



Fish Passage Workgroup



Co-Chairs:

Jim Thompson / Maryland Department of
Natural Resources

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Through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to...

Goal: *Continually increase habitat to support sustainable migratory fish populations....*

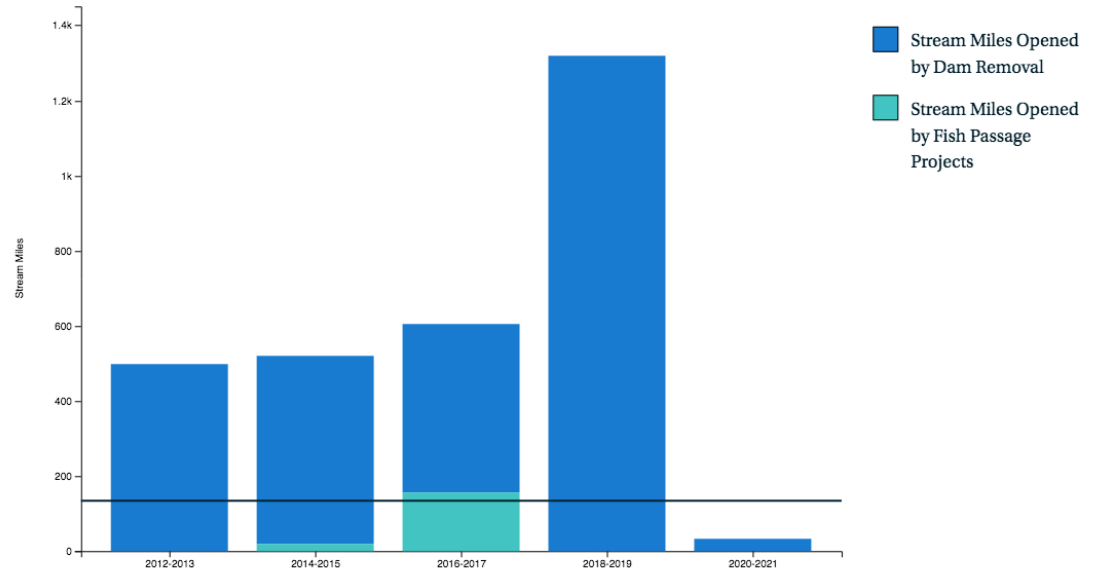
Outcome: *By 2025, restore historical fish migration routes by opening an additional 132 miles every two years to fish passage. Restoration success will be indicated by the consistent presence of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, American eel, and brook trout, to be monitored in accordance with available agency resources and collaboratively developed methods.*



What is our Outlook and Recent Progress?

Stream Miles Opened to Fish Passage (2012-2021)

[VIEW CHART](#) [VIEW TABLE](#)



Recent Progress: *Decrease*

Why? Covid slowed progress, increased prices, paused projects in development.

Outlook: *On Course*

Pending the status of projects that have been submitted for BIL funding. A workgroup poll estimates as many as 250+ miles in the next two years.



