

PENOBSCOT RIVER RESTORATION TRUST

Senators Snowe and Collins Advance \$2.5 Million for Restoration of Atlantic Salmon in Penobscot River

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(Washington, DC; Old Town, ME) Plans to restore habitat for Atlantic salmon and ten other species of migratory fish in the Penobscot River received another boost when the Senate Appropriations Committee recently approved \$2.5 million in the Department of the Interior's Fiscal Year 2007 Appropriations Bill. A joint effort by Senators Olympia J. Snowe and Susan Collins (both R-Maine) was instrumental in securing these funds in the Appropriations Committee's report.

The State of Maine also provided critical support in securing this federal investment in Maine by identifying restoration of the Penobscot as a high priority for the overall recovery of Atlantic salmon, and for the multiple benefits that restoring sea-run fisheries will bring to the state.

The Penobscot River Restoration Project, a collaboration between hydropower company PPL Corporation, the Penobscot Indian Nation, and six conservation groups, seeks to restore the Penobscot River's legendary fisheries while re-balancing hydropower production. Restoration of Atlantic salmon in the Penobscot River is considered critical to replenishing populations elsewhere in the state, and for the continued survival of spawning stocks of Atlantic salmon in the United States. Ten other species of sea-run fish, including American shad, alewives, striped bass, and the endangered shortnose sturgeon, will benefit from the restoration effort. Thirty-five endangered shortnose sturgeon have been caught in the river over the last month, as well as two sub-adult Atlantic sturgeon, indicating the potential for restoration of these species.

"There is clear and widespread recognition that restoration of the Penobscot River for Atlantic salmon and ten other species of migratory fish, while balancing generation of hydropower, provides multiple benefits for communities up and down the river," said Laura Rose Day, Director of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, a nonprofit corporation charged with implementing the river restoration project. "We greatly appreciate the continued efforts of Maine's Congressional delegation to secure critical Federal investment in the restoration of the Penobscot fisheries and the cultural and economic future of the region."

The Trust is actively seeking acquisition funds from a combination of public and private sources. Maine's Congressional Delegation has been instrumental in securing more than \$4 million dollars in federal funds for the project. Private fundraising efforts have thus far resulted in an additional \$4.5 million toward completion of the project. This additional \$2.5 million in funding to restore the river for Atlantic salmon, if secured in the Conference Committee Report between the House and Senate later this year, will be complemented by recent funding awarded by the state of Maine through the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund.

In June, the House of Representatives passed a resolution that allows the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to legally become engaged as a partner in the Penobscot River Restoration Project. Last week, the Senate approved \$100,000 in the Fiscal Year 2007 Energy and Water Appropriations bill to move the initial phase of the study forward. Passing the study resolution and funding the initial phase allows the Corps to analyze the potential for environmental restoration, anadromous fish restoration and other related interests within the Penobscot River in Maine and its tributaries.

Considered one of the most ecologically significant and innovative river restoration efforts in the country, the Penobscot agreement includes the decommissioning and removal of the Veazie and Great Works dams to allow migratory salmon, shad, striped bass, and other fish to move freely up and downstream. The agreement similarly calls for the purchase and decommissioning of the Howland dam and proposes the construction of

an innovative fish bypass to allow sea-run fish to swim around the dam. The Milford Dam, regional headquarters for PPL Corporation, will become the first dam on the river and be fitted with a state-of-the-art fish lift. The dams will be purchased from PPL Corporation for approximately \$25 million, and another \$30 million will be needed over the next 8-10 years for implementation costs such as dam removal, fish bypass construction, fish restoration, economic development and mitigation.

The Penobscot River Restoration Trust (PRRT) is a nonprofit corporation whose member organizations include the Penobscot Indian Nation, American Rivers, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Maine Audubon, The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited, and whose mission is to implement the Penobscot River Restoration Agreement.

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