# Focused In-Stream Habitat (FISH) – Large In-Stream Wood and Rock Additions

Maret Smith-Miller, MDMR, Marine Resource Management Coordinator,
and Ben Nauman, NRCS, Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships

# Resource Concern: Inadequate Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms

**Core Practice 395: Stream Habitat Improvement and Management**

# Practice 395: Stream Habitat Improvement and Management

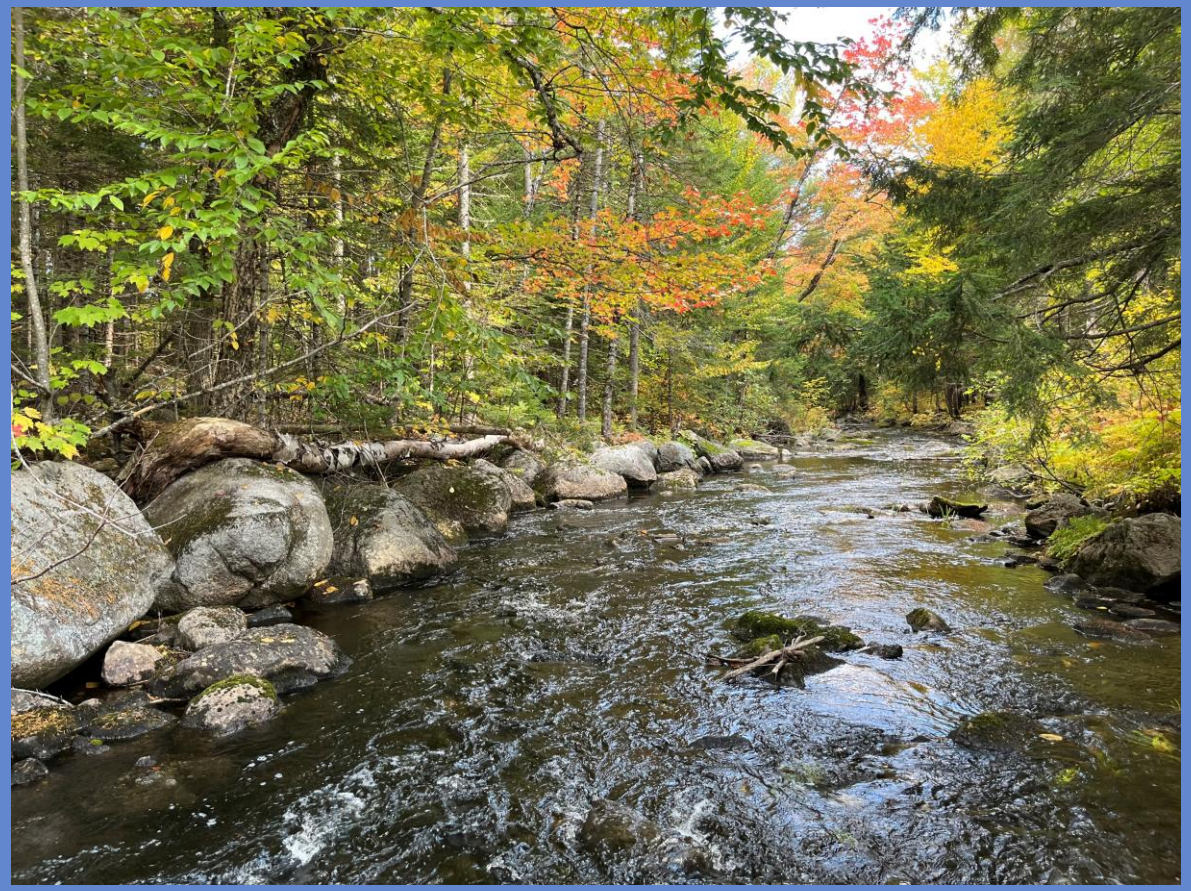
Application: Adding wood through mechanical and manual means
Note: Stamped engineering design is not required for this application

- The Dream: work with the forestry industry when they have a cut or road work near a stream, utilize forestry or road equipment that is mobilized to add wood to the streams

# Practice 395: Stream Habitat Improvement and Management

Application: moving rocks back into the channel that were moved.

Note: Stamped engineering design is not required for this application



# Practice 395: Stream Habitat Improvement and Management

Application: Boulder Placement
Note: Stamped engineering design is required for this application

- Engineered sizing and placement, for imported materials (boulders), single boulders or clusters to mimic natural conditions
- Boulder height will be above bankfull to collect material
- We want them BIG

