

# PENOBSCOT RIVER RESTORATION TRUST

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Private Donors Invest \$10 Million in Penobscot River Restoration Project**

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Old Town, ME – The Penobscot River Restoration Trust and its members today announced that it has met its first private campaign milestone by raising \$10 million toward the approximately \$25 million purchase price for three hydropower dams as part of the Penobscot River Restoration Project. The project, a collaborative effort between dam owner PPL Corporation, the Penobscot Indian Nation, seven conservation groups, and state and federal agencies, aims to establish a healthy balance between native sea-run fisheries and hydropower generation.

This private support is critical to helping secure public funding for the project. Under the leadership of Maine's Congressional delegation, the President, Senate, and House are all supporting \$10 million in federal funding for the project in Fiscal Year 2008. If approved, the total current federal investment combined with private funds will mean that the first phase of this project is primed for successful conclusion. "Tremendous private commitment has helped inspire federal investment in the future of the Penobscot River for Maine and the nation," said Laura Rose Day, Executive Director, Penobscot River Restoration Trust, the not-for-profit organization that holds an option to purchase the dams.

The Penobscot River Restoration Trust, working with the project's diverse public and private partners, proposes to purchase the three dams, remove the two dams closest to the sea (Veazie and Great Works) and bypass the Howland dam. Fully implemented, the project will help restore native fisheries by markedly improving access to nearly 1000 miles of key habitat for Atlantic salmon, American shad, shortnose sturgeon and several other species of sea-run fish that once supported diverse economic opportunities as well as the biological health of the Penobscot River.

Sue and Bucky Owen of Orono, were inspired to donate a gift five times larger than they had ever made before. "The river is at the heart of this region and our lives. We swim in the river, enjoy wildlife and hike along its banks, and fish and paddle its waters with boats and paddles made right here in Orono and Old Town. It is extraordinary to have a project of national, even global significance, in our backyard," said Bucky, former Commissioner, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Professor Emeritus, University of Maine, Orono.

Scott Phillips, owner of Northeast Outdoors Sports, is thrilled by the donations seeing them as a commitment to both the local economy and culture of his tribe, the Penobscot Indian Nation. "When the lower river flows freely, there will be more and better opportunities for paddling, fishing, and other recreational pursuits. As a Penobscot tribal member with deep cultural ties to canoeing, the moment when the river flows again from Old Town to the sea will be priceless."

Many helped to raise the private funds, with leadership from the Atlantic Salmon Federation, Natural Resources Council of Maine and The Nature Conservancy. Donations for the project have come from a variety of individuals, foundations, corporations and from tribal sources at the local, regional and national levels. "As a Bangor resident, this river and this campaign have special meaning to me. I am touched that so many others in Maine and beyond have recognized the importance of restoring this wonderful river and helping to make the project succeed," said Rick Warren campaign Chairman and U.S. Board Chair of the Atlantic Salmon Federation.

"This private commitment to the Penobscot Project is an investment in Maine's future, motivated by benefits that extend beyond the restoration of Atlantic salmon and other sea-run fish. People are equally inspired by the cultural benefits to the Penobscot Indian Nation, the potential to benefit the commercially valuable Gulf of Maine fishery, and the project's entrepreneurial approach that rebalances hydropower and ecosystem restoration," said Tony Grassi of Camden, Vice-Chairman of the campaign and board member of The Nature Conservancy in Maine.

"We are deeply grateful for this private generosity. Donors are impressed with the tremendous collaboration between business, environmental and governmental entities like the Penobscot Indian Nation, the State of Maine, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This is a key milestone and moves us a giant step closer to the day when the lower Penobscot River flows freely to the sea," added Day.

"PPL commends the Penobscot Trust and its partners for securing this important investment in the Penobscot River Restoration Project. We look forward to working with all of the project partners to fully implement this innovative approach to balancing hydropower, fisheries and wildlife on the Penobscot," said Scott Hall, Manager of Environmental Services, PPL Maine in Milford. The Penobscot Agreement provides PPL Corporation with the opportunity to maintain energy generation by increasing energy at several locations. The initial phase of energy increases were approved and underway in 2006.

The Penobscot Trust is now working to prepare regulatory permit applications required to implement the project. To this end, the Trust is holding formal public scoping meetings in the watershed at the following times and locations:

December 5, 1:00-4:00 p.m., at the Penobscot County Conservation Association in Brewer  
December 5, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Penobscot County Conservation Association in Brewer  
December 6, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Howland Town Office

Scoping meetings provide an important opportunity for people to comment on issues that they believe the Penobscot River Restoration Trust should consider in its filing of necessary federal and state regulatory applications. A scoping document is available on the Trust's web site: [www.penobscotriver.org](http://www.penobscotriver.org).

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*The Penobscot River Restoration Trust members are: the Penobscot Indian Nation, American Rivers, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Maine Audubon, Natural Resources Council of Maine, The Nature Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited.*