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## **Chinese Delegation from Yangtze River Visits Penobscot River Restoration Project**

### *Resource Managers Take Home Lessons on Balancing Fisheries and Hydropower*

**Brunswick, ME:** Today, representatives from [The Nature Conservancy](http://www.tnc.org) (TNC) and the Changjiang (Yangtze) Water Resources Commission (CWRC), part of the Ministry of Water Resources in the People's Republic of China, toured the [Penobscot River Restoration Project](http://www.penobscotriver.org) in Maine to learn about balancing fisheries restoration and hydropower production.

“CWRC was interested in visiting an example of a place where dam removal and cutting-edge fish passage is being implemented, and the Penobscot River watershed is that place,” said Colin Apse, Deputy Director of the Conservancy's Eastern U.S. Freshwater Program. “Small dam removal and fish passage projects are being implemented on a number of tributaries, and the Penobscot River Restoration Project is demonstrating that a coordinated, watershed-scale approach to large river restoration can be beneficial not just for ecological health but for maintaining hydropower generation as well.”

The [Yangtze River](http://www.yangtze.com), the third largest in the world, stretches nearly 4,000 miles from the Tibetan Plateau to the Pacific Ocean. Four hundred million people depend on the river's resources, and the river basin is home to 350 species of fish, which represent one-third of all fish species in China. Approximately 162 of these species are found nowhere else on the planet. Although new large hydropower dams get the headlines, there are also more than 40,000 small dams throughout the Yangtze watershed which may pose a threat to the long-term health of the river and its tributaries.

The Penobscot River Restoration Project is an innovative collaboration between industry, the Penobscot Indian Nation, state and federal agencies, and seven conservation groups to restore self-sustaining runs of migratory fish to the Penobscot River while maintaining current levels of energy production. The Penobscot River Restoration Trust, the non-profit implementing the project, intends to remove the two lowermost dams on the Penobscot River at Veazie and Great Works, and construct a bypass around a third dam in Howland after completing purchase of the dams from PPL Corporation.

Full implementation of the project will open up nearly 1,000 miles of historic spawning and juvenile rearing habitat for 11 species of sea-run fish, including endangered shortnose sturgeon and Atlantic salmon. Hydropower production will be increased at six other dams to maintain current energy levels. Black Bear Hydro Partners LLC, a subsidiary of ArcLight Capital Partners, recently purchased these six dams from PPL and will be making fish passage improvements at four of these dams as part of the project agreement.

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On Tuesday, November 10th, representatives from CWRC and TNC's China Program were provided a tour of the project area to learn from engineers and project partners involved in developing the innovative plan to restore American shad, river herring, Atlantic salmon and seven other species of sea-run fish to the Penobscot watershed.

The Nature Conservancy is working with the Chinese government, major hydropower companies and other nonprofit organizations to develop sustainable alternatives to the design and operation of 12 new large dams planned for the Yangtze River. In addition, over 40,000 mostly small (<10 m wide) dams in the Yangtze basin, many of them in poor condition, present a growing need to identify priorities for removal. CWRC is the managing authority for water development, utilization and protection of the Yangtze River, and oversees hydropower development projects in 40 other countries around the world.

“We are pleased to welcome the Chinese delegation and others to learn from this collaborative effort on the Penobscot River,” said Laura Rose Day, Executive Director of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust. “The ecological, economic, and cultural benefits of restored fisheries here will extend from the upper reaches of the watershed to the Gulf of Maine, and a balanced approach to fisheries management and hydropower production along the Yangtze River can offer similar benefits to the Chinese people.”

Visits to additional fishery restoration projects on smaller tributaries that complement the restoration effort on the Penobscot River's mainstem offered the Chinese delegation examples of ways to remove fish passage obstructions while meeting community interests in maintaining water levels or other aesthetic preferences while benefiting from restored fisheries. The removal of two dams and construction of a new rock and pool fishway along Sedgeunkedunk Stream in Orrington and a rock and pool fishway being constructed at Blackman Stream in Bradley highlighted community-supported and federally funded efforts, through the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA), to improve passage of alewife, a migratory species that provides an important forage base in healthy river systems.

In the Yangtze River and elsewhere, fish reproduction and survival depend on connected river habitats and on the maintenance of a river's natural flow patterns, because they set the cues for when fish breed and migrate.

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