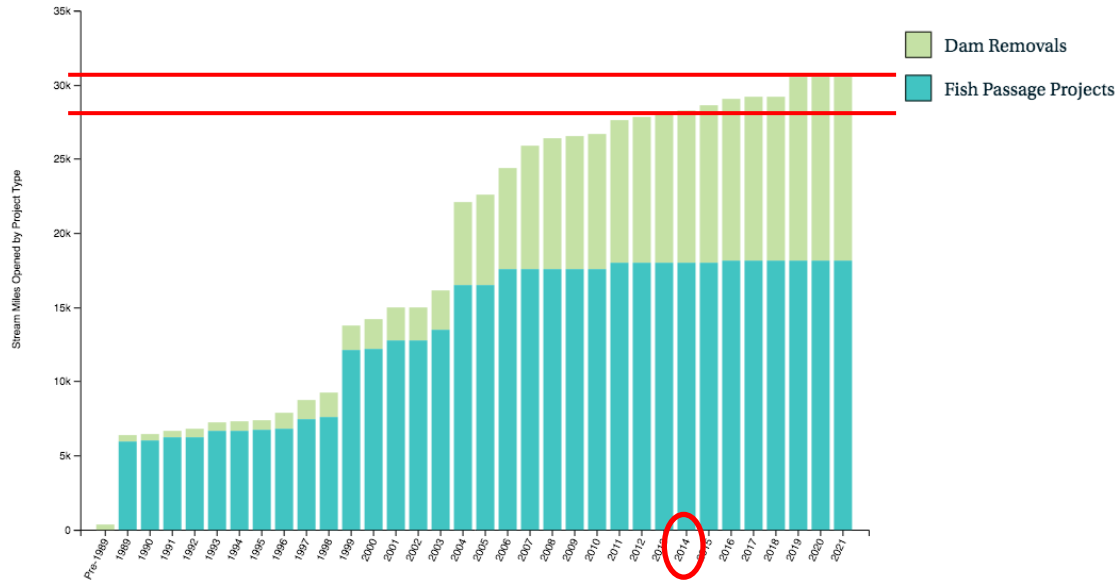
What is our Outlook and Recent Progress?

Fish Passage is obtained by removing a barrier or by constructing devices (fish ladders) to allow passage of fish upstream.

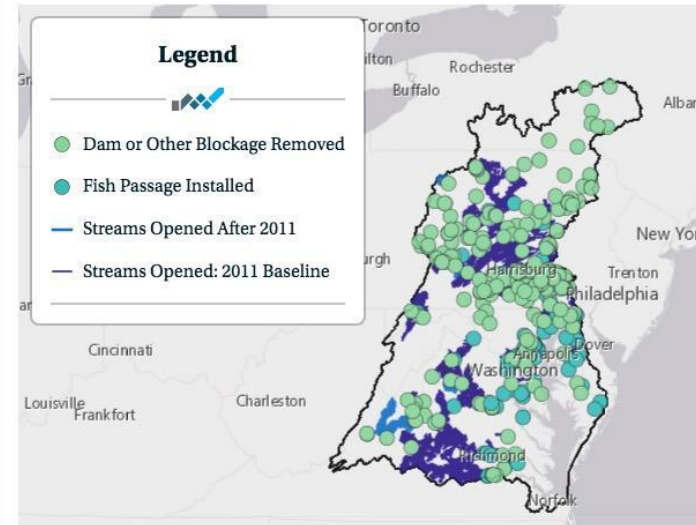
Stream Miles Opened 1988-2021 (Cumulative) 📄

Stream Miles Opened to Fish Passage via Dam Removals and Fish Passage Projects.

[VIEW CHART](#) [VIEW TABLE](#)



