

BANGOR DAILY NEWS

KEEPING MAINE'S FORESTS HONORED BY AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS PROGRAM



Sherry Huber

From left to right: Keeping Maine's Forest members Patrick Strauch of the Maine Forest Products Council and Wolfe Tone of the Trust for Public Land; and Antonio Bentivoglio, USFWS.

By Alison Truesdale, Coordinator, Keeping Maine's Forests

Posted Oct. 18, 2013, at 1:17 p.m.

Bangor, ME; October 18, 2013— Keeping Maine's Forests (KMF) has been presented with a plaque honoring the group for their recognition by the America's Great Outdoor Program (AGO). Antonio Bentivoglio presented the plaque on behalf of the US Fish & Wildlife Service at a recent meeting of KMF. The America's Great Outdoor program selected KMF for their collaborative approach to conservation and stewardship of natural resources, particularly their work in brook trout habitat restoration. KMF has been instrumental in establishing the working relationships necessary to bring federal, state, and NGO conservation efforts and resources in line with private timberland owners' needs.

Private forest landowners have utilized financial and technical assistance from the Natural Resource

Conservation Service (NRCS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to replace undersized or non-functional culverts that have cut off stream habitat for brook trout. In the past two and a half years, sixteen projects have been completed and close to 30 stream miles have been reconnected for brook trout as a result of KMF and its partners.

KMF has sponsored the Fisheries Improvement Network (FIN), led by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative's Pat Sirois, where landowners have helped to make federal assistance go further by finding effective ways to minimize the costs of replacing culverts. KMF has also partnered with Maine Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, and North Woods private landowners to survey almost 2,000 stream crossings, assessing the condition of culverts. The US Fish & Wildlife Service is maintaining the survey data and prioritizing culvert replacements.

Maine has 90% of the intact brook trout habitat in the eastern United States, making this restoration work critical for the species in the east, and to the health of the recreational trout fishing industry in Maine's North Woods.

<http://bangordailynews.com/community/keeping-maines-forests-honored-by-americas-great-outdoors-program/> printed on October 21, 2013