

Creating A Corridor For Wildlife And People

Mill Brook Preserve is the largest forever conserved land in Westbrook and it continues to grow. Presumpscot Regional Land Trust conserved this valuable wildlife habitat through the generous donations of remarkable landowners, collaboration with the City of Westbrook's Recreation and Conservation Commission, and Casco Bay Estuary Partnership. Now people can enjoy this unique trail system along a forested stream corridor within the City of Westbrook.

Wildlife

An impressive variety of wildlife can be found in Mill Brook Preserve including migrating songbirds, owls, salamanders, dragonflies, bobcats, and even an occasional moose.

Wildlife face constant challenges throughout the Presumpscot region, including habitat loss and water pollution. The Land Trust's conservation and stewardship of lands like the Mill Brook Preserve help to protect wildlife habitat and create valuable natural stream buffers to protect water quality.

Wildlife in Mill Brook Preserve



People

Mill Brook Preserve has four trailheads and over six miles of trails that are free and open to the public.

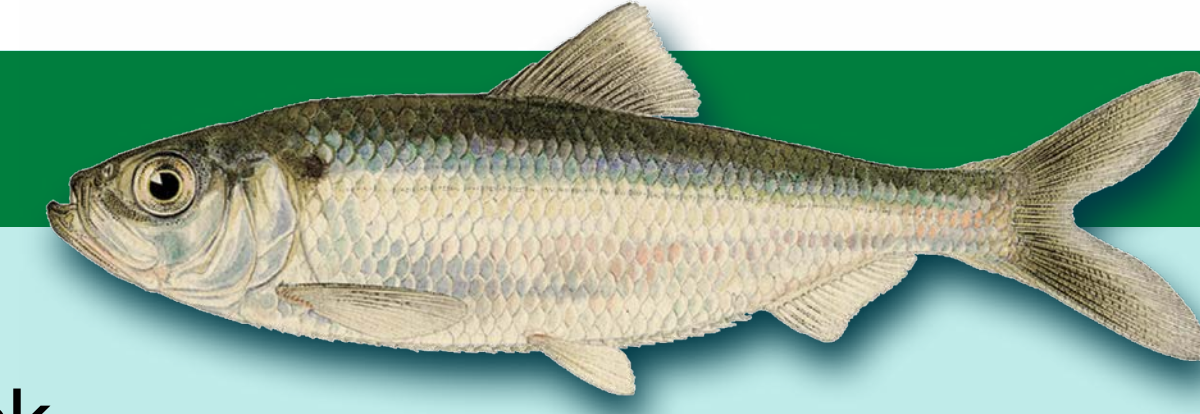


To access the trail map go to:

