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| **New England Newsletter 2020**  From reconnection projects to in-stream habitat restoration, Trout Unlimited’s staff had a great year in New England in 2019, and are teed up for another big one in 2020.  The efforts helped improve access to dozens of miles of previously out-of-reach streams for the region’s trout and other stream-dwellers, while also improving habitat in rivers and streams. TU staff mobilized many partners, from other conservation-minded organizations to local TU chapters, in the work.  ***For general information about TU’s work in New England, please reach out to New England Project Coordinator Colin Lawson at****colin.lawson@tu.org****or 603-228-2200.*** |

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| Since 2012, TU has partnered with the local community and private landowners to complete the [Salmon Creek Enhancement and Restoration Project](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA2OA/index.html) (photo below) with a grant secured from the [General Electric Natural Resource Damages (NRD)](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA2OQ/index.html) fund administered by the Connecticut Council of Trustees. Additional funding from the NRD was secured in 2018 to finish the full scope of the Salmon Creek work. During 2019, two additional sites were constructed, and post-construction monitoring was completed.  Farther downstream, TU is engaged with local partners to develop a thermal refuge enhancement project in West Cornwall. Mill Brook flows into the Housatonic River directly above the [West Cornwall Covered Bridge. Since modifications to Mill Brook several years ago, the thermal refuge no longer provides a safe place for hundreds of Housatonic trout during the heat of the summe](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA3MA/index.html)r. The TU team has completed a plan for the site and continues to fundraise for the project.  Macedonia Brook in Kent, Conn., continues to be a focus for TU. Restoration work will continue this year with a riparian planting project planned for May, in partnership with [the Northwest Chapter, Kent School, Kent Elementary School and the Housatonic Valley Association](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA3MQ/index.html). |

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On [the Norwalk River](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA3Mw/index.html), the [Mianus Chapter](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA3NA/index.html), in partnership with a contractor and the Town of Wilton, TU completed a half-mile restoration project at Schencks Island in downtown Wilton. Much of the habitat degradation within this reach has been a result of urban encroachment. The presence of a decaying dam has also impacted the stretch.  In addition to removing the dam and stabilizing the stream banks for public access, the project included instream channel modifications focused on improving channel dimensions and instream habitat diversity and cover.  TU continues to work on the Middlebrook School Stormwater Project, hiring a consulting firm to help identify opportunities to capture and treat the stormwater on the 110-acre complex. This will reduce pollutant loads to Comstock Brook and improve water quality in the Norwalk River watershed. A grant through the [EPA's Clean Water Section 319](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA3NQ/index.html) will support the project and the development of a stormwater management plan and implementation of a demonstration project at the school.  ***For more information on TU's Connecticut work, please contact Tracy Brown at******tracy.brown@tu.org******.*** |

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| **NEW HAMPSHIRE** |

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TU had a very productive 2019 field season across New Hampshire. The team completed approximately 4 miles of strategic wood addition instream habitat restoration work, reconnected over 23 miles of excellent cold-water upstream habitat for brook trout, and hosted numerous community workshops focused on flood resiliency and at-risk infrastructure.  Our second year working on the Gunstock River (photo) in Gilford, N.H., in collaboration with Belknap County Conservation District, was a huge success.[TU completed 2.2 contiguous miles of strategic wood addition work on Gunstock River, a 6.4-mile river](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA3Nw/index.html) rising west of Belknap Mountain State Forest and flowing north through a steep ravine before entering Lake Winnipesaukee at Sanders Bay. This project continued a three-year instream habitat effort taking place throughout the Lake’s Region of New Hampshire. To date, over 5 miles of instream habitat restoration work has been completed with additional instream work planned for the upcoming field season.  In Pittsburg, N.H., the TU team completed a [newly installed pre-cast concrete bridge over Tabor Brook](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA3OA/index.html), Indian Stream’s closest cold-water tributary connected to the Upper Connecticut River main stem. The goal of the restoration was to replace an undersized and deteriorated pipe culvert that completely prevented aquatic organism passage to the upper reaches Tabor Brook. This project successfully reconnected close to 4-miles of upstream cold-water habitat, refugia, and spawning areas for migrating brook trout. |

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Continuing our [multi-year community outreach effort to rural communities throughout the state, TU hosted 10 Community Flood Resiliency & Restoration Workshops](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA4MA/index.html), engaging more than 200 residents from 23 communities. These workshops targeted private citizens, town decision-makers and Conservation Commission members. TU highlighted the technical assistance opportunities TU can provide to communities interested in addressing vulnerable infrastructure, floodplain management, reintroducing aquatic habitat and minimizing excessive instream sedimentation.  Looking forward to 2020, the goal for the New Hampshire team is to promote our recently expanded Technical Assistance Program, offering communities instream restoration options and engineering designs, as well as construction recommendations and oversight. TU is also actively working with a variety of state agencies to collaborate on AOP, flood resiliency, and water quality projects. TU will continue to work with partners to develop and review high-priority project locations throughout the state.  ***For more information on Trout Unlimited’s efforts in New Hampshire, reach out to Colin Lawson at****colin.lawson@tu.org****.*** |

