

Unification with PWA

It's official!

On September 25, members of Damariscotta River Association and Pemaquid Watershed Association voted in favor of unifying to become a single conservation organization.

The unification process is expected to be finalized no later than February 2019.

That's a lot to take in, and we know you may have questions. Below are some of the things people have been asking (and some answers!)

1. What are the benefits of unification?

A: After an extensive examination of the mutual mission, goals, programs, services, memberships, geographic areas of interest and organizational values of Damariscotta River Association (DRA) and Pemaquid Watershed Association (PWA), it has become clear that unification of the two organizations is important for the following reasons:

- The missions of both organizations are similar;
- Both organizations work in a common geographic area of interest;
- There is an inter-connectedness of the land and waters of the Pemaquid and Damariscotta River watersheds;
- There is a shared culture that is community-based, grassroots and volunteer-driven;
- There are overlapping memberships and volunteers; combined memberships would add strength, financially and strategically;
- There is an alignment of water quality, land conservation and education programs;
- There are potential efficiencies of scale (staffing, real estate, communications, educational programs, fundraising);
- It would advance and expand on existing and successful collaborative efforts such as the joint management of the Crooked Farm Preserve;
- It strengthens the conservation histories of the Damariscotta River and the Pemaquid Peninsula; and
- It envisions a bold new land conservation, education and water quality future for the region.

2. What will happen to all the programs?

A: The new, unified board will undertake a strategic planning and visioning exercise that will carefully review all programs (DRA and PWA) for impact, cost, effectiveness, alignment with

the unified entity's mission and goals; consolidating those that make sense, revising those that need revision and scaling back or eliminating those that do not meet a series of criteria.

3. What will happen to my membership?

A: All memberships will be honored.

4. How will I have a voice in the new organization?

A: There will be opportunities serving on the board, participation on committees, volunteer activities, participation in annual meeting and events. The new organization will continue a culture of inclusiveness, open communications and regular engagement with all members.

5. What will happen to the PWA building?

A: Unless a practical reason exists to keep the building, it will in all likelihood be sold. The proceeds would likely be used to fund an easement defense fund, required by the re-accreditation of the new entity.

6. What will happen to bequests?

A: All bequest documents will be carefully reviewed to determine the donors' intent. All bequests will be transferred to the new entity, and the intent of each donor honored.

7. Will either organization lose staff?

A: No, all staff will be retained in the new entity. The existing staff of both organizations will be integral to the success; there is a wealth of knowledge and institutional history that we want to maintain, including existing relationships, program knowledge and a broad network of professional relationships.

8. Who will make up the board of directors/trustees?

A: Initially the boards of the two organizations will be merged into one board. In the current year, board positions of those members whose terms expire in 2018, will not be filled in order to maintain a manageable board size. Over the next two years, this process will continue until the unified board reaches a reasonable size of between 15 and 18 board members.

At the meeting on 9/25, members of both organizations approved the following Slate of Officers:

- President: Joel B. Russ
- Vice President: Mike Kane
- Treasurer: Bob Barkalow
- Secretary: Carolyn McKeon

As well as the following at-Large members of the Executive Committee:

- Mary Berger

- Sandi Day
- Jim Hatch
- Matthew Newman
- Joy Vaughan

9. What will happen to restricted funds?

A: All donor-restricted funds will be maintained and used for the purposes specified by the donors.

10. What is the name going to be?

A: As part of the “branding” strategy for the new entity, the collaboration Working Group, with input from the boards of the respective organizations, will explore name options and select one that most closely represents the mission, programs and goals of the new entity. It is likely that the services of a communications professional will be sought. Final name selection will follow the strategic planning session of the new entity.

11. When will unification take place?

A: The boards of each organization will be melded as soon as the boards of each organization and the respective memberships approve unification, all of which is expected no later than February 2019. The staffs of both organizations will be brought together at the time the boards are melded. Co-location of staff at the renovated offices at Round Top Farm will most likely occur in February 2019.

12. Is there funding to support a single, unified organization?

A: A new, unified organization budget is in the process of being developed and it is expected that funding will be adequate to support a single, unified organization.

13. What will unification cost?

A: The direct cost of unification is expected to be in the range of \$40,000, including legal and financial due diligence, but excluding lands-related costs.

14. Will unification save money?

A: We expect substantial overhead savings over time which will allow us to use limited resources to deliver more productive and effective programs and services.

15. Will the focus areas of both organizations (the Damariscotta River and the Pemaquid watershed) be maintained?

A: The Damariscotta River and Pemaquid watershed will continue to be the focus of the new organization, concentrating on land conservation, accessible trails, water quality and education. As mentioned in response to Questions 1 and 2 above, the fine-tuned mission, goals and

programs of the unified organization will emerge from the strategic planning and visioning exercises that the combined board will undertake.

16. Will all conserved lands be saved? How?

A: Yes, all lands, both those held in fee and conservation easements will be preserved. Unification will lead to enhanced protection of lands through the accreditation of PWA lands and increased organizational capacity to effectively manage the lands.

17. Will all easements be retained?

A: Yes. See #16 above.

18. How will the education programs be melded?

A: The melding of education programs will result from a combination of strategic planning and visioning as well as staff dialogue. As mentioned in Question 1. above: The board and staff will carefully review all programs (DRA and PWA) for impact, cost, effectiveness, alignment with the unified entity's mission and goals; consolidating those that make sense, revising those that need revision and scaling back or eliminating those that do not meet a series of criteria.

19. What values will the new organization embrace?

A: The unified organization will honor the natural ecosystems of our community and pursue the protection of land and water resources through inclusiveness, collaboration, partnerships, transparency, appreciation of members and volunteers, innovation, understanding and addressing community needs, public accessibility and strong partnerships of board and staff.

For more information:

- [DRA/PWA Agreement of Intent to Unify](#)
- [DRA by-laws for a unified organization](#) (approved at the 9/25 members' meeting)
- [PWA by-laws for a unified organization](#) (approved at the 9/25 members' meeting)

If you have questions or concerns that aren't addressed here, please don't hesitate to email us at info@pemaquidwatershed.org or dra@damariscottariver.org, or call us at 207-563-2196 or DRA at 207-563-1393.