



Restoring Aquatic Connectivity

Identifying and Addressing the Problem

- Stream habitat fragmentation by dams and road crossings has altered stream habitat across the northeast, impacting native fish at-risk species, and other aquatic organisms.
- Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) is restoring aquatic connectivity and fish passage in Vermont, the Connecticut River Watershed and the entire Lake Champlain Basin by assessing, prioritizing and removing barriers



Priority species such as brook trout and landlocked Atlantic salmon benefit from aquatic connectivity projects.

Barrier Removal

- In partnership with the VT Fish and Wildlife Department, NY State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Lake Champlain Basin Program, the National Fish Passage Program, and numerous other conservation organizations, the Lake Champlain FWCO has leveraged technical and financial resources to open hundreds of miles of rivers and streams by removing barriers.
- Barrier removal, combined with in-stream habitat restoration, restores access to historical spawning areas and allows for seasonal migration of salmon, brook trout and other aquatic species.
- In addition, properly designed road crossings greatly increase flood resiliency, lower nutrient loading, restore stream morphology and reduce maintenance costs.



Restoring natural stream flow and fish passage under a road



Bouquet River before and after removal of Willsboro Dam in Willsboro, NY

Conservation Success

In the last three years, the Service and our partners have removed **20 barriers**. Efforts have resulted in **210 miles of stream habitat re-opened** to aquatic species.

<https://www.fws.gov/projects/habitat-restoration> or Contact
Chris Smith Chris_e_Smith@fws.gov 802-662-5303



Atlantic salmon migrating up the Bouquet River in Willsboro