

PENOBSCOT RIVER RESTORATION TRUST

Press Statement for Immediate Release

Environmental Compliance Funds Boost Sea-run Fish Restoration Efforts *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Funds to Help Reconnect Penobscot River Fisheries to the Gulf of Maine*

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Contact: Laura Rose Day, Executive Director, 207-232-5976
George Aponte Clarke, Deputy Director, 207-232-9996

Portland, ME: The U.S. Attorney for Maine and the U.S. Coast Guard today announced more than \$1.9 million in grants to 14 projects aimed at restoring the health of the Gulf of Maine. The grants, funded through community service payments for criminal violations related to deliberate vessel pollution close to the Gulf, include a \$225,000 award to help restore the Penobscot River's valuable sea-run fisheries. Specifically, the Penobscot funds will be used toward the deconstruction of the Veazie Dam as part of the Penobscot River Restoration Project, a public-private partnership aimed at restoring endangered Atlantic salmon, American shad, river herring and several other sea-run fish, together integral to the health of the Gulf.

"We greatly appreciate the U.S. Attorney's office and the U.S. Coast Guard's recognition of the significance of restoring the direct link between the health of the Penobscot's sea-run fisheries and the overall health of the Gulf of Maine," said Laura Rose Day, Executive Director of the non-profit Penobscot River Restoration Trust, recipient of the award. "These funds will help recover valuable fisheries resources and allow for renewal of the cultural and economic diversity of an entire region."

Veazie Dam is the first barrier sea-run fish encounter as they attempt to migrate from the Gulf up the Penobscot River en route to essential spawning, nursery and other habitat. The Penobscot Project's promise for ocean fisheries has won the support of commercial and recreational fishermen, charter boat and guiding services, wildlife enthusiasts, businesses and civic groups, and community members at large, well inland to the bay.

"These funds arrive at a time critical to making this collaborative vision a reality," said George Aponte Clarke, Deputy Executive Director of the Penobscot Trust. "Removal of the Veazie Dam along with full implementation of the Penobscot River Restoration Project is anticipated to produce unprecedented ecosystem and community benefits extending from the Gulf of Maine to the heart of Maine."

Paula Silsby, United States Attorney, District Maine, said: "The Gulf of Maine is one of the jewels in the crown of the state's environmental resources. The conservation projects funded by these grants represent an important investment in both this great body of water and Maine as a whole." The Penobscot Trust congratulates all grant recipients; as a package, they exemplify the diversity and significance of Maine's coastal resources and the importance of partnerships in protecting them.

The funds, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, are available through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf of Maine Environmental Compliance and Protection Fund Grants. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with the Penobscot Nation, the state of Maine, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are partners in the Penobscot Project as well as other efforts to restore the valuable fisheries resources of the Gulf of Maine.

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American Rivers, Atlantic Salmon Federation, Maine Audubon, Natural Resources Council of Maine, Penobscot Indian Nation, The Nature Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited are members of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust. Partners include PPL Corporation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, and the state of Maine (Dept. of Marine Resources, Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, State Planning Office).