



Unprecedented Penobscot River Project Moves Atlantic Salmon Closer to Restoration

*Trout Unlimited and its Penobscot River Restoration Trust partners
announce their intent to purchase three dams on the river.*

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ARLINGTON, VA. – In this historic achievement, Trout Unlimited congratulates its partners for bringing restoration of the Penobscot River one step closer to reality. Through one of the most innovative river restoration projects in the nation, access to nearly 1,000 miles of river and stream habitat will be improved for Atlantic salmon. The project is considered the last best chance for wild Atlantic salmon recovery in the country.

Without the vision and unwavering support from the state of Maine, the federal government, the Penobscot Indian Nation, private donors, and our non-profit partners, this project would not be where it is today. In particular, Trout Unlimited would like to thank U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe, U.S. Senator Susan Collins, U.S. Congressman Mike Michaud, U.S. Congressman Tom Allen, the Bush Administration, and its key agencies in the effort, the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, for providing the federal funding necessary for the first phase of this project.

“Raising the \$25 million needed to purchase the three dams was no small feat,” said Charles Gauvin, President and Chief Executive Officer for Trout Unlimited. “The next phase will require a similarly focused and collaborative effort among federal, state, and private donors, but the pay-off both for Atlantic salmon and Penobscot River communities will be worth every last penny.”

“In the ten years since the Edwards Dam was removed on the Kennebec, we’ve seen how quickly a large river can recover,” explained Sean McCormick, chair of Trout Unlimited’s Maine Council. “Here on the Penobscot River we expect to see that kind of recovery again, and with more direct benefits for Atlantic salmon.”

The Penobscot River drains roughly 9,000 square miles in Maine, or about one-third of the state. Maine is home to the last remaining wild Atlantic salmon in the nation, and the Penobscot holds the state’s largest population of Atlantic salmon, with annual salmon runs estimated at 50,000-70,000 prior to 1830. This year, over 2,000 salmon have returned to the Penobscot, more than 90% of the total population that returned to Maine’s rivers. The Penobscot River is the engine of Atlantic salmon production in New England and the best opportunity to prevent their disappearance in the United States.

Trout Unlimited is North America’s leading coldwater fisheries conservation organization, with more than 140,000 members dedicated to the protection and restoration of trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds.