

# The Penobscot Times

Serving the Old Town-Orono area, including Milford, Bradley, Greenbush, Greenfield, Alton, Veazie, and Indian Island

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Vol. 121, No. 28

Old Town, Maine 04468

August 28, 2008



Penobscot Trust partners Laura Rose Day and Bucky Owen, Penobscot Nation Chief Kirk Francis, and Gov. Baldacci were among those who gathered in Old Town's Riverfront Park last week to celebrate the Penobscot Trust's milestone announcement.

## Penobscot Trust to purchase three dams from PPL

By Greta Sproul  
Partners in the Penobscot River Restoration Trust, Penobscot Indian Nation chief Kirk Francis, Governor John Baldacci, representatives for Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe, Rep. Mike Michaud, and other local and state officials were in Riverfront Park last Thursday for an announcement by Laura Rose Day, Executive Director of the Penobscot Trust, that the group planned to move forward with the purchase of the Veazie, Great Works and Howland dams. In keeping with the celebratory nature of the occasion, and its connection to the Tribe's ancestral home, two Penobscot Nation drummers started off the event with a traditional blessing song. The three dams, located on the Penobscot River, are currently

owned by the PPL Corporation (PPL). In announcing the Penobscot Trust's plans to purchase the three dams, Day said that its partners are taking a major step forward in their historic effort to restore Atlantic salmon and nine other species of sea-run fish to nearly 1,000 miles of river habitat while ensuring that energy generation is maintained on one of the country's most significant river systems.

In accordance with terms set by PPL, the Penobscot Trust had one year to purchase the dams before their option expired. By exercising the option at this time, the Penobscot Trust will pay \$25 million for all three dams, avoiding an increase of \$1 million in the purchase price.

"The vision to create a balance on the river between economic, recreational and Native American interests was both innovative and ambitious, and I have followed this project closely," Governor Baldacci said in his remarks to the crowd. "This is a remarkable model for how Maine can maintain important

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# Penobscot Trust thinking ahead to next phase of project

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hydropower generation on our rivers while taking the steps necessary to restore our native sea-run fisheries."

Following the Penobscot Trust's purchase of the Veazie, Great Works and Howland dams, the group will seek permits for the removal of the Great Works and Veazie dams and the construction of a fish bypass around the Howland dam. To compensate for the removal of two dams and the decommissioning of a third, PPL has already increased power generation in three other dams, and is currently in the process of re-powering the Orono dam. PPL has also agreed to

make changes to four of its dams in order to enhance fish passage. These changes include the construction of an elevator at the Milford Dam, which, following the removal of the Veazie and Great Works dams, and the decommissioning of the Howland dam, will become the first dam on the river.

In his remarks last Thursday, Penobscot Indian Nation Chief Kirk Francis alluded to the ancient connection between the Penobscot tribe and the river.

"The health of our people is directly tied to the health of this river. Opening up this waterway will revitalize a significant part of our culture and bring back

health to our sacred river," he said.

Maine's Secretary of State and Old Town resident, Matt Dunlap, was not able to attend the event, but commented later on his enthusiasm for the project.

"I was part of the original group and still am. This entire initiative really recognizes the value of the river as a resource," he said. "We used to put it down as a liability. (If you were standing on the banks of the river), you would look down and realize, 'What I'm standing on is an old sewer pipe.' Since passage of the Clean Waters Act, regulation has made the river an attractive resource, not just for fish and other wildlife, but also as an economic engine."

The funds that the Penobscot Trust will use to purchase the three dams

consist of \$10 million raised through a private capital campaign and \$15 million secured through federal funding. The organization estimates that it will need to raise \$25-\$30 million more in order to complete the second phase of its river restoration project. They expect the money to come once more from a mix of private and public sources.

"The Penobscot Trust and its partners deeply appreciate the constructive dialogue and commitment that has come from every corner to make this extraordinary milestone possible," Day said. "The leadership, the generosity and the local support all inspire confidence in the future health and prosperity of the Penobscot region."