WWW.PRLT.ORG/MILL-BROOK-PRESERVE

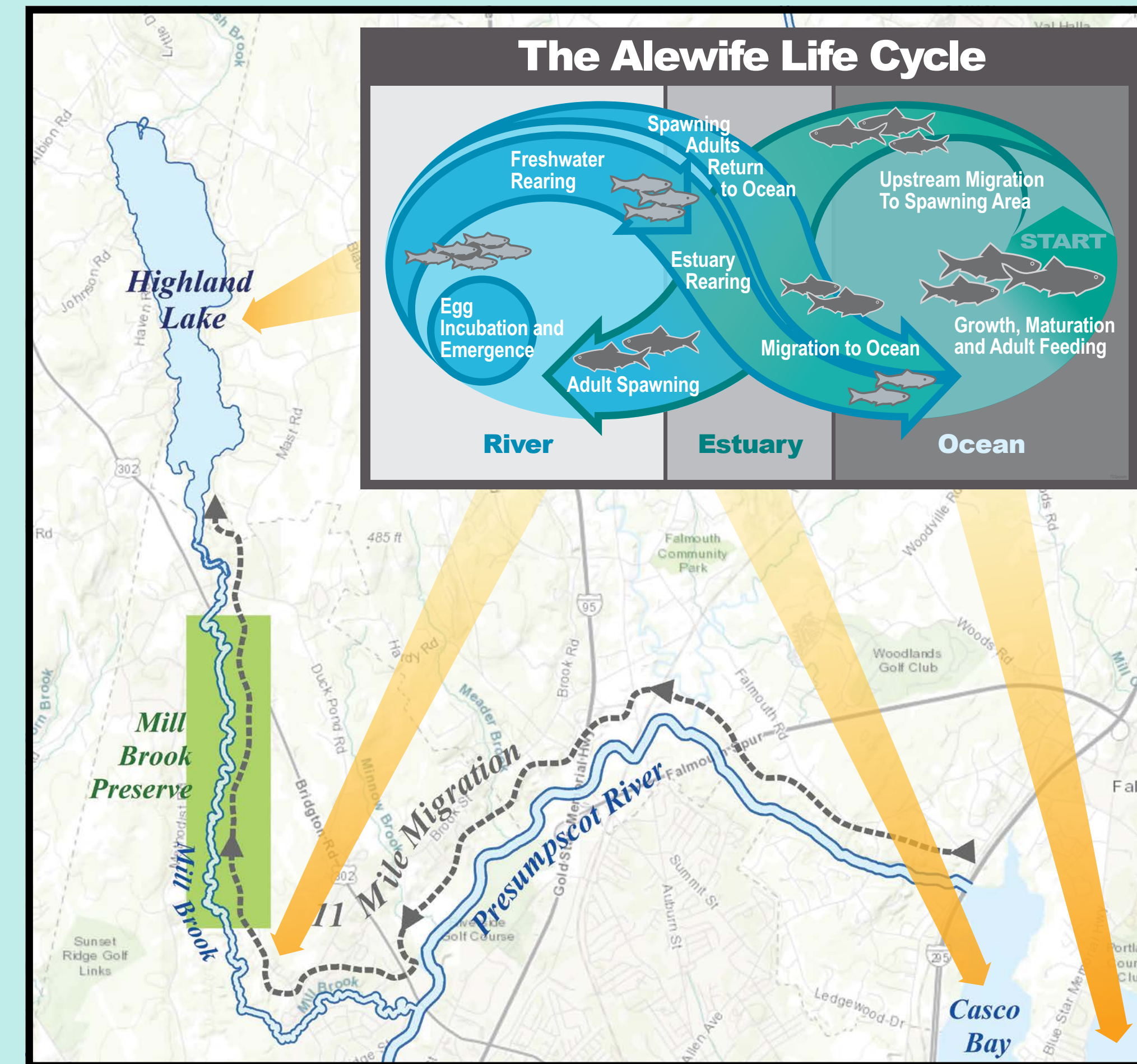
The Great Migration

Mill Brook Preserve supports the largest fish migration from Casco Bay. The Land Trust is committed to being the stewards of this alewife run through Mill Brook. Alewife fish can be observed up close along these trails, typically in late May and early June.



Life Cycle of the Alewife

In late May when waters warm, alewives migrate from Casco Bay up the Presumpscot River, through Mill Brook, to Highland Lake where they spawn. Adults will spend about two weeks spawning before they retrace their path back to the sea. Juveniles will hatch in less than a week and then begin their own downstream migration in the fall before starting the marine phase of their life cycle in protected estuaries of Casco Bay.



Restoration Works

Prior to European colonization, the lands in the Presumpscot River watershed, including Mill Brook, were used by the Abenaki people as a rich source of food and fertilizer. Until the early 1700s, the Presumpscot River and Mill Brook had more than 10 different fish species migrating through from the ocean, including salmon, trout, and alewife.

The recent return of the alewife migration through Mill Brook, after a 250 year absence, is a great success story. The Smelt Hill Dam removal at the mouth of the Presumpscot River in 2003, along with culvert replacements, and fish ladders added to Mill Brook, have resulted in the return of the largest fish migration from Casco Bay.



Alewife in the Web of Life

The alewives are commercially important as lobster bait. They are also a critical food source for cod, haddock, mackerel and other species in the Gulf of Maine. Bringing back alewife migrations to places like Mill Brook Preserve is critical for rebuilding fisheries in the Gulf of Maine. While migrating, alewives are an important food source for herons, ospreys, mink, and raccoons.

Alewife Predators in Mill Brook Preserve



Facts about Alewife

- Found from North Carolina to Newfoundland, Canada
- Grow to 11 inches and live up to ten years
- Typically spend four years at sea before their first spawning, then spawn every year
- Females produce up to 300,000 eggs annually
- Over 60,000 alewives have migrated from the ocean through Mill Brook Preserve on their way to Highland Lake in a year

Nature Explorer

Questions And Activities:

- How many different bird songs can you hear?
- How many different colors of mushrooms can you find?
- Do you see any round holes near logs or rocks? What do you think lives in them?
- Collect the largest and smallest leaf you can find on the forest floor. Do you see signs of animals eating the leaves?
- How many different types of cones can you find on the forest floor? Who do you think might eat the seeds out of the cones?
- Do you see fish swimming up or down stream? How many fish do you count?

Want more scavenger hunt questions? Go to:

WWW.PRLT.ORG/EXPLORE-MILLBROOK



Join Us



The Presumpscot Regional Land Trust engages with communities to conserve, steward, and provide access to local lands and clean water, for current and future generations to enjoy. We are a community based nonprofit primarily serving Gorham, Gray, Standish, Westbrook, and Windham.

We hold over 1,600 acres of conserved lands with 16 free public access preserves that include trails and water access. We are the water stewards of the Presumpscot River watershed and we coordinate the Sebago to the Sea Trail, a 28-mile trail from Standish to Portland.

To learn more, volunteer, find trail maps, and become a member go to: WWW.PRLT.ORG