



Gulf of Maine
Council on the
Marine Environment



MEDIA ADVISORY: COME SEE THE FISH: Officials will celebrate the return of river herring to Town Brook in Plymouth, MA

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WHO: Federal, state and local officials and environmental agencies.

WHAT: Celebrate the homecoming of potentially thousands of river herring to Town Brook and the removal of a major barrier on this historic waterway. Prior to its removal earlier this year, only 7 percent of the returning river herring were able to pass over the Off Billington Street dam. With the dam now gone river herring (alewife and blueback herring) and American eels have better access to traditional spawning and nursery areas. Town Brook is a historic waterway, providing a source of freshwater and food for the Wampanoag Indian Nation and western European Pilgrims. Roughly 150,000 river herring are expected to be migrating up the brook to spawn during this Dedication Event. With the completion of restoration work later this year, the potential to restore this historic run so that more than one million fish are able to make the annual migration will exist for the first time in centuries.

WHEN/WHERE: April 25, 2014 at 11 a.m. EST at Town Brook, Off Billington Street, Plymouth, MA. Directions follow.

WHY: The Town of Plymouth working in concert with other partners removed the deteriorating Off Billington Street Dam and replaced it with an arch bridge (to maintain access to private residences) earlier this year. This eliminated a public safety concern. Contaminated sediment was also removed from the site, which is helping to improve water quality in the brook. The Off Billington Street dam removal is part of a larger restoration effort that has spanned nearly 15 years and involved dam removal or installation of fish passage at five dams on the brook. The goal is to restore the historic sea-run (diadromous) fish run at Town Brook. Later this year, the nearby Plymco Dam will be removed, reestablishing river herring access to 269 acres of spawning habitat.

SCHEDULED SPEAKERS (alphabetical order)

Plymouth Town Manager, Melissa Arrighi

NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator, John Bullard

Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Acting Director for the Division of Ecological Restoration, Hunt Durey

Massachusetts Senate President, Massachusetts, Therese Murray

Plymouth Board of Selectmen Chairman Matthew Muratore

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Regional Director Deborah Rocque

Plimoth Plantation Deputy Executive Director, Richard Pickering

American Rivers Restoration Program Associate Director, Amy Singler

Conservation Law Foundation Vice President and Senior Counsel, Peter Shelley

Representatives of Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Nation: Chairman Cedric Cromwell, Vice Chairwoman Jessie Baird and Chief Vernon "Silent Drum" Lopez

Great Photo Opportunities Planned:

12 p.m. EST Speakers and staff will help transport returning alewives (contingent on fish availability) over a second nearby dam (Plymco Dam).

Other activities may include riparian grass planting, and guided tours of the entire project site.

Learn more about other planned weekend activities, all part of Plimoth Plantation's first River Herring Run Festival.

Friday Film Event:

<http://www.plimoth.org/calendar?trumbaEmbed=date%3D20140425#/?i=1>

Saturday

Activities: <http://www.plimoth.org/calendar?trumbaEmbed=view%3Devent%26eventid%3D109136980>

Directions to Off Billington dam and Media Parking Area #2 Billington Street

From Route 3, take Exit 6A toward Plymouth Center

Turn right onto Oak Street

Turn right onto Summer Street

Sharp left onto Billington Street

Pull-off dirt parking area on right, prior to Off-Billington Street