

Fish Passage Workshop Empowers Biologists & Engineers

For hundreds of years, humans have manipulated New York's waterways for their own interests and needs. The establishment of dams, weirs, and culverts have allowed humans to harness water power for mills, create ponds for recreation, and establish essential infrastructure such as roadways. While these changes have benefited people, they have, at times, had a negative impact on wildlife, in particular, fish such as river herring and American eel.

Many fish require access to all parts of rivers to complete their life cycles, including spawning and juvenile development. Fishways, which consist of ladders, lifts, bypasses, and ramps, can be designed and installed at barriers like dams, weirs, and culverts to move fish up, over, and through these impassable structures.

To date, a handful of fishways have been installed throughout New York and the New England region, but many rivers and creeks containing barriers remain in need of fish passage.

Recognizing this need, several partners, including New York Sea Grant, the Long Island Sound Study, Peconic Estuary Program, and Seatuck Environmental Association, decided to organize a workshop to educate those interested in fish passage.

In July 2015, 45 engineers, biologists, hydrologists, environmental scientists and other practitioners from New York and New England took part in the Fish Passage Workshop at Hofstra University. The workshop was taught by fish passage engineers from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast office. On Day 1, attendees learned about the design, operation, and oversight of fish passage projects. During Day 2, attendees visited a newly-installed fishway at Argyle Lake and a future fish passage site at Southards Pond in Babylon, NY.

According to evaluations, 100 percent of the attendees agreed that the training enhanced their understanding on the topic of fish passage and they would recommend the training to colleagues.



Workshop attendees inspect a newly-installed fishway at Argyle Lake, Babylon, NY. Photo: Amy Mandelbaum, NYSG/LISS

"This workshop upgraded my understanding of the engineering regarding the design of the fish passage projects. This was a very beneficial program providing background information, references, examples, and contacts. Good job by all." — Workshop participant

Partners:

- New York Sea Grant
- Long Island Sound Study
- Peconic Estuary Program
- Seatuck Environmental Association
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Northeast Office

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development

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New York Sea Grant Extension

112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

This project summary was written by

Long Island Sound Outreach Coordinator Amy Mandelbaum, 631-632-9216, acb328@cornell.edu, www.nyseagrant.org