

Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed recognized for efforts

More than 200 people, including Congressman Tom Allen, attended an annual awards ceremony on Dec. 17 in Portland in which the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed were recognized by the Training Resource Center and AmeriCorps.

The Friends, located in the Kennebec Valley region of central Maine, began operations in the summer of 2002 to "protect and improve the 28 lakes and streams of the Cob-

bossee Watershed."

The nonprofit association currently has over 2,000 members, and has gained local, state and national recognition for its innovative approaches to outreach, program development and constituency-building. The Friends have relied heavily on their partnership with AmeriCorps — both statewide with the TRC and nationally with the National Civilian Community Corps.

The TRC is a managing partner of the Portland Career Center, the largest of 23 centers throughout the state. The TRC provides a broad range of employment and training services, and since 2001 has become the largest recipient of AmeriCorps grant

funding in Maine.

Since 1994 AmeriCorps has assisted millions of Americans by providing over 250,000 men and women to help nonprofits accomplish more and effectively utilize their volunteers. AmeriCorps consists of three programs: AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC. More than three-quarters of AmeriCorps grant funding goes to governor-appointed state commissions, which in turn distribute and monitor grants to local nonprofits and agencies. In Maine, the AmeriCorps program is administered by the Maine Commission for Community Services. ■

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