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The Kinne Brook culvert replacement is finally all cleared through permits after a long time working with MassDOT structure review and TU will be moving into the construction phase as soon as possible this spring. In addition to some in-stream habitat work after the construction is complete, this culvert replacement will reconnect 1.5 miles of upstream habitat just 2 miles upstream of a dam that [TU removed back in 2014](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA4Mg/index.html).  TU coordinator, Erin Rodgers, is working with the Deerfield River Watershed Chapter to create rock vanes at the mouths of two important coldwater tributaries to the Deerfield River to help maintain the channel during low-flows on this dam-controlled river. Erin and the chapter have plans for more hands-on habitat work with large wood in the coming year and will be on the lookout for volunteers to help.  In 2019, TU continued our partnership with Mass Environmental Trust, UMass-Amherst, and MassDER to monitor the ecological response and resilience after removing dams (photo) from coldwater streams across the state. Initial study results highlight the importance of removing small dams from forested headwater streams and that while the timeline to recovery may vary based on landscape condition, all stream systems benefit from removing these sediment and fish barriers.  The Forests for Fish program continues to evolve and grow TU working to train Massachusetts DCR foresters on the benefits and methods of restoring large woody material to headwater streams in New England. This program was developed in partnership with Franklin Land Trust and piloted in Massachusetts with H.O. Cook State Forest manager, Nick Anzuoni. We anticipate continuing outreach to private landowners and publishing on guidebook on doing this type of work in Spring 2020.  Looking ahead to 2020, TU will complete construction on the Kinne Brook culvert replacement and improve large woody habitat up- and downstream of the new bridge. We are continuing to source funds for a large bank stabilization and fishing access project in New Marlborough which will keep sediment from polluting downstream reaches and bank erosion from jeopardizing a town bridge. TU will also work with chapters in western Massachusetts on instream habitat work on 1 to 2 miles of stream.  ***For more information on Trout Unlimited’s work in Massachusetts, please contact Erin Rodgers at****erin.rodgers@tu.org****or 603-852-8110.*** |

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TU continued our work with the US Forest Service in the Green Mountain National Forest, improving in-stream woody habitat in 3.5 miles of Chittenden Brook in 2019 (photo). Summer intern Zack Hoisington came up to Vermont to document our work there, the impacts and benefits it has for streams, and made a [video of the experience](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA4NA/index.html).  In other woodloading work, the TU large wood habitat crew worked with support from Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department to restore large wood to a mile of Clough Brook, a tributary to the Upper Connecticut River. We’ll be completing another 1-2 miles of work upstream in 2020.   The Forests for Fish program teaching private landowners and foresters about the benefits of restoring large wood to New England streams moved into Vermont. TU teamed up with Vermont Parks, Rec, and Forests and the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Service to host a training for state and private foresters and loggers.   It was very well received, and interest has been building for a second training in Spring 2020, which will be held in partnership with The Nature Conservancy on one of their conserved parcels in Windham.  Working with the towns of Sandgate and Guilford — in the headwaters of the Battenkill, Broad Brook and Falls Brook watersheds, respectively — TU helped prioritize culvert replacements within the towns and developed three initial design plans for undersized culvert replacements which we’ll be able to leverage into 100% replacement designs and construction funds through future state grants, ultimately reconnecting about 10 miles of upstream habitat.  In the Northeast Kingdom, TU partnered with The Nature Conservancy, and with additional financial support from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, to replace an undersized and perched culvert in Averill, Vt., to reconnect more than 2 miles of coldwater habitat. We were able to re-use a bridge from another TNC property to make a vast improvement to this tributary to Little Averill Pond.  In the Battenkilll watershed, TU launched a new [Home Rivers Initiative](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA4NQ/index.html) project. Coordinator Jacob Fetterman is rolling with landowner outreach, chapter member collaboration, and restoration projects throughout the Battenkill watershed.  Looking Ahead to 2020, the team plans to replace three undersized culverts in the headwaters of the Nulhegan River in partnership with Weyerhauser, Inc., and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.  Another 3 miles of in-stream wood addition is planned on the Green Mountain National Forest in the Rochester Region in the headwaters of the White River. We are also partnering on building future in-stream habitat with the U.S. Forest Service through Stewardship Agreements in the Somerset IRP Area, which encompasses a large portion of the headwaters of the Deerfield River.  ***For more information on Trout Unlimited’s work in Vermont, please contact Erin Rodgers at****erin.rodgers@tu.org****or 603-852-8110.*** |

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In Maine, 2019 saw us continuing our work to identify coastal streams in Casco Bay that support brook trout and have potential to support “salter” populations that use tidal waters. Volunteer anglers found five more Casco Bay tributaries with previously unknown brook trout populations, bringing our four-year total to eleven.   Angler-science volunteers from the Merrymeeting Bay Chapter continued temperature monitoring on these streams, [documenting the water temperature benefits](http://troutunlimited.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0yODk4OTYyJnA9MSZ1PTM5ODQ2ODY2NSZsaT0yMjg5NjA4Ng/index.html) that will come from the planned removal of the dams we will begin removing this summer. (Photo) The Kennebec Valley Chapter added more than 10 monitoring stations in the Cold Stream Forest in northern Maine.  We also worked with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries Wildlife on long-overdue updates to the state’s Fisheries Management Plan.  In 2020, we are looking forward to taking out the first of three dams on Frost Gully Brook and launching a partnership with the Appalachian Mountain Club to add large wood to streams on their 90,000-acre Maine Woods Project lands that support endangered Atlantic salmon and native brook trout. Finally, check out the [newly documented population of brook trout spawning on the shoreline](https://www.tu.org/blog/spawning-brookies-in-moosehead-lake-offer-hope-in-the-face-of-challenges/) of Maine’s largest lake.  ***For more information on Trout Unlimited’s Maine Brook Trout Project, contact Jeff Reardon at****jeff.reardon@tu.org****.*** |

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