

Healthy Waters Coalition Informs Citizens on Oil Sands

PRESS RELEASE March 28, 2013 –Raymond, Maine —Sebago Lakes Region residents, business-owners and watershed educators, appreciate the value of our streams, lakes and ponds. Panther Run and Crooked River are two tributaries that feed Sebago Lake. In fact, [94-100% of streams](#) in this region are located in Source Protection Areas (SPAs), which directly contribute to public drinking water. Now, you might think, if they are “protection” areas, they must already be protected! No. Headwater streams are not protected by the federal government. It is our job as communities to protect the Sebago Lakes watershed to the best of our ability. We’re a water-based economy. We’re a water-based community.

It was out of this shared interest in protecting streams, lakes and ponds that the Healthy Waters Coalition (HWC) formed last fall. A group of Raymond residents expressed their concerns about “heavy oil sands” at a town meeting (Sept. 2012). The Raymond Village Library co-sponsored the coalition’s first meeting, an information forum on oil sands and pipeline issues last November. On Election Day, 125 Raymond residents signed an informal petition asking to be kept informed about oil sands. The Healthy Waters Coalition quickly grew to include representatives from eight Sebago Lakes Region towns, local government boards and committees, businesses and watershed organizations. Some of these interests have included the Sebago Lake Anglers’ Association, the Panther Pond Association, Saint Joseph’s College and Raymond Waterways Protective Association. Since then, the HWC has strived to educate our communities about the importance of protecting our waters, including streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands. Town comprehensive plans, such as Raymond’s, identify the importance of protecting water, wetlands and drinking water supplies. Towns have also identified threats, such as oil leaks from boat motors, milfoil and run-off.

The coalition is concerned about the future transportation of oil sands through the Portland-Montreal pipeline, which crosses the Crooked River 6-9 times and travels under Panther Run. The coalition does not oppose the transportation of conventional crude oil, which is currently transmitted from South Portland to Montreal. Ideally, the coalition would like to see municipalities take pro-active measures to educate residents and to prevent oil spills *of any kind*. The State of Maine released its Oil Spill Prevention Clean-up & Countermeasures guidance in October 2012, which called upon municipalities to comply with regulations and to adopt measures on oil spill prevention. In addition, state and federal officials participated in an [oil sands product training](#) workshop at University of Southern Maine this past December. Several towns have adopted resolutions on “tar sands,” another term for oil sands.

Back in 2008-09, the Portland-Montreal Pipe Line Corporation (PMPL) acquired permits from Maine DEP and the City of South Portland to take steps to transport oil sands through the 60-year-old pipeline from Montreal to South Portland, effectively reversing the direction of flow. In Raymond, the issue is sensitive because of a pumping station in close proximity to three vulnerable areas: 1) Panther Pond; 2) Panther Run; and 3)

marshlands that connect to Panther Pond. The pipeline's pumping station on Rt. 121 is two miles from Jordan Bay of Sebago Lake.

The Healthy Waters Coalition has recommended pro-active measures to local governments and others in order to protect our waters and way of life. In February 2013, representatives from the HWC presented a resolution on spill prevention and oil sands transportation to the Raymond Board of Selectmen. The supporting materials are posted on the Town of Raymond website (See Raymond [Conservation Commission webpage](#)). PMPL's CFO, David Cyr, complimented the Town on its comprehensive webpage of information on oil sands and related issues at the Feb. meeting. In essence, PMPL's CFO approved of the coalition's sources of information. The coalition weighs economic and ecological factors in its recommendations.

On April 2nd, the Raymond Board of Selectmen will revisit the resolution on oil sands. The resolution calls for state and federal environmental review of oil sands transportation through Maine. The HWC encourages residents of the Lakes Region to stay informed on the pipeline's plans to transport oil sands, regardless of the type or brand, as the opportunity arises for PMPL, a subsidiary of Exxon-Mobil. This is our chance to voice our concerns, which are noticed at the state and federal government levels, where permitting decisions ultimately take place. For more information about HWC, visit <http://healthywaterscoalition.weebly.com/>

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