

Habitat restoration in Maine

Gulf of Maine Coastal Program



Installing ditch plug to restore salt marsh hydrology



Removing dam to restore fish



Seabird island survey



Grassland restoration

Since colonial times, Maine's natural environment has been subject to serious abuse. Increasingly, individuals and groups are becoming interested in restoring habitat where ecological, recreational and economic values have been lost. Maine's rivers, for example, are burdened with excessive sedimentation, loss of riparian vegetation and thousands of dams – which can degrade riverine habitat values and present serious impediments for many species of migratory fish and recreational users. Coastal island nesting birds may be threatened by disturbances associated with second home developments, timber harvesting, recreational use, aquaculture and predation. Maine's coastal marshes have been degraded by drainage ditches, filling, invasive plants, road crossings and undersized culverts. Maine's native grasslands are also disappearing – victims of residential development, fire suppression and forest succession. Gulf of Maine Program is committed to working in voluntary partnerships with all interested stakeholders, to restore rivers, nesting islands, coastal marshes and grasslands for migratory fish, birds, endangered species – and for all of us.

Since its inception, Gulf of Maine Program, with technical and financial support from many conservation partners, has played a substantial role in restoring 13 coastal nesting islands for nesting seabirds. In the late 1990's, with significant financial support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fish Passage Funds, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation-funded Maine Habitat Restoration Partnership and the Maine Atlantic Salmon Conservation Fund, and with additional financial and technical assistance provided by many partners, Gulf of Maine Program expanded its role in restoration by:

- coordinating with state and federal agencies, local and state conservation groups, private contractors and business sponsors to identify, prioritize, fund, design, implement and monitor river, salt marsh and grassland restoration work.
- restoring migratory fish passage at 56 sites by removing, lowering or breaching dams, installing/rehabilitating fishways, and conducting riparian restoration work to minimize non-point source pollution and eliminate excessive sedimentation.
- restoring nine salt marsh sites by plugging ditches, restoring tidal flow, removing fill from the marsh surface, and eliminating invasive plants.
- restoring four native grasslands.
- providing technical support to complete a restoration inventory in Maine's largest salt marsh.
- developing and implementing a scientifically-based restoration monitoring protocol at multiple salt marsh restoration sites.
- supporting field work needed to document and address fish passage and river restoration concerns.
- providing funds to support a river restoration coordinator.

For further information, please contact:

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