
Aquatic Connectivity Pilot Project a Success!

During the summer of 2011, KMF launched a pilot project to restore streams within the Pleasant River watershed that support brook trout habitat. The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the US Fish & Wildlife Service to remove three culverts on their land that, for different reasons, created barriers to fish passage and degraded the habitat for brook trout. Removing the culverts restored 13 miles of stream habitat. Three more culverts on AMC land are slated for restoration in the summer of 2012, and other landowners are asking for technical assistance from NRCS to identify stream crossings on their own land that are a high priority for restoration. KMF is exploring ways to broaden the project to other landowners and watersheds.

Enhancement of brook trout habitat emerged as a goal of KMF after the collaborative hosted a landowners' forum in _____, 201? identified the issue as one that all KMF members could agree was a priority. Maine has 90% of the intact brook trout habitat in the eastern United States, and a significant concentration of the nation's native brook trout habitat is located within the Pleasant River basin. Brook trout are a critical species for the recreational fishing industry in northern Maine; improving brook trout habitat will have direct economic benefits to guides and tourism businesses in the region who will be able to claim access to the best trout fishing in the east.

The Aquatic Connectivity Project also capitalizes on work done in support of the Penobscot River Restoration Project (PRRP). Three dams will be removed as part of the PRRP, restoring passage for 11 species of fish in the Penobscot watershed without impacting overall generating capacity. As a part of the PRRP, hundreds of severe culvert fish barriers were identified in the upper reaches of the Penobscot watershed, of which the Pleasant River is a part. By using the data on fish passage barriers and the NRCS's system for prioritizing their removal, KMF is maximizing the benefits of the project.

Download a PowerPoint presentation or Project Summary for more details.