

## *River Restoration*

The Child's River runs south from John's Pond in Mashpee and empties into Waquoit Bay in Falmouth. It passes through the middle of the property owned by the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club. The Clubhouse presently sits on a plateau overlooking the river.

Historically the Child's River had been known mostly as a herring river, an important commercial enterprise, and source of income for the local economy.

In the early 1900s the river also became known as a world-class Salter Brook Trout river along with other local rivers such as the Coonamessett, Quashnet, and Mashpee Rivers. It is believed to have been fished by two past US Presidents. Over a period of many years the Child's River suffered catastrophic damage to its ecosystem, in part due to chemicals and water temperature increases from upstream cranberry bogs, as well as siltation which smothered the stream bed and prevented trout from spawning. The lower reaches of the river became choked by vegetation and debris causing reduced water flow.

In 1969, the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club installed a fish ladder to aid herring to pass more easily upstream to spawn. In 1990, the club undertook a major project in cooperation with the Falmouth Department of Natural Resources. This project removed overvegetation and debris from the river channel between the lower pond and the outflow of the river to improve water flow and the free passage of fish.

In 2008, the club committed to the restoration of the lower reaches of the Child's River as a Salter Brook Trout river. This effort is undertaken with the Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife, Massachusetts Riverways, and the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. On June 4, 2008, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist Steve Hurley and his team moved 19 adult Salter Brook Trout from the restored Quashnet River to the Child's River. At that time they implanted a PIT tag (a kind of bar code tag) into each fish. When released, their size, PIT tag number and the exact GPS location were recorded for future reference and tracking purposes. Since being moved to the Child's River, two fish surveys have been conducted to ascertain that the fish have stayed and adapted to their new home. The second of these surveys revealed 11 of the original stocked fish were able to be located with some movement in the river and very good growth. This is encouraging news and the group is looking forward to April of 2009 when an electroshocking survey will be conducted. This will determine if these fish were able to successfully spawn and may reveal young trout in the river.

#### UPDATE 2017:

The Falmouth Rod and Gun Club (FRGC), in conjunction with its charitable foundation, the Sporting, Safety, Conservation and Education Fund (SSCEF) have embarked on a major expansion of this project. Together with the Towns of Falmouth and Mashpee, the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and others, they intend to lead the project to restore two abandoned bogs, the Farley and the Garner, back to their original wetland state. Both of these bogs are fed by natural springs flowing into the Childs River. Historically this facilitated the spawning of herring and brook trout upriver. An earthen dam has created two ponds which have warmed the river to such an extent that the fish habitat has become too hostile an environment for them to survive. The groups have a plan to fix that problem.

The solution is to remove the dam and the two shallow ponds, reroute the upper Childs River to the west side of the Farley Bog, construct an embankment along the east side of the river, and plant native plant species to shade the river. The intent is to create a coldwater fishery in the upper Childs River which will allow the return and propagation of brook trout and herring. The restoration of the cranberry bogs to wetlands will create habitat for songbirds, waterfowl, and other wildlife. Additionally, these wetlands will act as a natural filtration system for water resources in both towns.

The Farley Bog is located in East Falmouth, MA, and borders the Falmouth/Mashpee town line. The Farley Bog and the Childs River are part of a 12.5-acre parcel owned by the Town of Falmouth. The northern tip of the Farley Bog lies within a 24.7-acre parcel owned by the Town of Mashpee. The Childs River extends north from the Farley Bog to the Garner Bogs, all of which are within the Mashpee parcel.

The FRGC owns 186 acres of land in Falmouth and Mashpee which virtually surrounds the Farley Bog and the portion of the Childs River leading north to the Garner Bogs. The FRGC and SSCEF have proposed to acquire these parcels to rehabilitate the upper Childs River and restore the Farley and Garner cranberry bogs to wetlands. The land and river would have a Conservation Restriction to ensure it would remain undeveloped but still be accessible to the public for hiking and enjoying nature.

This worthwhile project will benefit the surrounding communities and restore the area to its eco-friendly natural state.

## UPDATE 2018:

We continue to make significant progress in 2018, including an agreement with the Town of Falmouth to purchase the 12.5-acre parcel of the Farley Bog and completion of a 30-year lease with the Town of Mashpee for the 24.7-acre Garner Bog parcel. A Conservation Restriction is near completion for the Farley Bog, which will allow the transfer of the title of that land to the FRGC.

Our engineering partner, Inter-Fluve Inc., is completing survey and engineering plans for the final location of the river, restoration of the two bogs, removal of the earthen dam, and full rehabilitation of the Childs River to a coldwater fishery.

We are fortunate to have received grant funding from these federal, state, and local sources:

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