

# Mill River Habitat Restoration

## The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts

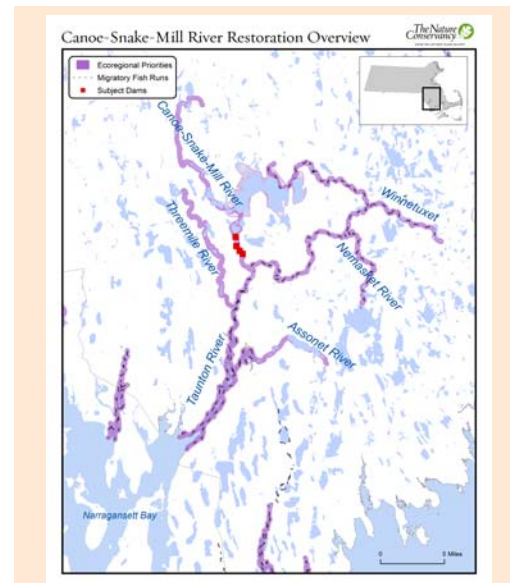


### Alewives ascending the Nemasket River, Middleboro, MA.

Once known as “Herring Town” for the abundance of fish that ascended the Mill River each spring, the City of Taunton has a new opportunity to regain the title.

A series of dams constructed to provide water and power for mills as Taunton’s industry grew destroyed the fish runs that were so important to native peoples and early colonists.

Today, the Mill River dams are no longer serving the purpose for which they were built, and they’ve become a hazard to the community. During storms in October 2005, the Whittenton Mill Dam nearly failed, prompting the evacuation of downtown Taunton and turning national attention to the issue of failing dams.



### Fast Facts

The Taunton River watershed hosts New England’s largest alewife run

The Mill River project will re-connect 41 river miles and 550 acres of alewife spawning habitat

The Mill River Habitat Restoration will address public safety concerns, re-connect 41 river miles for resident fish, American eel, freshwater mussels and turtles, and restore access to 550 acres of alewife spawning habitat.

A feasibility study to evaluate alternatives for river restoration and fish passage was initiated in April 2007. The three downstream dams are being evaluated for removal or constructed fishways. The only option considered at the fourth dam is a fishway, because Lake Sabbatia is a natural lake enlarged by the dam and is a highly valued recreational resource. The project will move forward in phases, with expected completion in 2011.

A monitoring program will measure the effects of the restoration on migratory and resident fish, the river channel, wetlands, and riverside vegetation.



## Working Together

	Project Mgmt	Technical Comm.	Outreach Comm.	Funding
Southeastern Regional Planning (SRPEDD)	✓	✓	✓	✓
MA Riverways Program	✓	✓	✓	✓
MA Division of Marine Fisheries		✓		
US Fish & Wildlife Service		✓		
NOAA Restoration Center		✓		✓
The Nature Conservancy		✓	✓	✓
American Rivers		✓		✓
Taunton River Watershed Alliance			✓	
Save the Bay		✓		



*The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.*

Mill River dams, from top left: State Hospital, West Britannia, Whittenton Mill, Morey's Bridge.



The National Partnership between the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program and The Nature Conservancy implements innovative conservation activities that benefit natural resources and riparian habitats across the United States. The NOAA Restoration Center has worked with community organizations to support local y-driven projects that provide strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that offer educational and social benefits for people and their communities, as well as long-term ecological benefits.

For more information:

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