



United States Department of Agriculture

## JOINT CHIEFS' LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

# Clear Waters, Healthy Communities

### DRINKING WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



Beebe River © Dave Pushee/Trout Unlimited Pemigewassett Chapter

The pristine natural beauty of New Hampshire's mountains and crystal clear cold water streams draws visitors from around the world to camp, hike, kayak, canoe, swim and fish. But it's not just tourists who benefit from New Hampshire's clean water. This state ranks second in the nation for the percentage of people with private wells, many of which are experiencing reduced water quality. This Joint Chiefs' funding supported hundreds of projects in New Hampshire that created fish passage and enhanced habitat, and improved recreational access using agriculture and forestry conservation practices, including invasive species removal, and provided outreach and education about local water quality. One project is on the Beebe River that flows 16.7 miles from Sandwich to Campton, New Hampshire and is ranked as a "Highest Value Habitat" in the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan because of its rich landscape for fish and wildlife habitat while providing a significant positive economic impact.

#### PROJECT IMPACT

# \$15 MILLION

Total awarded through the JCLRP from 2014-2016: \$6.2 million

A 2014 -15 study noted the annual economic impact of outdoor/hiking tourism in the Beebe project's two counties added 168 jobs and \$15 million. (Appalachian Mountain

USDA's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service are working together to improve the health of forests where public forests and grasslands connect to privately owned lands. Through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, the two USDA agencies are restoring landscapes by reducing wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protecting water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat.

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Drinking Water Quality Improvement Project

## GOALS



Brook Trout



**Improve fish passage and habitat:** Improve fish and other aquatic species passage and resilience to

high stream flows by replacing five undersized crossings with bridges and adding large natural wood to streams.

**Increase conservation practices:** Increased practices to include the removal of invasive species in riparian zones, reduced soil erosion, and improved wildlife habitat and water quality.

**Reduce impact of recreation infrastructure:** Improve trails, roads and parking areas. Eliminate camping sites and improve storm water management at day use facilities in riparian zones.



**Provide water quality outreach and education:** Educated private landowners on non-

point source pollution and riparian management.

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*New bridge constructed to improve fish passage courtesy USDA*



Nany Bell is The Conservation Fund's New Hampshire and Vermont State Director, which recently purchased 5,435 acres of land along the Beebe River. This working land has been in timber production for over 140 years and was the largest producer of spruce for World War I airplane frames. "There was great partner enthusiasm to protect this land because of threats from nearby developments," Bell said. New Hampshire is the fastest growing state in New England and the project area is within a five-hour drive of more than 40 million people. The project is in one of the four most threatened watersheds in the nation, due to housing density, conversion of private forest lands and climate change.

According to Bell, "New Hampshire Fish & Game and Plymouth State University's research indicated the high water quality in the Beebe's tributaries was producing wild Eastern Brook Trout – a distinction only a small percentage of the state's watersheds can claim. The disrepair and degradation of the five-mile access road along the river system further threatened the wild Brook Trout population and required replacement of dozens of culverts."

"This has been an extraordinary partnership effort for conservation and habitat restoration in New Hampshire, said Bell. This is a community project with support for maintaining working forests, protecting a favorite swimming hole, ensuring public access for fishing, hunting, hiking, a state snowmobile trail, and much more," Bell said. "Nearly \$1,000,000 has benefited the local economy - local contractors engineered, constructed and completed the work in record time with community businesses and locally sourced materials."

This project is part of a larger conservation effort that encompasses 6,372 acres of land. This area, combined with land in the adjoining White Mountain National Forest protects 60% of the entire Beebe River watershed. \$2.6 million has been appropriated in a Forestry Legacy Program grant to ensure protection of the property by The Conservation Fund. "Unprecedented partnerships brought this all together," Bell said.

## Key Partners

Appalachian Mountain Club

NH Association of Conservation Districts

NH Department of Environmental Services\*

NH Department of Resources and Economic Development\*

NH Fish and Game\*

Plymouth State University\*

Randolph Mountain Club

Rumney Rocks Climbing Assn.

Squam Lakes Association

Squam Lakes Conservation Society\*

Student Conservation Assn.

The Conservation Fund\*

Towns of Campton and Sandwich, NH\*

Trout Unlimited\*

University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center

USDA NRCS\* and Forest Service\*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service\*

Private Local Businesses\*

\* Beebe River Partners