

American Shad Restoration in the Potomac

What was done and why?

This large cooperative effort to reestablish migratory fish populations in the Potomac involves a broad segment of the community. Stocking efforts above and below the Little Falls Dam fishway project have involved local school groups, the Interstate Commission for the Potomac River Basin, volunteers, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and city and state natural resources departments. While shad were hugely abundant in the last century, due to poor water quality, loss of habitat, and the placement of dams that prevented migration their numbers declined almost to extinction prior to these restoration efforts.

Who was involved?

School groups in the Schools-in-Schools program, nonprofit organizations, government supporters and anglers, Trout Unlimited, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, & others; US Fish & Wildlife, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, Maryland DNR, US Geological Survey

Where can I see the restoration project?

The Little Falls fishway project can be viewed on the Virginia side of the Little Falls Dam. Contact the Interstate Commission on the Potomac Basin. Another good place to learn about shad restoration is at Fletcher's boat house.

Why is this a model project?

A wide range of groups worked together towards the goal of reestablishing migratory fish populations. Monitoring was initiated before the projects were in place and has continued to demonstrate effectiveness and document methods.

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