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Endangered Atlantic salmon habitat destroyed in Phillips Maine

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Our small town of 900 residents need your support. As a passionate supporter of the environment and salmon fisheries, I am reaching out to you to request your help in raising awareness for an important cause. Our Sandy River harbors the last native populations of the endangered Atlantic salmon in the US. It is being destroyed by our town's administrators and their witless decisions. It is estimated to cost over \$3,000,000.00 to restore the destroyed salmon habitat. We need answers and the MEDIA is our last hope.

The Phillips Maine Town administration approved the dredging of one mile of the pristine Sandy River and destroyed the Salmon habitat which took decades to establish in early 2024. Additionally, the Town administration authorized the building of a 1.5 mile BERM within the Sandy River Salmon habitat. All this destruction under the pretense of repairing a portion of a dirt road.

A FOIA petition to the Town Manager on June 12, 2024 requesting all documents regarding the destruction of the Salmon Habitat has been refused and petitioners have been branded as "disgruntled". A recent request for a Special Selectmen meeting has also been refused. The Maine Attorney Generals Office request to honor the FOIA has also been ignored by the Town.

Verbal permission from the DEP for the area of the washed out portion of the road was initiated by Maine State Rep Michael Soboleski, who has refused to answer two FOIA requests regarding the identity of the DEP person and the scope of the discussed activity. The Maine State Legislature's Ombudsman's petition to honor the FOIA request has also been ineffective in getting Rep. Soboleski's response.

Fisheries expert Daniel McCaw, who formerly studied the Atlantic salmon habitat in the Sandy River, estimates that thousands of salmon eggs and juveniles were destroyed due to the dredging that turned the branch with numerous channels into a "canal". These catastrophic events were performed under the guise of rebuilding a portion of a washed out road – ALL WITHOUT REGULATORY PERMITS.

I have attached assorted documents and news articles regarding the present investigation. In conclusion, I believe we require legal help asap to get answers to this situation. Any support or recommendations would be appreciated.

Thanking You in Advance,
Paul S Caruso

Attachments: Portland Press Herald, DEP Notice of Violation Letter, DEP Notice of Violation
FOIA Request Town of Phillips, FOIA Request Maine State Rep Soboleski