

Restoring Furnace Brook Fishway

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Construction work to restore the Furnace Brook Fishway in the Town of Cornwall is completed. This work is the result of several years of effort by HVA and other partners including the adjacent landowner, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Inland Fisheries Division and the Housatonic Fly Fishers Association.

Furnace Brook is a high-quality headwater tributary of the Housatonic, draining 13.3 square miles of the Town of Cornwall. The clean, cold water of Furnace Brook provides an important thermal refuge for trout trying to escape the warm waters of the mainstem Housy in the summertime. Furnace Brook also provides important trout spawning habitat.

In 2012, HVA obtained funding from the Connecticut Housatonic River Natural Resource Damage Trustee Council to repair the fishway and restore passage through the culvert. The Council, which is represented by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, administers funds that were derived from a 1999 settlement with General Electric to restore the natural resources and recreational uses of the Housatonic River that were injured by the release of PCBs from the GE facility in Pittsfield, Mass.



In the photos above, a couple of HVA staff members unload the Alaskan Steeppass units we'll be using for the Furnace Brook Fishway restoration project. Each of these units weighs about 450 lbs! The Steeppass units will be installed inside the existing fishway, creating an extremely durable baffling system that will maintain velocities that fish can handle as they move upstream.

We worked with the engineering firm Princeton Hydro LLC along with our other partners to develop a design for the restoration project.

With the design completed and our permits in hand, we retained River Logic Solutions Inc. as our construction contractor. Construction began the week of September 1st and was completed within two weeks. Follow our posts on [Facebook](#) about our progress until the fall migration, when we expect to see significant numbers of trout getting past the culvert to spawn for the first time in more than 20 years!

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