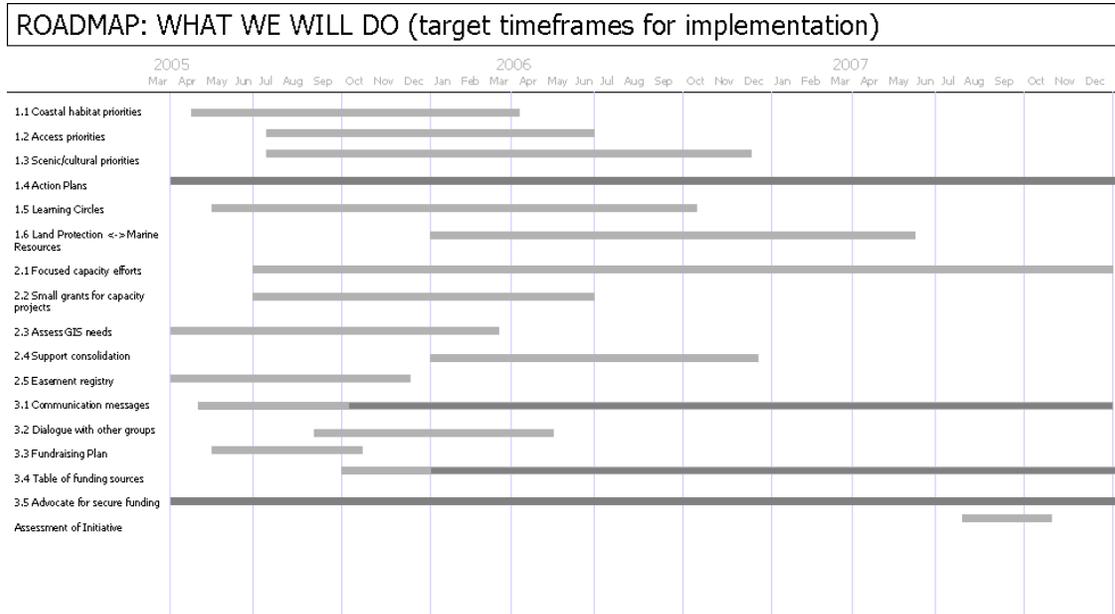
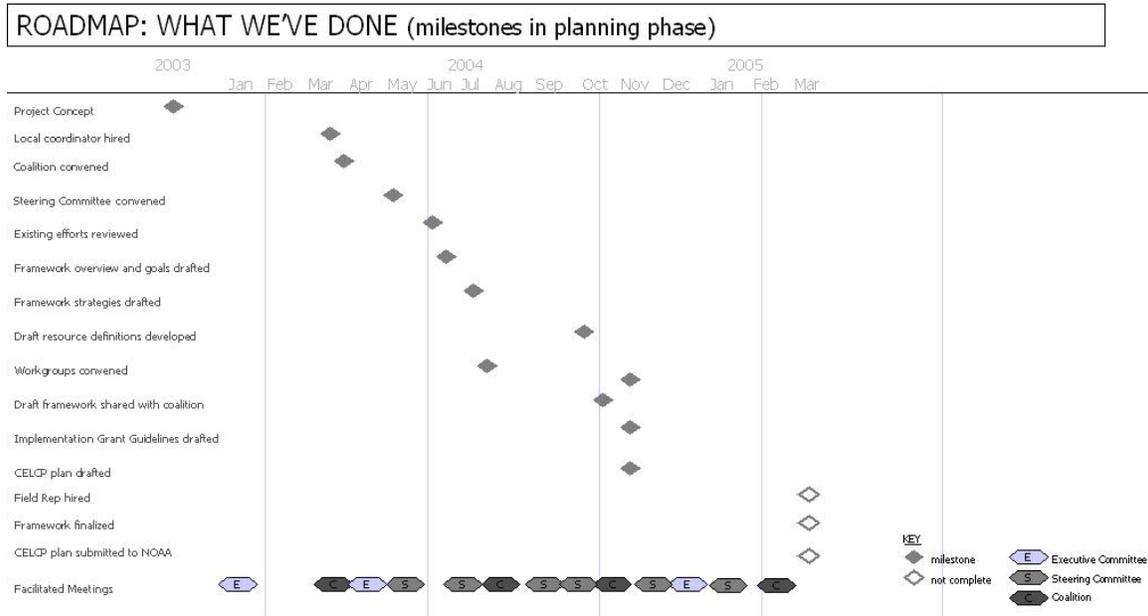
Implementation Strategies

The following strategies describe how the Coalition will attain this goal:

