

Penobscot River Restoration Project Timeline



Photo by Pete Didisheim

More than a decade ago, the Penobscot River Restoration Project was launched to help restore the severely depleted native sea-run fisheries of the Penobscot River system while maintaining hydropower generation in the watershed.

Laying the groundwork:

- In May 2004, the Penobscot River Restoration Trust (Penobscot Trust) was incorporated to implement the restoration project.
- On June 25, 2004, the Penobscot Indian Nation, several conservation groups, the dam owner, and state and federal agencies signed the Lower Penobscot River Settlement Accord and filed it with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The Accord lays out a roadmap for restoring the river that will:
 - Restore self-sustaining populations of native sea-run fish, such as the endangered Atlantic salmon, through improved access to nearly 2,000 miles of historic habitat;
 - Renew opportunities for the Penobscot Nation to exercise sustenance fishing rights;
 - Create new opportunities for recreation, business, and communities; and
 - Resolve longstanding disputes and regulatory uncertainties.

This unprecedented, innovative and collaborative agreement enabled:

- The Penobscot Trust to purchase three dams from PPL Corporation, and subsequently remove the two lowermost dams: Veazie (2013-2014) and Great Works (2012);
- The Penobscot Trust, after obtaining the approval of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to decommission and pursue construction of a nature-like fish bypass around the third dam, Howland, that will achieve restoration goals and maintain an impoundment;
- PPL Corporation the opportunity to increase generation at six existing dams, which would result in maintaining essentially all of the current energy generation; and
- PPL Corporation to improve fish passage at four additional dams, including a new fish lift at Milford.

More milestones:

- June 20, 2008, the Penobscot Trust exercised its option and purchased the dams.
- November 7, 2008, the Penobscot Trust [filed for federal and state permits](#) required to purchase the dams, and subsequently received all necessary permits.
- During 2009, scientists began collecting [baseline scientific data](#) that can be compared to data collected once the project is completed. Monitoring will continue for several years.
- December 17, 2010, after holding numerous public hearings, receiving necessary federal and state permits, and undergoing all necessary legal due diligence, the Penobscot Trust purchased the Veazie, Howland, and Great Works dams.
- During 2012, the Trust removed the Great Works Dam.
- During 2013-2014, the Trust removed the Veazie Dam.
- During summer, 2015, the Penobscot Trust began construction of the Howland fish bypass, which was completed in the summer of 2016.

The Penobscot Trust will continue to operate and monitor the Howland bypass to ensure effective fish passage in the coming years. The Penobscot River Restoration Project has made significant progress toward restoring sea-run fish to the Penobscot River watershed.