

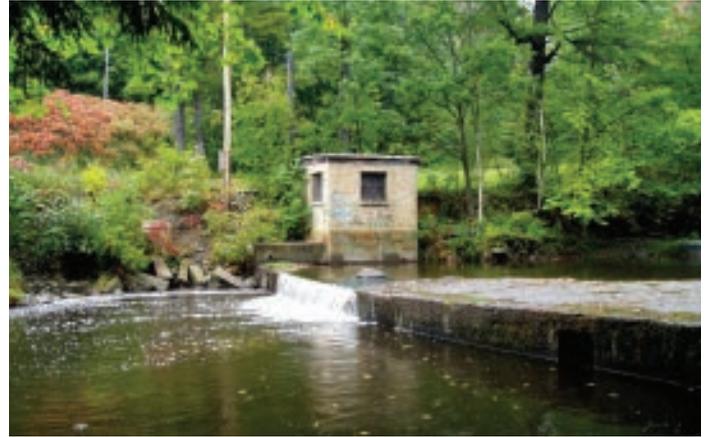
Due to a steep ledge drop at the confluence with the Androscoggin River, Atlantic salmon, American eel, and sea lamprey can move into the Little River, while bass and pike cannot.

Little River Dam Removal

Project: Little River Dam Removal, Little River, Androscoggin River Watershed

Before

Tributary: The Little River is an important lower Androscoggin River tributary for cold-water fish species like brook trout and Atlantic salmon. This 17,500-acre watershed is 82% forest, 8% grassland, and largely undeveloped despite its proximity to several large towns and urban areas. The Little River has a largely intact riparian buffer zone, is well-shaded, and has cold groundwater inputs from numerous springs that keep the river cool during the summer, making it excellent habitat for trout and salmon.



Problem: Conservation of Atlantic salmon in the Androscoggin River watershed had never been a high priority for state or federal fisheries agencies despite the fact that the river historically produced a run of at least 50,000 salmon. A lengthy history of water quality problems, habitat degradation, impassable dams, and presence of non-native fish species like smallmouth bass and northern pike have made large portions of the Androscoggin inaccessible or inhospitable to Atlantic salmon and other native fish species. Despite the problems in the watershed and the lack of resources spent to restore the species, Atlantic salmon continued to persist in the watershed. With the designation of the Androscoggin's Atlantic salmon as a federally protected endangered species in 2009 came a renewed





focus to salmon conservation and restoration in the watershed. A small dam on the Little River, a tributary that enters the mainstem Androscoggin between the towns of Topsham and Lisbon, became the first dam ever removed in the Androscoggin watershed for environmental reasons.

Solution: The Little River and its tributaries have been identified both as a refugia from many of the non-native fish species that inhabit the mainstem of the Androscoggin, but also an area where Atlantic salmon spawning has likely been occurring. A small, obsolete dam on the lower Little River was hindering passage of American eel, sea lamprey, brook trout and Atlantic salmon. The Atlantic Salmon Federation, along with the Androscoggin River Alliance and the Maine Department of Marine Resources, worked with the dam's owner, Miller Industries, to remove the dam in the summer of 2009, opening up 43 miles of riverine habitat.

Anticipated Results: Sea lamprey, eels, brook trout, and both juvenile and adult Atlantic salmon have been documented in the Little River above the old dam site in the years since the dam removal. The 7 acres of riverfront land adjacent to the old dam site are now owned by the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust. Project partners will continue to monitor the Little River for Atlantic salmon and will explore additional opportunities to both conserve and enhance spawning and rearing habitat in the system.

Partners: The engineering work was completed by Stantec Consultants and the dam removal construction was done by Shaw Brothers Construction. Project partners and funders include ASF and its Maine Council, Androscoggin River Alliance, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Miller Industries, Inc., Patagonia, Inc., Orchard Foundation, Orvis, Inc., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Total Project Costs: \$85,000
Project Completion: September 2009