



# Stony Brook Salt Marsh & Fish Passage Restoration



## COASTAL RESTORATION *at work*

In February 2009, NOAA received \$167 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to restore coastal habitat and help jump-start the nation's economy by supporting thousands of jobs.

After a rigorous selection process and review of more than 800 proposals, the agency funded 50 high quality, high priority coastal restoration projects—spanning the country from New England's salt marshes, to the shores of the Great Lakes, to the coral reefs of the Pacific Islands. One of these projects is the Stony Brook Salt Marsh and Fish Passage Restoration in Brewster, Massachusetts.

### Restoring Stony Brook

Stony Brook is an unusual watershed on Cape Cod. It supports both a large coastal wetland as well as a very large fish run—the most popular on Cape Cod. It has nearly 400 acres of spawning habitat for river herring, and habitat for American eels. The watershed also contains more than 900 acres of protected open space, the historic Stony Brook mill, and numerous scenic vistas.

Historically, Stony Brook was once a meandering stream with extensive surrounding salt marsh. However, the rise of American industry beginning in the late 18th century led to great change for Cape Cod's natural habitats. The town's history grew around Stony Brook, where the first water-powered grist and woolen mill in the country was founded in the late 1600s. Downstream, roads and culverts divided the salt marsh and constricted water flow between the Cape Cod Bay and Stony Brook.

### Tidal Flow and Fish Passage

In 2006, NOAA and the Town of Brewster, along with other local and state partners, saw an important opportunity to restore Stony Brook and began planning for the project. In 2009, NOAA awarded the Town of Brewster \$1.65 million of Recovery Act funds to construct the project.



This culvert above conveyed Stony Brook under Route 6A. This aging, undersized culvert was replaced by an 18-foot box culvert.

The project began in the spring of 2010. Contractors replaced an undersized and deteriorating three-foot culvert on state route 6A with a larger 18-foot box culvert. This facilitated natural tidal flow and improved fish passage. The project also rebuilt portions of a trail through the marsh and created a marsh overlook platform.

The increased tidal flow will restore 20 acres of salt marsh and 3,000 feet of stream habitat. This will also allow herring greater access to nearly 400 acres of prime spawning habitat and decrease the area of non-native plant species on the marsh surface.

The project supported many jobs through its construction efforts, employing area engineers, construction crews, biologists and surveyors. This project also replaced aging infrastructure, improving public safety in Brewster.

“These Recovery Act projects will put Americans to work while restoring our coasts and combating climate change.”

- Secretary of Commerce, Gary Locke



The new culvert restored tidal flow and allowed fish to migrate to their freshwater spawning grounds.



This salt marsh was restored when Recovery Act funds supported the employment of local experts to restore healthier habitat for many Cape Cod area species.

## The Future of Cape Cod Coastal Habitat

The estuaries and coastal habitats of Massachusetts, including Stony Brook, form a vast and complex web of biodiversity—thousands of species of plants and animals, millions of individual organisms that, together, make up a rich and valuable ecosystem. From striped bass, alewife, and lobster to osprey and great blue herons, the Commonwealth's fish and wildlife depend on healthy coastal habitats.

In recent years, new approaches have been developed to help restore degraded coastal habitat, benefit fish and wildlife populations, and improve ecosystems and communities. As a leader in habitat restoration in Cape Cod and throughout Massachusetts' coastal areas, NOAA will continue to work with local, state, federal, and non-governmental partners to restore rivers, wetlands, oyster reefs, and other coastal habitats.

## Coastal Restoration and Recovery Nationwide

All of the 50 coastal restoration Recovery Act projects are now underway, and many will be complete by the end of the year. The 50 projects have already supported hundreds of jobs and are expected to support the equivalent of an additional 1,000 full-time jobs before they are completed.

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### Project Partners

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Town of Brewster, Massachusetts
- Cape Cod Museum of Natural History
- Association to Preserve Cape Cod
- Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration
- Massachusetts Bays Program