

Penobscot River Restoration Project
Great Works Dam Removal Event
June 11, 2012
What People are Saying

“The Penobscot River Restoration Trust is pleased to oversee this historic moment in Maine. The benefits of the Great Works Dam removal, and the project more generally, will be far reaching and positively affect fisheries and related environmental ecosystems, expand business and cultural opportunities as well as recreational use of the expansive Penobscot River.”

- Laura Rose Day, Executive Director, Penobscot River Restoration Trust

“By working collaboratively to restore Atlantic salmon while simultaneously maintaining current levels of clean energy production, the Penobscot Project has established itself as a national and international model for river restoration. It has been an honor to assist in securing federal resources for this ambitious collaborative project that will provide lasting benefits to our coastal fisheries and enhancing our economy with hydropower generation on the river for generations. It is heartening after nearly a decade of work that this watershed moment for this historic river has arrived and look forward to leading the ongoing effort to return the legendary Atlantic salmon runs to the Penobscot River.”

- United States Senator Olympia Snowe

“I am excited to see this partnership effort come to fruition on the Penobscot River. Over the past decade, I have worked hard to secure federal dollars for this community-led, landmark river restoration project that prioritizes the needs of the local communities, important economic uses, energy generation, and the restoration of salmon and the great historic fisheries of the river.”

- United States Senator Susan Collins

“I grew up on the Penobscot River and have worked both in industry and to protect the river’s natural beauty and resources. So I especially appreciate the hard work, collaboration and generous support from private and public partners that make it possible to restore the Penobscot River’s valuable sea-run fisheries, including Atlantic salmon, beginning today with the Great Works Dam removal. The Penobscot Project shows us that, through ingenuity and determination, we can work together to find smart approaches to restore our natural resources while also supporting and even improving hydropower and other businesses. Maine people deserve the full benefit of all that a restored Penobscot River and its fisheries can offer.”

- Congressman Michael Michaud

"NOAA has long hoped to see the Penobscot River's Atlantic salmon, herring, sturgeon and shad swim freely to their spawning grounds upstream. This will help spur the growth of these fish populations that are vital to the health of the larger Gulf of Maine ecosystem as well as the commercial and recreational fishing it supports. "

- Eric Schwaab, Acting Assistant Secretary for Conservation and Management, NOAA

"It's truly inspiring to see the Penobscot coming back to life, and not just because of what it means for wildlife and people. This internationally recognized project represents the future of science-driven conservation, forging an enduring partnership among local communities, businesses and government at all levels. By reconnecting a thousand miles of river, we will take a critical step forward in wild Atlantic salmon recovery, while providing enduring benefits to many other wildlife species and millions of people who depend on the Penobscot for clean water and jobs."

-Dan Ashe, Fish and Wildlife Service Director

"This project will create local jobs over the next three years while maintaining important hydropower generation on the Penobscot for decades while taking the steps needed to restore our native sea-run fisheries. A future of continued economic use along with healthy fisheries in rivers such as the Penobscot are both high priorities for the State of Maine."

- Commissioner Pat Keliher, Department of Marine Resources

"Today is a day that will be remembered as a most significant event in reuniting our long-lost fisheries resources with their historic homeland. Bringing back these lost relatives continues the restoration of ancient natural cycles of creation in a river we have been connected to for thousands of years, and makes us who we are as a people."

- Kirk Francis, Chief, Penobscot Indian Nation

"This is one of the biggest and most significant river restoration projects our country has ever seen. The Penobscot is proof that river restoration and economic benefits go hand in hand. We don't have to choose between healthy rivers and energy production. American Rivers is proud to have played a lead role in the Penobscot River restoration effort, and we hope this success inspires others to dream big about what is possible for their rivers and communities."

-Wm. Robert Irvin, President, American Rivers

"Restoration of the Penobscot River is and has been a top priority of the Atlantic Salmon Federation for the past 13 years and this is an exciting and long-awaited day. The Penobscot, which supports more than 75% of the country's wild Atlantic salmon, is our best chance to save the species from extinction."

-Bill Taylor, President, Atlantic Salmon Federation

"Maine Audubon congratulates PRRT on this momentous achievement. We are thrilled to be part of a project with such far reaching benefits for Maine's wildlife and we applaud the development of this significant new model for river and habitat restoration."

-Ted Koffman, Executive Director, Maine Audubon

"Today (June 11, 2012) is a great day for the people, fish, wildlife and communities of the Penobscot River. The removal of the Great Works Dam, combined with other aspects of the Penobscot River Restoration Project, mean that largest river in Maine will get a new lease on life while it continues to maintain its hydropower production. The Penobscot River has worked hard for Maine people for hundreds of years. Now it's time for us to take care of the river. NRCM has worked for decades to restore the Penobscot, and is proud to be a founding member of the Penobscot River Restoration Project, and to take part in its creative, cooperative conservation efforts."

