

## **New Video Highlights Successful Restoration Project in Wolastoq Watershed**

*Wolastoqiyik, local government, and conservation groups work together to remove obsolete Campbell Creek Dam, opening passage for migratory fish species and restoring natural freshwater habitat*

**March 1, 2022** — *For Immediate Release*

*Fredericton, N.B.* — For the first time in a century Campbell Creek flows freely. Where until recently there was a stagnant headpond and obsolete concrete dam, there is now an unobstructed channel and a streambank quickly returning to its natural state. Improved water quality, restored migratory fish access, and reinvigorated habitat are among the benefits for Campbell Creek, a tributary of the Nashwaak River, which itself flows into the Wolastoq (St. John River).

A short video released this week tells the story of the project, which was completed in early autumn 2021. Five years in the making, the project garnered broad community support. Led by the Maliseet Nation Conservation Council, a coalition including the Nashwaak Watershed Association Inc., St. Mary's First Nation, the City of Fredericton, and the Atlantic Salmon Federation worked to secure the necessary funding and permits to complete the project.

Jillian Hudgins, Environmental Strategist with the City of Fredericton, remarked that dams cause several environmental problems. “The headpond that the Campbell Creek Dam created impacted the water quality of the stream, which impacts the animals that live in the stream. It impacted the vegetation that was here before; all of that was underwater.”

The dam was built in 1919 to supply water to the Marysville Cotton Mill. Since its decommissioning decades ago, the barrier served no industrial purpose. Until its removal, the dam was an impediment to fish passage and normal stream function, as well as a public safety liability in its decrepit state.

In anticipation of the removal, project partners carried out several years of baseline ecological monitoring. Then, in 2020 an opening was created in the crumbling concrete dam to drain the headpond. In late summer 2021 heavy machinery rolled in and completely removed the structure. Where the dam stood, freshwater engineering experts chiseled a functional stream channel to allow natural flow and reconnect the habitat.

Community Forests Canada planted native trees to re-naturalize the newly exposed streambank, noted Natalie Deseta of the Nashwaak Watershed Association Inc. “We’re planting approximately 3,000 trees. You need to plant the right species in the right sites, and the best way to do that is to plant native species that already have a role to play in the local ecology.”

Kaleb Zelman, former Aquatic Ecologist at the Maliseet Nation Conservation Council, said rehabilitating the stream is about restoring severed connections. “Dams have been instruments of colonialism, and that’s no different here in the Wolastoq watershed,” he said. “What they do is

sever ties between people and the river and all the relations that would have co-existed for millennia.”

It is this connection and the relationship with Polam/Pəlam (Atlantic Salmon), and the environment more generally, that St. Mary’s First Nation wanted to focus on. “The Nashwaak watershed, and more generally the Wolastoq watershed is in dire need of more projects like this that contribute to the overall wellbeing of the entire ecosystem. This project exemplifies the worldviews that we as Wolastoqiyik people live by, such as seven-generation thinking, meaning we are leaving the world in better, more sustainable place for the ones that will come after us, as well as the teaching of Psiw Ntulnapemok (all my relations), which speaks to honouring our interdependence and responsibility to all living and non-living things. It is for these reasons that St. Mary’s First Nation fully supports this project.” adds Tim Plant from St. Mary’s First Nation.

Through engagement with the community and the Wolastoqey Nation in New Brunswick’s ethnohistorian, Dr. Jason Hall, the Wolastoqey place name for the creek, Pahkwapskw was identified. This ancient name is indicative of the relationship the Wolastoqiyik have shared with this creek since time immemorial. The removal of the dam is an important project in that light because it allows us to respect the natural flow of the stream, and allows for the community to gift something back to the stream which has given so much to us historically. In this way we respect the relationship, reciprocity is a cornerstone for the Wolastoqiyik.

Meanwhile, several migratory fish species have also been reconnected with the upper reaches of the creek’s prime spawning and rearing habitat. “With climate change affecting so many rivers, there’s a real priority here to create resiliency by opening up as much quality, cold, clean water habitat as possible, and the Campbell Creek Dam removal is a perfect example” said Nathan Wilbur, Director of Regional Programs at the Atlantic Salmon Federation. Wild brook trout, Atlantic salmon, American eel, and sea lamprey are among native species that will benefit.

The project was funded primarily through Fisheries and Oceans Canada, with assistance from WWF Canada and the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation. A heritage display on the Marysville flats will commemorate the dam's history, but most importantly will highlight aspects of the much longer history of pre-dam Wolastoqey relationships with the area.

To watch the video, [click here](#)

For a gallery of downloadable images, [click here](#)

### **Media Contact:**

Natalie Deseta  
Project Coordinator  
Nashwaak Watershed Association Inc.  
[Coordinator@nashwaakwatershed.ca](mailto:Coordinator@nashwaakwatershed.ca) / (506) 478-7328

Aruna Jayawardane

Science Director, Maliseet Nation Conservation Council  
[arunajawardane@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:arunajawardane@yahoo.com.sg) / (506) 461-2745

Timothy Plant  
St. Mary's First Nation  
[timothyplant@smfn.ca](mailto:timothyplant@smfn.ca) / (506) 459-2200 - ext. 126

Nathan Wilbur  
Director of Regional Program, Atlantic Salmon Federation  
[nwilbur@asf.ca](mailto:nwilbur@asf.ca) / (506) 442-2185