#	Implementation Strategy	Contributing Entities	Target Timeframe
3.1	Develop communication plan and materials for coastal decision-makers in government, business, and other organizations, that identifies important messages and describes relevant conservation tools.	Workgroup, MCPI staff, Grant Recipient	6 months and ongoing
3.2	Encourage dialogue among land conservation organizations and groups focused on other issues about the connections between coastal land conservation and the important work of other groups.	Workgroup, MCPI staff, Coalition Volunteers	9 months
3.3	Develop a comprehensive and broad-based fundraising plan to dramatically increase the financial support provided by local, regional, and national funders for protection projects, land trust operational support, stewardship endowments, and easement defense.	MCPI Staff, Workgroup	6 months and ongoing
3.4	Develop and manage a table summarizing funding sources to make available to Maine coast land trusts.	MCPI staff, Workgroup, Coalition Volunteer	3-6 months
3.5	Engage Coalition participants in advocating to secure federal, state, and local funding for coastal land conservation.	Workgroup, MCPI Staff,	ongoing

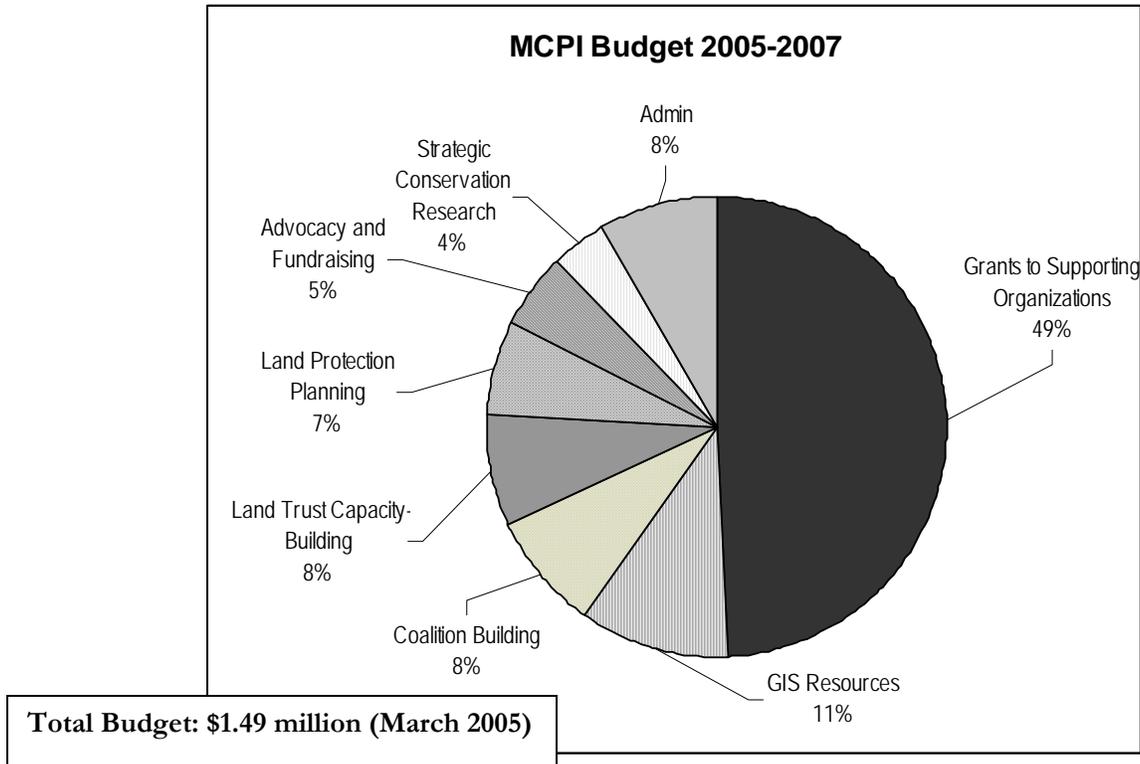
Implementation Schedule

The following chart provides an overview of the planning process during 2004 and a roadmap for the overall implementation schedule for the project during 2005-2007.



Implementation Budget

The current total budget for the four years of project funding is \$1.49 million, of which \$647,000 has been raised. As of March 2005, fundraising for an additional \$845,000 is still in progress. The budget categories within this project funding are described in the following chart:



Grants to Supporting Organizations provide support for efforts that advance the goals of the Initiative. At least \$350,000 in *Capacity-Building Grants* will strengthen the long-term ability of coastal land trusts to effectively engage in proactive conservation and stewardship activities. These grants advance goal 2. At least \$220,000 in *Implementation Project Grants* will support projects that will help implement the strategies in the Strategic Conservation Framework, particularly related to goals 1 and 3.

GIS Resources include grants of six ESRI software licenses, hardware for GIS, as well as grants for technical support of GIS services. (In addition, NOAA's Coastal Services Center plans to provide technical assistance, training, and other services to support GIS capacity-building).