-Lisa Pohlmann, Executive Director, Natural Resources Council of Maine

“Tens of thousands of fish will be able to travel upstream, following in a river that hasn’t run free for more than a century, and paddlers and fishermen will be able to return to one of New England’s great rivers; all because Mainers came together to tackle the challenge of meeting the needs of both the river and the people who live along its banks.”

- Mike Tetreault, The Nature Conservancy in Maine

"Today's removal of the Great Works dam marks the beginning of an unprecedented recovery for wild Atlantic salmon by improving access to 1,000 miles in the Penobscot River. Years of collaboration among energy companies, state and federal agencies, the Penobscot Indian Tribe, conservation organizations, local communities and volunteers have brought us to this historic moment, which will yield progress for fish, wildlife and the Maine economy."

- Chris Wood, President and CEO, Trout Unlimited

“Black Bear looks forward to developing new hydropower in the Penobscot watershed as part of the Penobscot Project’s new balance between energy production and fisheries. We look forward to working together with the Penobscot River Restoration Trust and other project partners to realize both energy and fisheries benefits for Maine.”

- Scott Hall, Vice President, Environmental & Business Services, Black Bear Hydro Partners, LLC

“After the dams are removed I envision coming down with my family and celebrating the return of the river, the return of the fish, and the recreational potential. In a short period of time, this river is going to change tremendously and we'll be here to see it. In about five years, we'll see phenomenal changes and it will continue to change over the next 20-40 years. The Penobscot is the core, if you will, of the state ... to have this river in the most natural state that we can have it is one of the most wonderful things we could leave as a legacy for the people of the state of Maine.”

- Bucky Owen, Prof. Emeritus, Dept. of Wildlife Ecology, UM and past Commissioner, Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

“As the Penobscot River Restoration and the removal of the Great Works Dam Project has developed from concept to reality, the Town of Bradley has become increasingly excited about this historic event. I believe that the Town of Bradley will benefit greatly with the future development of water access at the Great Works Dam site. I feel confident that restoring fisheries and a healthy river will not only benefit the environment but the community.”

- Melissa L. Doane, Town Manager, Bradley ME

“I am thrilled to see the Great Works Dam removed as the first big step in opening up the river. We need to do everything possible to promote business and economic opportunities when they arise. The paddling, fishing, and other recreational opportunities that will come from a freer-flowing river will be a boon for paddle-sport outfitters, river guides, and many local businesses, and benefit the entire state of Maine. I can’t wait to be one of the first people to paddle an unobstructed river from Old Town to the sea again.”

- Scott Phillips, owner of Northeast Outdoors Sports

“The region's fish and wildlife, diverse boating opportunities and scenic beauty are not only worth preserving in and of themselves, but are clearly an asset to economic development here and throughout Maine. What's so exciting about the Penobscot River Restoration Project is that we have found a way to have both - we can revitalize economic and cultural traditions in communities along the river through restoration of the fisheries within the Penobscot River watershed, while retaining the economic benefits of hydropower generation on the river. And, the agreement to reconfigure hydropower on the river will help ensure the continued presence of PPL Corp. on the river, which is a significant economic asset to the region. By paying attention to the lessons we learned along the way, we can accomplish this and much more.”

- Sandra Blake Leonard, Penobscot River Restoration Trust Board Member and Bangor resident

“This river and its diverse life connect the Northern Forest to the Gulf of Maine. Whether our passion is salmon fishing, preserving Penobscot Indian culture, paddling new rapids, bird watching, or economic development - restoration of the Penobscot River enhances all of our region's most unique strengths. As a resident of Bangor, I am thrilled to be a part of this landmark project.”

- Rick Warren, Atlantic Salmon Federation US Board Chair and Penobscot Campaign Vice-Chair

"There are going to be enormous benefits both upstream in fresh water and downstream out in the bay. With the changes coming in and around the Penobscot watershed, my charter business stands to directly benefit. More fish to catch equals more anglers on my boat, not to mention the associated items anglers will need to buy when they are here on a fishing trip. Things like lodging, bait, tackle, food and gas can only help local businesses."

- Captain Pete Douvarjo, Eggemoggin Reach Guide Service and Maine Charter Boats Association

"Once Maine reopens its largest river and reestablishes its sea-run stocks, sportsmen throughout the country will flock to the area. Sustainable runs of Atlantic salmon, shad and stripers in the Penobscot would spin off benefits to every town bordering the river ... But the key to this opportunity lies in the fact that river towns and cities would not be the only ones to benefit from a revitalized river. Reopening the Penobscot River will restore three different types of fisheries - each with accompanying economic benefits. The first, of course, is restoring the river fisheries; the other two are in the marine world, and would help revitalize the state's fabled coastal fisheries."

- Ted Ames, Penobscot East Resource Center and Stonington Fishermen's Alliance