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Video Shows Save the Sound's Removal of Dam in Mystic

CFE/Save the Sound and US Fish and Wildlife Service partnered to restore habitat

Mystic, Conn. – A time lapse video made public by CFE/Save the Sound today [shows the removal of Hyde Pond Dam in Mystic](#). The project is a joint effort of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Save the Sound, a bi-state program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment. Whitford Brook, a tributary of the Mystic River, is now [flowing freely for the first time in 350 years](#), reducing flood risk for Mystic and improving habitat for migratory fish.

“This video really shows the transformative power of dam removal,” **said Gwen Macdonald, director of Green Projects for CFE/Save the Sound**. “You can see the landscape changing before your eyes. After more than a year of design and permitting, the dam was removed in a matter of weeks. We’re thrilled that after a century-and-a-half of blocked access, fish can now reach upstream spawning grounds once again. Taking down this deteriorating dam and reconnecting the river to its flood plain has improved water quality, restored natural transport of sediment, and improved the resiliency of Whitford Brook in the face of future storms.”

The dam removal has eliminated the hazard of potential catastrophic dam failure in the face of future storms. Re-opening natural flow of the brook restores fish passage to 4.1 stream miles and improves habitat for alewife, blueback herring, and American eel—species that have experienced significant population declines—as well as for other wildlife.

The video was produced and edited by Ayla Fox of Shed Light Productions. Fox used cameras placed at the worksite to capture images every two minutes during the day for about five weeks. Follow-up work at the site continues.

In 2013, in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was awarded \$167 million by the Department of the Interior for more than 70 projects to clean up and repair damaged refuges and parks; restore coastal marshes, wetlands and shorelines; connect and open waterways to improve flood control; and increase scientific understanding of how these natural areas are changing.

Further support for the Hyde Pond project was generously provided by the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, a grant program of National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Long Island Sound Study.

“We're proud to join with Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound in supporting the Hyde Pond project to strengthen natural defenses and help protect communities and wildlife against future storms,” **said Lori Benoit, a biologist with USFWS.**

“By connecting and opening waterways like the Whitford Brook here in Mystic, we can improve flood control, restore habitat for fish and wildlife, and contribute to the local economy and quality of life,” **continued Benoit.**

CFE/Save the Sound and project partners are planning a volunteer riverbank planting and press event at Hyde Pond on Saturday, May 7.

At Pond Lily, the site of another CFE/Save the Sound and USFWS dam removal on the New Haven/Woodbridge border, a volunteer cleanup is planned for this Saturday and Sunday, and a planting for Saturday, April 9.

For more information on any of the upcoming events or to sign up to volunteer, please email restoration@savethesound.org.

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Save the Sound is a bi-state program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment with an established 40-year track record of restoring and protecting the waters and shorelines of the Sound. From our offices in New Haven and Mamaroneck, Save the Sound works for a cleaner, healthier, and more vibrant Long Island Sound where humans and marine life can prosper year-round. Our success is based on scientific knowledge, legal expertise, and thousands of ordinary people teaming up achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations. Visit www.savethesound.org for more information.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.