



Local Sustainability Initiative: Seed Grant Program

NRCM's Sustainable Maine project encourages individuals, communities, and the State to adopt practical, effective measures that conserve and protect our natural resources through hands-on assistance. Our goal is a resilient future where people are able to work, play, and thrive in Maine. To help advance sustainable community initiatives throughout the state, we offer seed grants for organized committees and start-up groups to help them reach their goals. Seed grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis, and grants do not exceed \$500. Each of our seed grant applications is evaluated with these three criteria in mind:

1. Relevance to NRCM's Sustainable Maine Project: initiative must contribute to a sustainable community
2. Strength of the group's organizing skills: demonstrated ability to carry out the project plan
3. Need for funding to reach the goals of the sustainability initiative

Statewide Impact

Our local seed grants have supported a variety of initiatives throughout Maine. NRCM has contributed funding and other assistance to rural and urban communities to reduce waste and litter, begin or enhance community gardens, promote clean energy, and more.

Groups we have funded include:

- Association to Promote and Protect the Lubec Environment
- Ban the Bag Belfast
- Bangor Housing Authority
- Bath Garden Club
- Bring Your Own Bag Kennebunk
- Bring Your Own Bag Midcoast
- Bring Your Own Bag York
- Camden Conservation Commission
- City of Saco
- City of South Portland
- Downeast Zen EcoSattvas
- Falmouth Recycling and Energy Committee
- Freeport Citizens Initiative to Ban Plastic Bags
- Kennebunkport Environmental Action Team
- Messalonskee High School
- Mount Desert Island, A Climate to Thrive Initiative
- Planeteers of Southern Maine
- Presque Isle Community Garden
- Scarborough Food Waste Pilot Committee
- Sustain Mid Maine Coalition
- Terra Matters, Portland Public Schools
- Vinalhaven WasteWatchers



For more information about NRCM's Seed Grant Program contact Sarah Lakeman at sarah@nrcm.org or (207) 430-0170.



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Local Sustainability Initiatives Funded by NRCM Seed Grants



Bring Your Own Bag Midcoast is a robust group of local activists in Brunswick and Topsham who were successful in banning foam food containers and regulating single-use disposable bags. NRCM's seed grant funds were used to purchase reusable cloth bags for distribution to needy families and children, and to print and pay postage for postcards to Topsham residents urging them to come to the annual town meeting. Brunswick's Town Council voted to ban foam food containers and plastic bags and Topsham's voters banned foam food containers and supported a fee on plastic and paper shopping bags.



Mount Desert Island's A Climate to Thrive (ACTT) Initiative is a group of MDI citizens concerned about climate change and envision MDI as a leader in energy efficiency and sustainability. NRCM's seed grant funds were used toward capacity building, including hiring a Project Coordinator and hosting a second ACTT kickoff event for hundreds of local residents. Since the launch, A Climate to Thrive has been formalizing its organizational structure, holding meetings of the six action committees, gathering important data, and implementing actions shopping bags.



Presque Isle Community Garden creates and maintains a sustainable community garden for predominately low-income and underserved persons living at the Presque Isle Housing Authority and in Presque Isle. NRCM's seed grant was used for expanding the community garden infrastructure including a rain barrel, seeds, raised bed corner brackets, and toward the purchase of cedar lumber for sides of raised beds. The Presque Isle Community Garden offers the foundation for a sustainable future of vegetable gardening and pollinator habitat and provides fresh vegetables for local families and food pantries.



Bring Your Own Bag York is a grassroots group of dedicated citizens whose mission is to reduce environmental hazards from single-use plastic bags. NRCM's seed grant was spent on outreach and education about the impact of plastic bags on York's environment and promoting the proposed ordinance. This included signs, postcards, and literature, advertising, and support of local business in the transition away from plastic bags. York's plastic bag ban went into effect in March 2016, and the group has continued to be an asset for other activists in Maine.



The Association to Promote and Protect the Lubec Environment (APPLE) strives to promote and protect the historical, cultural, ecological, and economic environment of the Lubec area through environmentally sound tourism. One of their special initiatives is "Plastic-Free Lubec" to keep plastic out of the ocean. NRCM's seed grant funds were used toward building weather-resistant enclosures for recycling, redemption, and trash bins placed at Lubec's major mooring locations for convenient for fisherman and boaters.