Streams Opened to Fish Passage (1989-2021) 📄





Successes

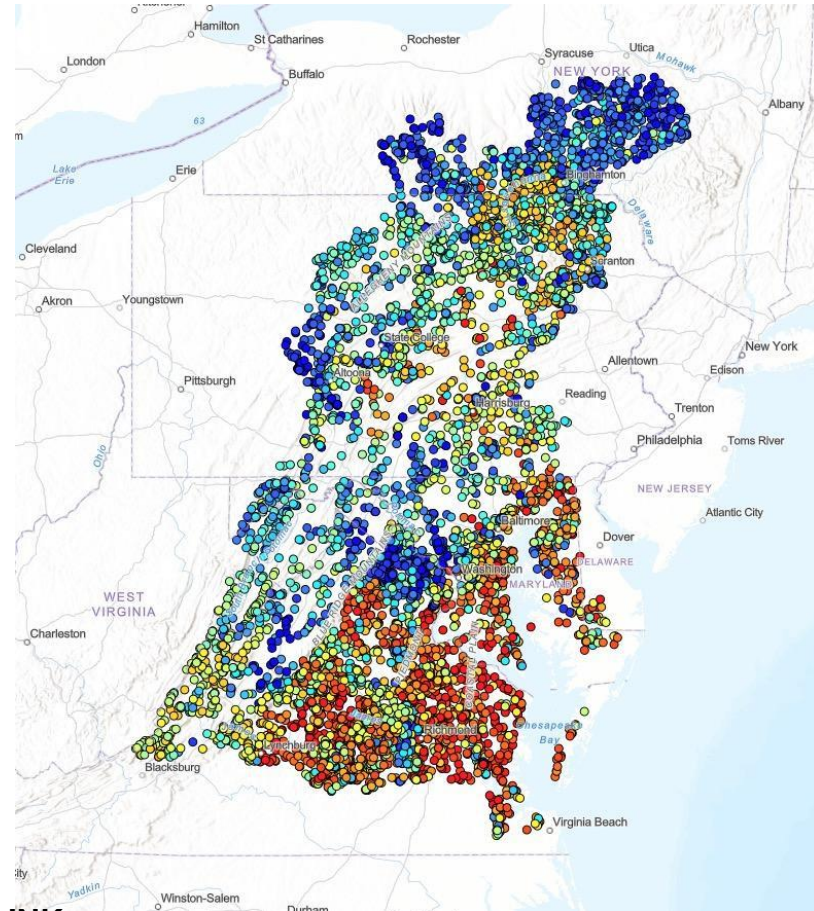
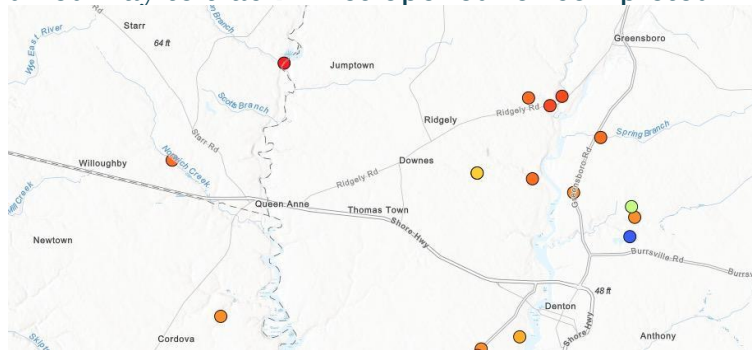
- Fish passage at road-stream crossings.
- Chesapeake Prioritization Tool was updated to include road-stream crossings, climate and economic justice data, and brook trout layers.
- Increased interest in barrier removal for mitigation opportunities.
- **MD:** DNR/Dam Safety creating document for owners interested in removal.
- **VA:** Stream Barrier Removal Task Force - new work plan.
- **PA:** Leader in dam removals, advancing road-stream crossing replacements.
- **NY:** Migratory fish restoration in upper Susquehanna River, including fish passage work.



Successes

The Fish Passage Prioritization Tool

The Fish Passage Prioritization Tool, is a GIT funded project that uses a variety of environmental, ecological, and social metrics to rank barriers in the Chesapeake Bay. The Fish Passage Workgroup has agreed upon three “default” rankings to rank anadromous blockages, non-migratory or “resident” blockages, and brook trout blockages. However, users can run custom rankings using whichever metrics are important to them and for a wide range of geographic areas. The Tool also provides a standardized way to track miles opened for completed projects.



LINK:

<https://www.maps.tnc.org/chesfpp/#/explore>



Challenges

- Interest by dam owners
- Non-federal match requirements
- Staffing design and implementation/fish passage engineering expertise
- Need supportive policies to encourage dam removals (ex. tax credit?)
- Aquatic invasive species



Next Steps

- Use updated Fish Passage Prioritization Tool to find new priority projects. This will lead to more miles opened.
- Increase engagement with Federal, State and local regulatory and transportation agencies on road-stream crossings. Road-stream crossings don't face the typical challenges we see with dam removals because they often do not require willing dam owners = more projects.



Future workgroup workplan activities

- Develop social engineering strategy to change hearts and minds around fish passage, including additional incentives for dam owners
- Increase capacity for fish passage outreach, design, and engineering
- Work with DOT's to develop Bay wide strategy to provide fish passage at road-stream crossings

QUARTERLY PROGRESS MEETING – December 2023
Chesapeake Bay Program



Discussion