



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
**U.S. Department
of the Interior**

www.doi.gov

News Release

Salazar Highlights 10 Projects in Northeastern States under America's Great Outdoors Rivers Initiative

05/24/2012

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WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today highlighted projects in 10 northeastern states that serve as models of the America's Great Outdoors River Initiative to conserve and restore key rivers across the nation, expand outdoor recreational opportunities and support jobs in local communities.

The 10 river projects are part of a list of 51 ongoing projects that the Secretary is highlighting nationwide, one in each state and the District of Columbia. Ranging from the establishment of the Connecticut River Blueway in Connecticut to a watershed restoration project on the Winooski River in Vermont, the projects were selected to provide examples on how communities across America can restore and reconnect with the rivers in their backyards.

"Across the country, we are working hand in hand with states, tribes, local communities and other partners to revitalize our nation's rivers and expand the opportunities for people to fish, swim, boat, and otherwise connect with the great outdoors," Salazar said. "These on-going projects demonstrate how the federal family can be an effective conservation partner for community-led efforts to improve our rivers, which are the lifeblood of our communities and our economies."

A map and more detailed descriptions of the river initiatives highlighted by Salazar can be accessed [here](#). Additional river projects across the nation will be announced in the coming days.

The America's Great Outdoors Rivers identified today are:

Connecticut: Connecticut River – Connecticut River Watershed

Today in Hartford, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar signed a Secretarial Order establishing the National Blueways System and announcing the 410-mile-long Connecticut River – spanning the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire – as the first National Blueway. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been working with many federal, state and local agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private landowners to support landscape level conservation, environmental education, and recreation opportunities that will protect important natural resources along the river and connect the public to a mosaic of conserved land.

Delaware: Nanticoke River – Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

With the support of the governor, the Chesapeake Conservancy and other partners, on May 16 the Secretary designated the Nanticoke River as a historic connecting trail. The river is an integral part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, which traces the historic water routes of Captain John Smith's voyages exploring the Chesapeake Bay and connects with public with scores of historic and natural areas.

Maine: Penobscot River – Penobscot River Restoration

The Penobscot River Restoration project is a well-established, multi-partner, landscape level conservation that includes

returning endangered Atlantic salmon to their historic spawning grounds for the first time in 150 years, continuing hydropower production, restoring a Tribal Nation's connection to their heritage, and reconnecting upriver habitats to the Gulf of Maine for the benefit of people and nature. The project can serve as a demonstration for other large landscape collaboration efforts that must address similarly varied resource demands.

Massachusetts: Connecticut River – Connecticut River Watershed

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New Hampshire: Connecticut River – Connecticut River Watershed

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New Jersey: Delaware River – Athos Oil Spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Project

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, other federal, state and local agencies, and non-governmental organizations are working to restore habitat and recreational opportunities on the Delaware River, which was impacted by the 2004 Athos oil spill, including creating 17 acres of oyster reef.

New York: Bronx River – Bronx River Water Trail

The National Park Service is working with New York City Parks and the Bronx River Alliance to host 7,000 participants for various recreational programs and to obtain a National Water Trail designation for the Bronx River Water Trail, which will provide recreational and educational opportunities to thousands of urban residents.

Pennsylvania: Susquehanna River – Lower Susquehanna River Conservation Landscape Initiative

The National Park Service, other federal, state, and local agencies, and non-governmental organizations are expanding and improving and recreation and education opportunities and public access along the Susquehanna River, which is an important link to Pennsylvania's natural and cultural heritage. On May 16, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar designated the Susquehanna River as a historic connecting trail and integral part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

Rhode Island: Blackstone River – Blackstone River Valley Greenway

The National Park Service and the Department of Transportation are working with state and local agencies and non-governmental organizations to create a 50 mile water trail and greenway, and to develop classroom programs that will serve as a model for other regional programs to promote natural resource stewardship and connect the public to their historical sites.

Vermont: Winooski River – Conservation and Restoration for Flood Resilience in the Winooski River Watershed

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with other federal, state and local agencies as well as non-governmental organizations to demonstrate proactive ways to prevent and mitigate flood damage by working with cooperating landowners to restore the natural floodplain and geomorphic functions on the Mad River.

"America has more than 3.6 million miles of rivers and streams, and nearly every American lives within a mile of a river or stream, making them some of the nation's most important recreational and ecological assets," Salazar added. "America's Great Outdoors Rivers will help fulfill President Obama's vision for healthy and accessible rivers as we work to restore and conserve our nation's treasured waterways."

Rivers are economic engines for many local communities, supporting recreation and tourism industries by providing opportunities for boating, fishing and hunting, hiking, camping, swimming, and numerous other outdoor activities. Salazar noted that the outdoor industry creates an estimated 6.5 million jobs in the United States and pumps an estimated \$730 billion a year into our nation's economy.

Salazar unveiled America's Great Outdoors Rivers in January as part of President Obama's overall America's Great

Outdoors Initiative to work with communities across the country to establish a conservation and recreation agenda for 21st century and to reconnect people, especially young people, to the great outdoors.

The goals of America's Great Outdoors Rivers include protecting and restoring America's rivers for people and wildlife and enhancing river recreation that supports jobs in tourism and outdoor recreation.

Under the initiative, Salazar issued a Secretarial Order in February establishing a National Water Trails System, creating a network of designated water trails on rivers across the country that will help facilitate outdoor recreation, especially around urban areas, and provide national recognition to existing, local water trails. He designated the Chattahoochee River Water Trail, which encompasses 48 miles of river within the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Georgia, as the first National Water Trail.

In March, Salazar, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, and Secretary of Commerce John Bryson signed a memorandum of understanding implementing the National Fish Habitat Action Plan to assist state and local governments, landowners, and community groups in protecting and restoring waterways and fisheries.

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