

# NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEED GRANT QUARTERLY REPORT

Grant Number: Northeast Regional Conservation Needs Grant 2007-02

Grant Title: Northeast Regional Connectivity Assessment Project

Grant Receipt: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Contact Name: Colin Apse, Deputy Director, Eastern U.S. Freshwater Program, [capse@tnc.org](mailto:capse@tnc.org)

Report #- 10 (Quarter ending September 30, 2010)

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes

Regional Conservation Need Addressed: Development of Habitat Conservation Initiatives at a Landscape Scale.

## Project Abstract and Timeline:

Work under this grant is focusing on developing region-wide spatial data, tools, and protocols to prioritize fish barrier mitigation projects to more efficiently conserve and restore diadromous fish, coldwater species, and other species of greatest conservation need. The project is organized around a Northeast Connectivity Workgroup which meets monthly through web conferences and includes state resource agency personnel from throughout the Northeast NEAFWA states. This Workgroup is informing TNC in collaborative development of region-wide protocols, tools and new datasets that are useful to state agency staff in their work on barrier mitigation.

The project will have a unified, error-checked dataset on dams, major waterfalls, and key anadromous fish habitat for all the NEAFWA states by September 2010. An ArcGIS tool, called the Barrier Assessment Tool (available in August 2010), and other GIS techniques will be used to calculate a set of workgroup agreed-upon connectivity assessment metrics for all barriers in a pilot basin – most likely the Connecticut Basin- by October 2010. Metrics will be calculated for all barriers within the NEAFWA region for Workgroup review by January 2011. A region-wide barrier assessment product, underlying datasets, Barrier Assessment Tool, and final “regional landscape scale management strategy” report will be delivered by March 2011.

## Progress Achieved: (For each Goal/Objective, list Planned and Actual Accomplishments)

- *Completed as Planned:* 2 Virtual Meetings to keep the workgroup updated on our progress in sending out data for QA/QC, addition of data on anadromous fish runs, and locations of natural falls and developing metric tools. The July 30<sup>th</sup> call was used to demonstrate the Barrier Assessment Tool, and was recorded for all those not able to make it. The second call, on September 24<sup>th</sup> focused on initial results of our Connecticut Basin pilot assessments using metrics derived from the BAT and other sources.
- *Completed as Planned:* Majority completion of the QA/QC effort with NEAFWA states to arrive at a final dataset on barriers, anadromous fish runs, and locations of natural falls as well as associated metadata. .
- *Completed as Planned:* In August we finalized the Barrier Assessment Tool (BAT) by the GeoData

Institute, to calculate critical connectivity metrics using ArcGIS. The BAT is already being distributed due to popular demand – to federal, state, NGO and academics from Nova Scotia to Georgia.

- *Completed as Planned:* Did a first iteration of barrier assessment analysis for the Connecticut Basin and presented a prototype version of the final barrier assessment product to be delivered in March.

#### Difficulties Encountered:

The process of received feedback and edits of the barrier, waterfall, and anadromous fish spatial data and metadata is proceeding well in most states but a few are behind on response or difficult to contact. We have set deadlines and developed contingency plans.

State agencies have been doing substantial work on this project, but have not been sending in match forms to get credit for their time. This will be key to allowing this project to be completed on budget, so new approaches are necessary to ensure match forms are submitted.

#### Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- 2 Virtual Meetings to: 1) develop draft weighting and scoring approaches for the barrier assessment results on the regional level and 2) examine further results of the pilot analysis to inform the region-wide assessment
- Completion of the pilot analysis for the Connecticut Basin – including testing of all Workgroup recommended metrics. This pilot analysis also may be used to inform USFWS activities in the CT Basin in 2011.
- Completion of QA/QC of anadromous fish, dam, and waterfall data from all NEAFWA states. We will use this compilation to create, to the best of our ability, a seamless database for the NEAFWA region for which our metrics will be run.

#### Costs:

Are you within the approved budget plan? Yes

Are you within approved budget categories? Yes

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colin Hesse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Date: October 15, 2010