

Workshop Focuses on Building Better Stream Crossings

by [Catherine Pegram](#) - February 28th 2012 09:49pm - Read more [Local News](#)

Brewer - Local contractors, engineers and foresters came together in Brewer Tuesday to learn how to build better stream crossings.

They're taking part in a program designed to balance road development with protecting wildlife. the efforts to cross it.

A sand and water table is a small-scale model of a real-life stream and



Culverts, which funnel the stream under a road, are a common solution.

But Barbara Charry, a biologist with Maine Audubon, says they can also create problems for habitat.

"Over time a culvert that was lined with up the stream bed becomes perched and it becomes higher than the stream. And the animals can't jump up that far too successfully and get up stream."

Maine Audubon is hosting a series of workshops, with the help of other environmentally-minded organizations, to educate people on how to build and install better culverts.

Charry says "about 40-percent of them are serving as barriers for fish and wildlife."

Initially stream-smart culverts may be a bit more costly than traditional structures.

But Robert Van Riper, a Regional Fisheries Biologist, says they can also generate a lot of bang for the buck.

"The bang for this relatively small expense is over a fairly long period of time. In fact culverts that they'd replace today wouldn't be replaced in our lifetime again if they're installed correctly."

Charry say installing them correctly also gives local wildlife a better chance of flourishing.

"By educating people who are making decisions they'll have that in their toolboxes when they're looking at projects and say this is something easy to do in this situation."

Organizers of the workshops say one more is planned for next month but so many people have wanted to take part in them, they're considering adding another session.

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