



**203 Carriage Shop Road, East Falmouth, MA 02536**

**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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September 21, 2021

**Childs River Restoration Complete  
Restoring Habitat for Fish and Wildlife in Falmouth and Mashpee**

Construction for the Childs River restoration, which included installation of a new culvert and reopening of Carriage Shop Road at the river crossing, was completed in August. Completion of this \$3 million project comes a year after construction began and following five years of planning by the project lead, the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club. The project is only the second river and bog restoration of its kind on Cape Cod and among only a handful now completed in southeastern Massachusetts.

“The Falmouth Rod and Gun Club, along with the Sporting, Safety, Conservation and Education Fund with support from the towns of Mashpee and Falmouth, undertook this project to revive the river system to its once historic status as a thriving habitat for Brook Trout and a natural area for public recreation,” said Ron Densmore, club president. “Working with a large group of partners and funders, we are excited to see the output of this great effort.”

The area is part of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, and the river and its resources have been maintained by the sports club in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge. Under a memorandum of understanding, multiple landowners operate and manage their lands as part of the refuge, with shared conservation goals for the protection of waterfowl, wildlife, and their habitats.

The initial driver for this project was to restore and improve coldwater habitat for Brook Trout, but the restoration will also provide multiple benefits to fish, wildlife, and the surrounding watershed. The new culvert installed at the Carriage Shop Road crossing, removal of old cranberry bog water control structures upstream, and replacement of a failed fish ladder with a functioning stream channel will allow Brook Trout, American Eel, and other fish and wildlife to migrate upstream to what has been largely inaccessible habitat for decades.

A Federal Lands Transportation Program grant from the Federal Highway Administration paid for the culvert installation and road repaving. The town of Falmouth purchased the culvert.

“This has been a tremendous partnership that will have lasting impacts on natural resources for the watershed,” said Scott Kahan, North Atlantic-Appalachian regional chief of refuges of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “It’s wonderful to see private landowners and partners working together to restore habitat for the benefit of wildlife and people and an honor to support this effort with technical and financial assistance.”

Removal of an old earthen dam below Carriage Shop Road, along with improvements to water flow in the bogs, has eliminated connections of warm water ponds to the river channel that had raised water temperatures and impaired existing coldwater habitat for trout.

Upstream, the abandoned Farley and Garner cranberry bogs were restored to natural wetland habitat by filling old ditches, removing excess sand, and improving the flow and temperature of the river to benefit fish and other wildlife. Within these bogs, four new freshwater ponds, which are separated from the river, provide shallow and deep water habitat for dabbling and diving ducks.

Together, these combined actions to restore functionality to the wetland and reconnect the river to the surrounding floodplain will increase the resilience of the system to flooding. This restored system will also improve water quality by reducing stream temperature, increasing dissolved oxygen in the water supporting aquatic life, and increasing uptake of nutrients currently degrading water quality in the Waquoit Bay estuary downstream.

“The restoration of the Childs River brings multiple benefits to people and nature,” said Beth Lambert, director of the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration. “Restoration results in healthy wetlands, habitat connectivity for eastern Brook Trout and other native species, and improved water quality. In addition, the town of Falmouth benefits from a larger road-stream crossing that is resilient to extreme weather, and residents and visitors alike will enjoy improved trails for exploring Cape Cod’s unique environment. DER is thankful to work with dedicated partners to see this work from the initial vision through completion.”

“The completion of the Childs River restoration project greatly improves the habitat for the restored population of sea run Brook Trout to conditions close to what was available in the early 1800s, when the river attracted some of the earliest sport anglers to the region. The removal of the pond at Carriage Shop Road has already shown dramatic improvement in average July temperatures from the 70s, which are too warm for trout, to the high 50s which are close to ideal for trout survival and growth. This expanded habitat should result in improved Brook Trout populations in the future as the fish colonize new habitats in the former pond and bogs. This project was a great example of the cooperation needed between federal, state and local governments, anglers, hunters, environmental groups, and businesses to protect and improve fisheries and wildlife habitats for future generations,” said Steve Hurley, MassWildlife southeast district fisheries manager.

“If you build it, they will come,” stated April Wobst, Association to Preserve Cape Cod restoration ecologist. “That is the approach we and the team have taken in seeking to restore this to a functional system for fish and wildlife. Following the lead of those working on the Coonamessett River restoration and other regional partners, we are taking techniques and lessons learned to turn back time and recreate the conditions of what was historically a natural wetland and free flowing river. Monitoring the outcomes of this project, APCC plans to continue to work with partners to support transfer of this knowledge to other projects across the region.”

The Childs River restoration partners and funders include the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club, the Sporting Safety Conservation and Education Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the towns of Mashpee and Falmouth, MassWildlife, Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Inter-Fluve, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, Luciano’s Excavation Inc., Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, the Falmouth and Mashpee Community Preservation Committees, Woodwell Climate Research Center, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through collaboration with Restore America’s Estuaries Southeast New England Program watershed grants, the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, the Cape Cod Foundation, the Living Observatory, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Sea Run Brook Trout Coalition and the Friends of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge.

For more information, contact Gary Anderson, Falmouth Rod and Gun Club treasurer and project manager at [huntergal@comcast.net](mailto:huntergal@comcast.net) or April Wobst, Association to Preserve Cape Cod restoration ecologist at [awobst@apcc.org](mailto:awobst@apcc.org). To learn more about the project go to <https://www.sscefund.org/>.

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