Coalition Building includes fees for Coalition meetings and facilities, and Coalition communications.

Land Trust Capacity-Building provides staff and consulting time to work with local land trusts in Maine on effective implementation of strategies related to Goal 2.

Land Protection Planning provides staff and consulting time to work with Supporting Organizations on effective implementation of strategies related to Goal 1.

Advocacy and Fundraising provides staff and consulting time to work with Supporting Organizations on effective implementation of strategies related to Goal 3.

Strategic Conservation Research provides staff and consulting time to develop curriculum and materials for the Strategic Conservation Learning Circles.

Grant Programs

Capacity-Building Grants are intended to help land trusts move to a higher level of organizational or programmatic capacity so they can dramatically increase the pace of land conservation along Maine's coast, and are also intended to guide land trusts toward full implementation of Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices.

By the conclusion of 2005, the Initiative has set a goal of raising at least \$350,000 for grants to land trusts. The first \$250,000 of the funds raised will be focused on a limited number of land trusts and/or collaborative efforts of land trusts. The grant program will encourage recipients to promote a) greater regional focus, and/or (b) collaboration, and/or (c) sustainable capacity. The remaining \$100,000 will be available for smaller-scale capacity-building projects. Additional funds over and above the first \$350,000 raised will be dedicated to other capacity-building opportunities with coastal land trusts and/or other project partners. The grants are available to land trusts that are a Supporting Organization of MCPI and are LTA Sponsor Members (*see Appendix H for additional information about this grant program*).

Implementation Project Grants will provide support for organizations that implement the strategies in the Framework, particularly related to goals 1 and 3. These projects should lead to increased conservation of priority coastal resources identified by MCPI.

In 2005, \$100,000, and up to \$220,000 (pending final approval), will be available to any non-profit organization or state agency with operations in Maine that is also a Supporting Organization of MCPI or partnering with a Supporting Organization (*see Appendix I for detailed guidelines for this grant program*). Implementation grant funds will be disbursed in 2005 and 2006.

HOW TO SUPPORT MCPI

This Strategic Conservation Framework was developed during 2004 and early 2005 through collaboration of over 70 organizations with diverse interests in coastal land conservation. This Framework lays the foundation for the work of the MCPI Coalition during the next two years.

The Initiative invites your participation during the implementation of this Framework. We invite you to:

- **Review** the Strategic Conservation Framework and identify where you can contribute knowledge, experience, ideas, and resources;
- **Share** this document with your colleagues so that they might also contribute their experience, skills, or resources to implement the Framework;
- **Refer** MCPI contact information to any colleagues you think would make valuable contributions to this Initiative.

To achieve the Goals identified by the Coalition, we will need the support of many agencies, institutions, organizations, and individuals. Recreation groups, land trusts, commercial fishing groups, tourism and economic development councils, municipalities, sporting groups, small businesses and large corporations are examples of the many diverse partners that can work together to achieve the Goals described in this Framework.

As a Supporting Organization of the Maine Coast Protection Initiative, you or your organization will have opportunities to help lead strategic coastal land conservation across Maine. Supporting Organizations can:

- be a part of a coastal conservation community with a clear vision and common priorities;
- use your unique organizational skills, knowledge and/or resources to achieve shared goals;
- include your priorities in a coordinated effort to advance coastal conservation;
- develop relationships with other Supporting Organizations with shared interests and goals;
- become eligible for project grants, MCPI staff assistance, and other resources.

To show support for the importance of coastal land conservation, organizations can become a Supporting Organization by writing a letter that is signed by the appropriate individual(s) within the organization and is printed on their letterhead. This letter should:

- include this phrase “ABC Organization supports the Goals of the Maine Coast Protection Initiative”
- describe their organization’s perspective on the importance of coastal land conservation in Maine and the relevance of MCPI
- describe, if appropriate, how their organization intends to be involved in the implementation of the Framework

Supporting Organization Letters can be sent to:

Amy Owsley
Maine Coast Protection Initiative
Maine Field Representative, Land Trust Alliance
1 Main Street, Suite 201
Topsham, Maine 04086

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations support this Strategic Conservation Framework for the Maine Coast Protection Initiative.

- TBD

APPENDICES

The following appendices are available at www.protectcoastmaine.org. Appendices may also be requested from the MCPI Maine Field Representative, Amy Owsley: aowsley@lta.org.

- A: State of Maine's CELCP Plan
- B: Planning Process - Steering Committee Decision-Making
- C: Planning Process - Meetings
- D: Planning Process - Participants
- E: Assessment of Conservation Needs
- F: List of Available Datasets and Maps
- G: Sample Workplan
- H: Capacity-Building Grant Guidelines
- I: Implementation Grant Guidelines
- J: Results of Priority-Setting - January 2005