



**For Immediate Release  
November 9, 2004**

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## **CORPORATE WETLANDS RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCES BELLAMY MILLS DAM REMOVAL IN DOVER**

### **Private Corporations Join Federal and State Environmental Agencies In Effort to Restore Bellamy River Spawning Ground for Smelt and Herring**

**Dover, NH** - An innovative partnership of private companies joined Federal and State agencies today in Dover to announce the removal of the Bellamy Mills Dam, a 19<sup>th</sup> century head-of-tide timber crib dam that obstructed the passage of migratory fishes to important spawning grounds on the Bellamy River.

The project was unveiled during a "floating media conference" on the Bellamy River, which included Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP) Chairman Ronald B. Laurence, Congressman Jeb Bradley, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Wetlands and Information Branch Chief Carl Deloi, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Director Rollie Schmitt, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Supervisor Michael Bartlett, NH Fish and Game Assistant Director Daniel Lynch, NH Department of Environmental Services Assistant Commissioner Michael Walls, Coastal Conservation Association Director Peter Whelan, and Great Bridge Properties Owner Chris Davies.

The \$35,000 dam removal and river restoration project, which was completed in early November, is the first step in what the NH Fish and Game Department hopes will be a long-term effort to re-establish fish passage to the Bellamy River through a combination of the installation of fish passage devices and the selective removal of dams. The Bellamy River system is currently the only major river system within the Great Bay Estuary that does not allow fish movement past the head of tide due to dams. The removal of this partially breached dam will allow for unhindered access to additional spawning habitat for rainbow smelt and river herring.

"The Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership NH chapter is proud to play a key role in this very important river restoration effort," said CWRP Chair Ronald B. Laurence. "We believe this is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when private corporations partner with Federal and State agencies in an effort to restore critical aquatic ecosystems."

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"The Bellamy Mills dam removal and restoration project is an important first step in an effort to restore the fragile ecosystems in one of New Hampshire's main waterways," stated First District Congressman Jeb Bradley. "This project is a testament to successful partnership between private companies and Federal and State environmental agencies, and truly represents the New Hampshire way of accomplishing projects - through collaboration and innovation."

"Wetland and stream restoration projects such as this one bring many benefits to marine life in Great Bay and beyond. The Bellamy River was the last river to be opened up for increased spawning habitats around Great Bay. We look forward to witnessing more aquatic restoration in the future," said Carl Deloi, Chief, Environmental Protection Agency Wetlands and Information Branch.

"Commercial and recreational fish species throughout the Gulf of Maine will benefit tremendously from increased access to spawning habitat being made available on Bellamy River and other river restoration projects in New Hampshire's Great Bay," said Rollie Schmitt, Director of Habitat Conservation for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"As a professional biologist I can attest to the fact that this is the right thing to do. It is the right way to spend hard-earned conservation dollars," said Michael Bartlett, Supervisor, New England Field Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service. "This is something that is hugely beneficial to the fishery resources of New Hampshire."

"This project demonstrated the power of partnership in river restoration activities," said Michael Walls, Assistant Commissioner of DES. "In addition to the wonderful contributions from corporations, anglers and NOAA, our DES dam maintenance team conducted the actual deconstruction making the project extremely cost effective."

"The removal of the Bellamy V dam is a significant accomplishment because it provides an area of critical habitat for such species as rainbow smelt," said NH Fish and Game Assistant Director Daniel Lynch. "The Bellamy River watershed is a vital part of the ecosystem of the Great Bay Estuary and because the river has this value, it is important to continue to improve the fisheries and fish passage."

CWRP's goal is to facilitate corporate interest, involvement, and support for the state's aquatic resources. This includes raising corporate in-kind services and dollars to leverage Federal matching funds. In New Hampshire, the program will help fund habitat restoration projects, specifically targeting priority projects developed by the State. CWRP NH chapter private and non-governmental members include Jacques Whitford, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc, FPL Energy, Keyspan Energy, Normandeau Associates, Public Service of New Hampshire, O'Neil Griffin Bodi Inc, McLane Graf Raulerson & Middleton, Ducks Unlimited, Antioch-New England Graduate School, Osram Sylvania, and The Nature Conservancy.

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Additional partners in the Bellamy River dam removal project include, NH Coastal Program, NH Department of Environmental Services Dam Bureau, NH Fish and Game, Coastal Conservation Association, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fish America Foundation, City of Dover, Coastal America, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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