

Penobscot Project Bursts Ahead

This river and its tributaries have more potential habitat for migratory fish populations than any river in the North Atlantic and provides us with our best opportunity to recover the overall population of Atlantic salmon in the continental United States.

—**Dr. William Brennan, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere**

Dr. Brennan's remark well sums up the excitement that sportsmen everywhere should feel over the recent announcement by the partners of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust that they are readying to purchase the Veazie, Great Works and Howland dams.

It's all part of a historic effort to restore sea-run fish to nearly 1,000 miles of river habitat, while ensuring energy generation is maintained on one of the country's most significant river systems. In all, \$25 million in private and public funds have been raised to purchase the three dams.

There are many extraordinary aspects to this restoration project, but none quite so newsworthy as the fact that this plan not only brings anadromous fish back to the river, but also does so while increasing the amount of electricity the river produces, even while eliminating three dams. The

additional electricity generated will result from making improvements in the power production capabilities of other dams on the river. Ironically, it will be recycling of turbines from the discontinued dams at other dams that makes the increased power production possible.

While it still is anyone's guess whether runs of Atlantic salmon can actually be restored on the Penobscot, there is no question about the restoration of the other anadromous species native to the river.

The Project will allow the return of river herring, American shad and seven additional species of migratory fish to the largest river in Maine. The rebuilding of the Penobscot's fish stocks will have multiple benefits, including providing more food for fish-eating birds — such as eagles, ospreys, and herons — and for predatory fish in the Gulf of Maine, such as cod, pollock and other commercially significant groundfish. In fact, a wide array of wildlife will benefit from the removal of these dams, everything from tommycod to eagles.

This is a project with endless benefits, not the least of which is showing those who inevitably rise up to oppose any dam removal that it's possible to do so while increasing the state's supply of hydropower. (HPV)