

## Winnicut Dam removal celebrated

October 16, 2009

GREENLAND — After years of planning and a summer of work, those involved in the removal of Winnicut River Dam celebrated a new era for the river.

The Thursday afternoon event, held on the bank of the river, also marked a partnership between several state, federal and local agencies aimed at protecting and improving New Hampshire estuaries. The 52-year-old dam was torn down in hopes of restoring populations of fish that migrate between freshwater and the ocean, and which have dwindled since the dam's creation by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to create a habitat for waterfowl.



Cheri Patterson, the supervisor of marine programs with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, said it should help to restore populations of the fish, which depend on both the river and the ocean, as they will be able to go freely to and fro. Some of the species that could benefit include the blueback herring and rainbow smelt. Both are on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's watch list for species of concern, which are species that could eventually become endangered or at risk.

### Online

To check out the course of the dam removal project through pictures, visit [www.earthcam.com/winnicut](http://www.earthcam.com/winnicut).

In addition to the removal of the dam, a new fish pass will be put in, habitats will be restored and agencies have worked to eradicate the invasive Japanese knotweed plant that invaded some 6,000 square feet of the stream-bank. A public boat access for car-top vessels such as canoes and kayaks will also be created upstream of the Route 33 bridge.

A series of speakers thanked those involved and explained each agency's role in the process. Almost all mentioned the town of Greenland for its role in allowing the change to occur.

Jeff Barnum, the president of the Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire, praised the project and all those who contributed. He said it was a helpful measure for the river and the Great Bay, which has been dealing with an increasing number of environmental issues in recent years.

"It's no secret that Great Bay hasn't been as great of late. What's happening here is a real bright spot," Barnum said. "It was the right thing to do. CCA New Hampshire thanks you, and the fish thank you."

Appropriately enough for the nature-friendly event, a blue heron flew by the head of Ted Diers, the coastal program manager for the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, before he delivered the opening speech for the afternoon. He said an enormous amount of time and effort went into the project — estimated by Catherine Coletti of the NHDES Coastal Program to be about seven years.

"When I started this project, my daughter was 2. My daughter is in the second grade this year," he said. "It's a cast of thousands who make a project like this happen."

The afternoon concluded with a ceremonial signing by 10 agencies, including New Hampshire Fish and Game and NOAA coming together to protect estuaries. After the ceremony, those in attendance were scheduled to get a tour of the project site led by those involved.