

Wolastoq-St. John Watershed Restoration Program Description

Purpose: To create a prioritized strategic restoration plan for the U.S. side of the Wolastoq-St. John Watershed focusing on aquatic habitat needs, particularly addressing barriers to fish passage posed by road/rail crossings and dams.

Why: Habitat is fragmented and infrastructure is vulnerable to more extreme storm events (e.g. Route 1 washout in Cyr Plantation this spring).

Scope: There are over 4000 known road crossings in the watershed, roughly 15% state, 15% municipal and 70% private. We need to identify the most important improvements to address. Many owners will need financial assistance to make desired improvements.

Plan Timing: January 2024-April 2025

Planning Grant Goals & Deliverables:

1. Build strong collaborative among partners to build trust and maximize leveraged investment opportunities around shared objectives.
2. Develop multi-value prioritization model using best data available and scoring criteria for water quality, fisheries habitat, threatened species, public safety, fiscal prudence and community economic development.
3. Build understanding and enthusiasm for combining objectives and fixing most serious problems among landowners, asset managers, municipal leaders and the general public. Seek endorsements for the Restoration Plan once complete to set up for implementation.
4. Complete prioritized investment plan with highest ranking projects sufficiently scoped for technical, fiscal and political feasibility to launch aggressive implementation fundraising campaigns.
5. Grow the capacity of the Maliseet Community Development Authority to manage the program and collaborative relationships, anticipating several large scale infrastructure and habitat restoration efforts occurring over next 10 years to implement the plan.

Use of Funds: Funds will support a project manager and consultants with the expertise to develop the model, perform needed outreach, develop and review technical data, evaluate effective solutions and prepare cost estimates for the highest scoring projects.

Anticipated Next Steps: Use Plan to create bundled infrastructure/habitat restoration funding applications beginning in 2024 for municipalities and private landowners.