

Stratton Brook Habitat Enhancement Project

Location: Stratton Brook State Park,
Simsbury, Public property

Implemented: August 1998

Partners:

CT DEP Inland Fisheries Division
Farmington Valley Chapter, Trout Unlimited

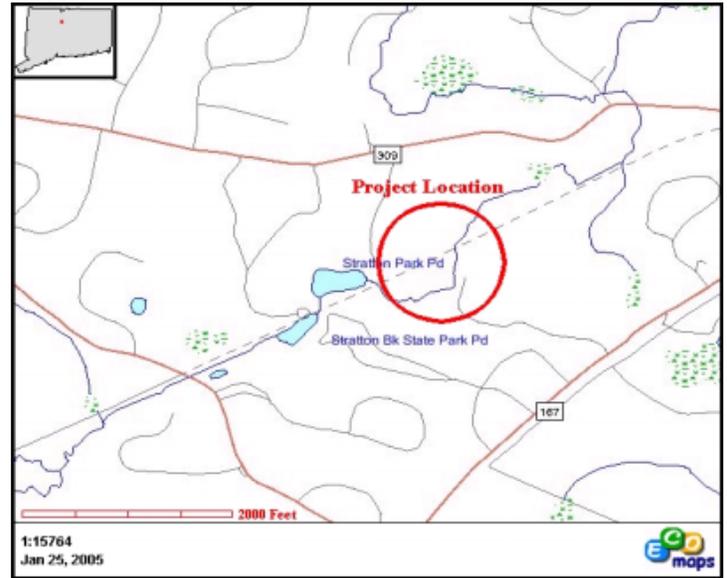
Cost: \$ “0” volunteer services

Engineering and Design:

CT DEP Inland Fisheries Division

Project Manager/Contact Information:

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Problem/Need

Stratton Brook flows through a forested riparian corridor and receives the input of high-quality groundwater from a shallow sand and gravel aquifer. Superlative instream habitats and water quality allows the stream to support a robust population of native brook trout and wild brown trout. A locally intense snowfall of April 1, 1997 toppled numerous trees within the riparian corridor of Stratton Brook. A significant number of these trees, primarily conifers, fell perpendicular to the stream channel creating debris dams. The dams redirected stream flow that resulted in erosion, scour and streambank failure. Streambank failure presents a two-fold concern; as banks collapse the fish habitat provided by the undercut is eliminated. Subsequently, eroded bank material is transported by stream flow and deposited elsewhere within the watercourse. These depositions can degrade or eliminate habitats essential for fish life history functions such as spawning.

Restoration Actions

Ten debris dams identified as being of concern were removed. At each location, complete or partial lengths of trees were removed from the dams. Trees along with other suitable material were repositioned and secured to streambanks. These habitat structures were intended to create overhead cover for fish, provide a substrate for aquatic and terrestrial insects, and trap sediment and other organic material to reinforce the bank. All work was done manually and at no cost with volunteer labor.



Example of debris dams prior to habitat enhancement activities.

Example of brush structures designed to protect streambank and provide overhead fish habitats.



Example of brush structures trapping instream sediments.