



# Reconnecting Our Rivers and Estuaries

Fish such as herring, smelt and eels must travel between the ocean and freshwater along rivers and streams to complete their life cycles, that is, to live and reproduce. Dams, many of which are obsolete and in poor repair, are big obstacles to aquatic wildlife, impair water quality for all, and increase flood risks to downstream communities. Removing dams and restoring rivers improves fisheries and recreation, decreases stagnant water and associated mosquito-borne illness, and increases safety. Southeastern MA watershed associations, towns, and their local, state and federal partners have been leaders in improving stream connectivity. Critical funding and assistance have been provided by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and its agencies.

## Success Stories

- Removed dams and restored rivers, opening up miles of river for fish and other wildlife, as well as human enjoyment (JRWA, NepRWA, NSRWA, STB).
- Monitor herring, contributing to DMF data set and for comparison before and after dam removal or fish ladder replacement (BCWC, HPWA, JRWA, NepRWA, NSRWA).
- Improved and restored fish passage. When dam removal is not feasible, fish passage can be increased with better (or new) fish ladders or fishways, restoring miles of river and stream and essential ponds and headwater lakes for use as habitat. (JRWA, STB, NSRWA).
- Obtained superfund designation of lower Neponset for removal of PCBs, and advocated for removal of two major dams to reduce flood risk impact of climate change (NepRWA).
- Designated the Taunton River as Wild and Scenic, a federal designation providing extra protection of the river and better access to funds for water quality, dam removal, and wetlands restoration (STB, TRWA).
- Completed Conceptual Design for a 56-acre wetlands restoration project at the headwaters of the Marstons Mills River (BCWC).

## What Can Legislators Do?

The Watershed Action Alliance of Southeastern Massachusetts greatly appreciates your efforts to protect water resources in your district, and we want to help you! Our 14 member organizations are very knowledgeable about the environmental issues in your region, and we have subject matter expertise that we want to share with you. With our long histories of environmental success and our extensive local partnerships, we are uniquely positioned to help your constituents by efficiently using and leveraging the Commonwealth's financial investment in environmental protection. Please support our Top Five legislative priorities for FY23:

1. Prioritizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund investment in water infrastructure and climate resiliency projects.
2. Making non-profit organizations eligible for climate resiliency funding through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program (Energy and Environmental Affairs).
3. Supporting H.2198 An Act relative to the preservation of water resources in Chapter 40B applications.
4. Supporting H.898/S.530 An Act relative to maintaining adequate water supplies through drought mgmt.
5. Supporting the Green Budget FY23, including line items for DCR, DER, DEP, EEA, and MVP program.