



482 Main Street, Dennis, MA 02638 • Phone: 508-619-3185 • E-Mail: info@apcc.org

PRESS RELEASE

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Childs River Restoration Construction Begins

Construction for the Childs River Restoration project is underway on land owned and leased by the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club in Falmouth and Mashpee. Construction in the river and upstream bogs is being completed by Luciano's Excavation, Inc. with oversight by the club, and from Inter-Fluve, which completed design and engineering for the project.

The project will return the abandoned Farley and Garner cranberry bogs to natural wetland habitat and will restore the river to improve the productivity of this ecosystem for fish and other wildlife. A new culvert at the Carriage Shop Road crossing and replacement of a failed fish ladder with a functioning stream channel will allow Brook Trout, along with American Eel and other fish species, to migrate upstream to currently inaccessible habitat. At the same time, removal of an old earthen dam below Carriage Shop Road, along with improvements to water flow in the bogs, will reduce ponding and sources of warm water currently impairing existing coldwater habitat for the Trout.

“Development in the form of cranberry bogs, mill dam construction and other factors caused the extirpation of the wild Brook Trout population in the Childs River. Between 2008 and 2010, wild Brook Trout from the Quashnet River were transplanted to the Childs River which resulted in a successful reproducing wild Trout population in the lower Childs River,” said Steve Hurley, MassWildlife’s Southeast District Fisheries Manager. “However, due to the barrier created by the dam and failed fish ladder, Trout have not been making it further upstream. Restoration of the stream channel and upstream cranberry bogs will improve aquatic habitat for Trout and other kinds of fish and wildlife with the added benefit of enhancing ecosystem resilience.”

The area is part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, and the river and its resources have been maintained by the club in coordination with the refuge, Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and MassWildlife. The restoration project is a long-term effort begun by the Rod and Gun Club in October of 2016. With four years and about \$2.5 million committed for planning, design, permitting and construction, the club and the project team are now seeing their hard work come to fruition, according to Ron Densmore, club president. “This project supports the club's mission of improvement, conservation and preservation of the land and water systems of Cape Cod,” said Densmore. “Restoring the bogs and river will ensure the public can enjoy the natural, historical beauty of these resources in perpetuity.”

The Association to Preserve Cape Cod has supported the club in planning and project management since 2017. The project was also selected in 2018 by the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) as a priority project as part of their newly formed Cranberry Bog Program, which aims to work on retired farms to restore out-of-use cranberry bogs to natural wetlands. “Through our Restoration Coordination Center, APCC has been working across the Cape with partners like DER to provide technical support and help bring in grant funding for town and community projects like this,” said April Wobst, APCC’s restoration ecologist. “Clearing

of excess plant growth and trees are a part of this first phase of work along with earth moving and stockpiling of trees for reuse for the restoration. Much like with the nearby Coonamessett River restoration project, there will be a period of transition during construction when it is going to look messy. However, the reward will be worth the wait when we have a new, functional and beautiful river when work and replanting is complete.”

“The holistic restoration of the Child's River provides an opportunity to restore stream and wetland form and function by removing the physical barriers that have been impacting it for centuries,” said Nick Nelson, senior geomorphologist and regional director at Inter-Fluve. “With remarkable foresight, the club has formed a team of club members and local residents, non-profit organizations, and local, state, and federal agencies to achieve the goal of a free-flowing stream with improved water quality and aquatic and terrestrial habitat from headwater springs to downstream tidal waters.”

Additional support for the Childs River restoration has been provided by the Sporting, Safety, Conservation, and Education Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USFWS Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, the towns of Mashpee and Falmouth, MassWildlife, Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, 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, 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 huntergal1@comcast.net or April Wobst, Association to Preserve Cape Cod restoration ecologist at awobst@apcc.org.

A short video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBbtEa76MA0&t> for those interested in learning more about the history of the Childs River and bogs.

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