

ENVIRONMENT

Bradley events hail milestones in local ecology

Chestnut trees planted, fishway dedicated at Leonard's Mills



BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY JOHN CLARKE RUSS

Local Atlantic Salmon Federation Maine Council volunteer Bucky Owen, left, and Andrew Goode, vice president U.S. Programs-- Atlantic Salmon Federation, poured buckets filled with alewives into a newly completed fishway at Leonard's Mills Logging Museum dam on Blackman Stream in Bradley, Maine during a dedication ceremony there Saturday morning, May 22, 2010. The fishway caps and eight-year effort by the Atlantic Salmon Federation to reconnect Blackman Stream to the Penobscot River — part of an effort to restore sea-run fisheries in the Penobscot River. [Buy Photo](#)



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[By Jessica Bloch](#)

BDN Staff

BRADLEY, Maine — The Maine Forest and Logging Museum at Leonard's Mills might seem an unusual place to mark two important moments for Maine's ecology.

But alewives and chestnut trees fit right into Leonard's Mills' mission to keep alive the state's forest traditions of the late 18th century, and they were the main players in Saturday's events.

A new fishway at the Leonard's Mills dam on Blackman Stream was dedicated Saturday morning after eight years of work by the Atlantic Salmon Federation and its Maine council. The fishway creates a passage for fish around the dam on Blackman Stream, which runs into the Penobscot River. In conjunction with the fishway, the Maine Department of Marine Resources a week ago stocked Chemo Pond, which is upriver from the dam, with sea-run alewives in order to restore sea-run fisheries on the Penobscot.

After that ceremony, Bangor resident Glen Rea, who is chairman of the board of directors of the American Chestnut Foundation, planted on museum grounds the first two genetically altered, blight-resistant chestnut trees in Maine.

The planting was symbolic of a nearly 30-year effort to restore chestnut trees after they were wiped out in the early 20th century due to blight across the country.

“Ecologically this is an important day in the state of Maine,” said Rea, who is a member of the Leonard's Mills board and a graduate of the University of Maine's forestry program. “We have alewives coming back and chestnuts coming back.”

About 40 people attended the first ceremony, during which the fishway was dedicated. Alewives collected Saturday morning at the Veazie Dam were dumped from two buckets into the new fishway to mark its opening.

A fishway is a structure that allows fish to ascend a stream over obstacles that they normally wouldn't be able to go over, according to ASF Maine Council member Ray “Bucky” Owen, a former commissioner of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and former chairman of the University of Maine Department of Wildlife Ecology.

“Right here, there is no fish passage so they can't [go] over the dam here,” Owen said. “This provides fish a chance to get beyond the obstacle. Now they're able to run up into Chemo Pond.”

The new fishway uses a Denil design, which ASF Vice President of U.S. Operations Andrew Goode said allows fish passage through a wide range of flows that mimic many of the Penobscot River's tributaries.

The Leonard's Mills board of trustees was a bit apprehensive about the fishway project, which had the potential to stick out visually among the 18th century-style buildings. But Saturday several board members credited contractor and stone mason Lance Linkel of Linkel Construction in Topsham with creating granite weirs and walls that help the fishway appear to belong in the space.

“This is built right into the existing ledge, so it looks very natural,” board member Bill Lynch said. “We didn't want anything that looked too unnatural. We had to compromise a little on some concrete, though. But it came out well.”