

## The North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC)

A network of partners who are collaborating to take on the work of assessing and upgrading road-stream crossings to improve passage for wildlife and increase community resiliency to future floods. The NAACC offers:

- Consistent regional assessment protocols
- Field trainings on conducting assessments
- Regional database of road-stream crossings
- Prioritization of sub-watersheds for road-stream crossing surveys

### DEVELOPED BY:

The University of Massachusetts Amherst, The Nature Conservancy, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, USDA Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### WHO IS USING IT?

Heidi Ricci, Senior Policy Analyst, Mass Audubon, and other members of the Resilient Taunton Watershed Network

### HOW IS IT BEING APPLIED?

Using North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative data and protocols, Ricci led the development of a report in partnership with the Taunton River Watershed Alliance and other partners that identifies priority road-stream crossings in the watershed based on the potential ecological benefits associated with upgrades, repairs, and replacements.

The report is designed to help municipal officials in the 43 towns within the Taunton River watershed in southeastern Massachusetts direct limited resources toward projects that can offer multiple benefits, both by reducing flood risks and increasing aquatic connectivity for wildlife.

But Ricci hopes the report will also help raise awareness among residents. “There are all kinds of reasons to look at road-stream crossings,” she said. “We want to convey that functioning natural systems provide quality of



A culvert in Raynham, Mass, before and after replacement.  
Credit: Bill Napolitano, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

life, economic value, protect infrastructure, and protect property.”

### WHAT CONSERVATION NEED DOES IT ADDRESS?

“More than just documenting road-stream crossings, we wanted to be able to move toward setting priorities and getting work done,” explained Ricci.

Addressing crossings that represent the weakest links in the aquatic chain is increasingly important in the context of climate change. “Especially in a low-lying watershed like the Taunton, when there’s a big rain event, drainage can be a major issue,” said Ricci, pointing to the fallout from an infamous storm in March 2010. “There was massive flooding. The Whittendon Dam failed, and they had to evacuate downtown Taunton for several days.”

### LEARN MORE:

- **North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative:** [www.streamcontinuity.org](http://www.streamcontinuity.org)
- **Mass Audubon’s Shaping the Future of Your Community program:** <http://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/advocacy/news-events/reconnecting-streams>
- **Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District:** <http://www.srpedd.org>