

Sebago TU Volunteers Support Fish Passage Impediment Survey

Sebago TU teamed with the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) this summer on their survey of impediments to fish passage for all waters flowing into Casco Bay. Training took place in June and July with the survey work – mostly culverts – continuing into August.

Although the primary impetus for the project was Casco Bay and anadromous species passage, how fish can pass between different parts of the drainages affects fresh water species – including trout – as well. Badly designed culverts may prevent native and stocked brook trout from moving between habitat that the species needs to use at different times to thrive. This includes spawning areas, feeding areas, nursery areas and coldwater refuges needed to survive summer heat and low flow conditions. The data gathered will be used by both CBEP and IF&W, and should point out where improvements can and should be most efficiently made to improve trout habitat in the Crooked, Presumpscot and Royal River watersheds.

Sebago Chapter members Eben Marsh, Pat O'Shea, Stan Jennings, Brett Levin, Ken Simard, Don Hodgson, Brook Hidell, Emily Bastian, Nate Hinze, and Steve Heinz participated; Brett, Don and Steve put in multiple days in the field. TU volunteers supplied about two thirds of the volunteers effort expended and helped drive the “75% complete” in the first year of a two-year project status that was announced. CBEP said thanks to all survey volunteers and staff by holding a Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue on August 26th. CBEP Executive Director Dr. Curtis Bohlen praised the volunteers for their efforts and summer staff members Christina Bilodeau and Jessica Barilone presented them with tee shirts: front - “How did the fish cross the road?” back - “Through a properly designed culvert” with appropriate graphics and CBEP, TU and US Fish and Wildlife Service logos.

The survey still has the Crooked River drainage to go, and given its importance as the spawning grounds for Sebago Lake landlocked salmon, the chapter looks forward to continued involvement. IF&W will have similar work going on in the Saco draining the summers of 2010 through 2012 that will provide additional volunteer opportunities.