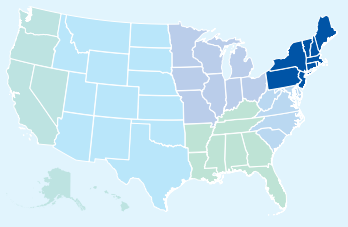


## Program Leverages New Funding to Promote Clean Drinking Water, Conserve Forestland, and Enhance Recreation

### Northeast Region



### Overview

[Sebago Clean Waters \(SCW\)](#) received \$8 million from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\) Alternative Funding Arrangement \(AFA\)](#). SCW, a diverse coalition led by Portland Water District, will use the USDA funds to leverage another \$10.5 million from public and private sources. The grant will support forest conservation, land stewardship, and stream connectivity in the Sebago Lake Watershed. The AFA allows partners to have more flexibility to implement approaches that would otherwise not fall under the scope of a traditional RCPP.

### Notable Features

- **The program conserves forestland for recreation and other co-benefits.** The forestland conservation aspect of the initiative provides multiple benefits, including providing greater access for hunting and fishing, preserving fish and wildlife habitat, expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation, and supporting the local economy.
- **It strengthens collaboration.** Sebago Clean Waters is a coalition of ten partners, including the Portland Water District, which worked closely toward the shared goal of a forested Sebago watershed for water quality and numerous co-benefits. The RCPP award catalyzes further collaboration among the partners and will move the initiative closer to its shared goals.

- **It leverages new funding sources.** Sebago Clean Waters will engage downstream businesses as funding partners and tap traditional funding sources to secure RCPP grant matching funds.
- **It promotes clean drinking water.** The NRCS grant supports the protection of thousands of acres of forests that naturally clean Sebago Lake, the drinking water supply for more than 200,000 people in the Portland area.

### People Involved

- Karen Young, Sebago Clean Waters Partnership Coordinator.
- Spencer Meyer, Senior Conservationist, Highstead Foundation; Sebago Clean Waters Co-Chair.
- Paul Hunt, Environmental Services Manager, Portland Water District; SCW RCPP Grant Lead Partner.

### Additional Resources

- [Sebago Clean Water Press Release.](#)
- [Sebago Clean Waters website.](#)
- [November, 2019 News Article—“Exactly 150 Years After Sebago Lake Water Arrived in Portland, Focus is Still on Keeping it Clean.”](#)
- [An Economic Case for the Sebago and Sebago Watershed Water and Forest. Conservation Fund.](#)

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