

FY06 PFW Program Notable Accomplishment – New England Field Office

State: New Hampshire – Technical Assistance & Habitat Improvement

Name: Merrimack Village Dam Removal

Location: Merrimack, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire

Service Point-of-Contact: Eric Derleth
New England Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
(603) 223-2541 x14
eric_derleth@fws.gov

HabITS number(s): 40406 & 40214

Congressional District: NH01, Jeb Bradley

Project Narrative: Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW) staff, in partnership with the NH Department of Environmental Services, NOAA, and other project partners, prepared and submitted a \$40,000 Fish Passage proposal to the USFWS's Fisheries Program to provide partial cost-share assistance in the removal of the Merrimack Village Dam on the Souhegan River (tributary of the Merrimack River) in Merrimack NH. The grant proposal was accepted and funded during spring, 2006. This \$350,000 project will use PFW Program and Fisheries Program funding along with other partner contributions for the removal of the dam. PFW personnel have been active in building partnerships for the project (dam owner, NH Department of Environmental Services, NOAA, the USFWS's Fisheries Program, New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game, American Rivers, Conservation Law Foundation, FishAmerica Foundation, Coastal Conservation Association) and as part of a technical team on project design, permitting issues, and overall project implementation.

Removal of this dam, scheduled for 2007, would restore fish passage to 14.1 miles of the mainstem Souhegan River and access to a minimum of 5 miles of tributary habitat. Additionally, dam removal would also restore 1650 feet of free flowing riverine conditions to the currently impounded reach immediately upstream of the dam. The lower Souhegan River is a priority watershed for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners to restore spawning populations of Atlantic salmon, American shad, and river herring and to provide access to rearing habitat for maturing American eels the Merrimack River watershed. The Souhegan River and tributaries provide the appropriate habitat (gravelly, sloping bottoms, water temperatures, oxygen levels and food sources) for excellent growth and survival of Atlantic salmon fry. On average, approximately 100,000 salmon fry are stocked in the Souhegan River watershed annually and interagency efforts to restore populations of American shad have been supported through intermittent stockings in the lower Souhegan River.

Restoration Technique: Dam Removal, Stream Channel Restoration, Education and Outreach, Partnership Development

Project Size: Fish Passage Restoration: 19.1 miles
Stream Channel Restoration: 1650 feet

Project Benefits: This project will restore 14.1 miles of fish passage to the mainstem of the Souhegan River and access to a minimum of 5 miles of tributary habitat. The project also will contribute to interagency efforts to restore diadromous fish (Atlantic salmon, American shad, river herring, and American eels) to the Merrimack River watershed. Community involvement in the project is significant with participation by local watershed associations and sportsmen's groups.

Timeframe: September, 2006 – October, 2008



Caption: Merrimack Village Dam on the Souhegan River in Merrimack, New Hampshire, scheduled to be removed in 2007.