# Practice 395: Stream Habitat Improvement and Management

Application: Rock and Wood Structures

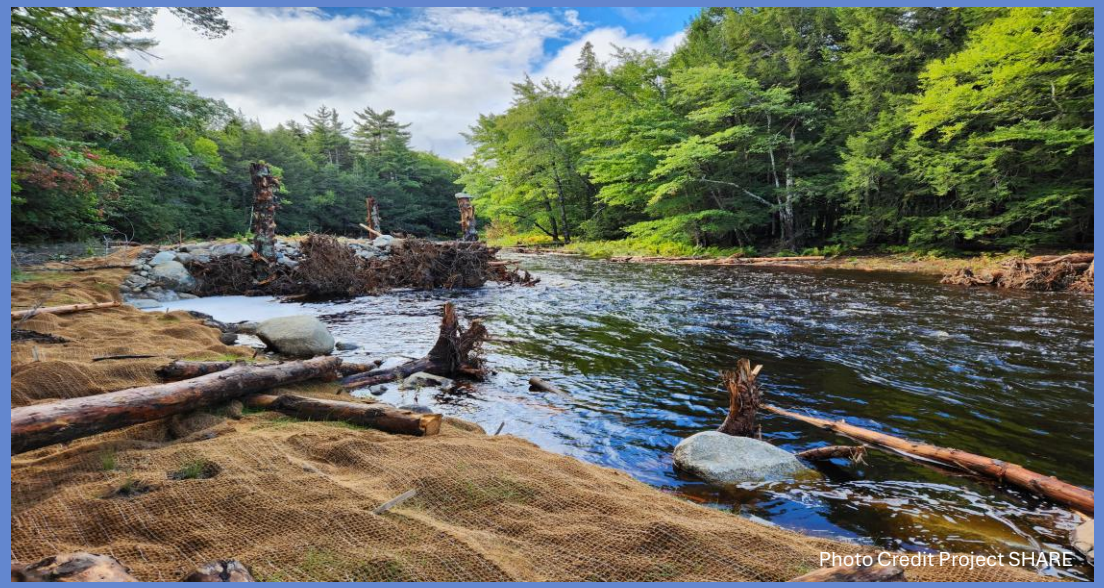
Note: Stamped engineering design is required for this application

- Spaced individual structures

# Practice 395: Stream Habitat Improvement and Management

Application: Stream Restoration
Note: Stamped engineering design is required for this scenario

- Multiple activities, including rock/wood structure loading, berm/dike removal, ice control structures, and engineered log jams



# Draft Supporting Practices

- Aquatic Organism Passage (396)
  - Application: only for dam removal, typically remnant log drive splash dam Earthen Dam Removal less than or equal to 1000 cu yd
  - Earthen Dam Removal
  - Concrete Dam Removal

- Instream habitat and Management (395)
  - Manual Instream Wood Placement
    - Application: only for manual wood additions: prox to large project (.25 stream miles), trib above or side channel - Max 2 miles, =<20 ft. This practice is capped at 2 acres; *for example: if a stream is 15 feet wide and one mile is treated, the practice area is 79,200 square feet or 1.8 acres*.

# Draft Supporting Practices

- Brush Management (314)
- Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580)
  - Application: Needs to be related to construction
- Mulching (484)
  - Application: Needs to be related to construction
- Stream Crossing (578)
  - Application: temp stream crossing only
- Structure for Water Control (587)
- Tree/shrub establishment (612)
- Rare and or Declining Natural Communities

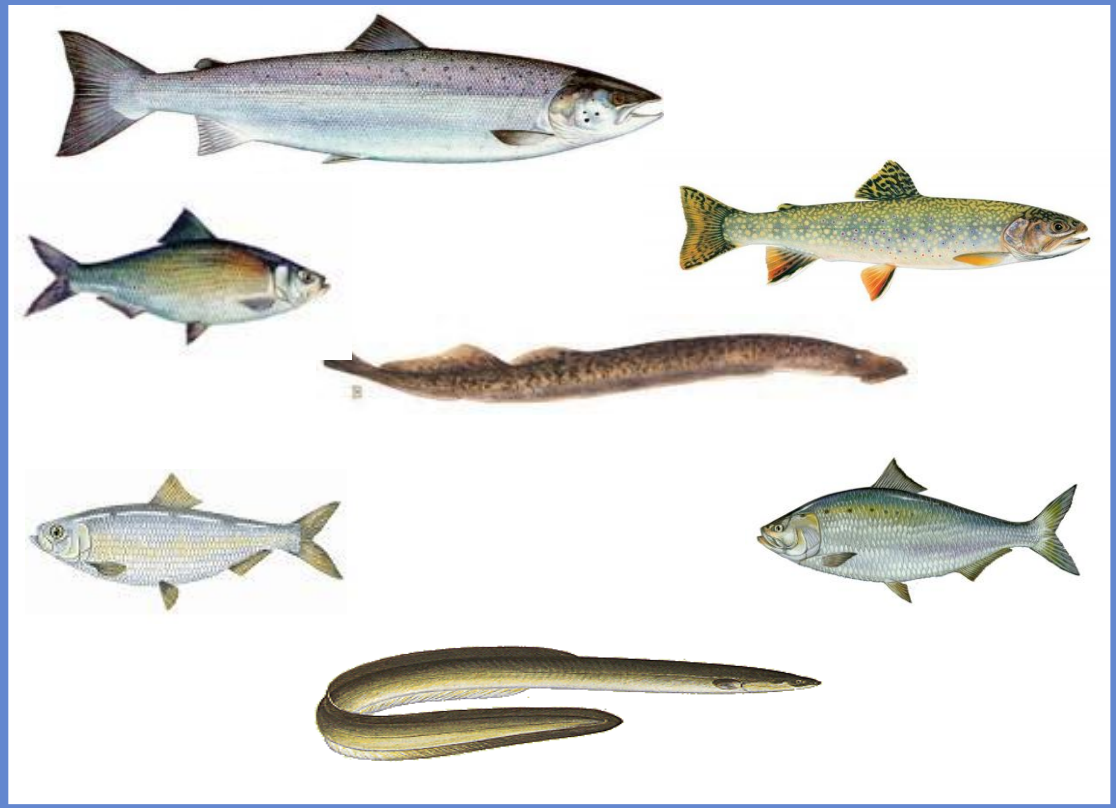
**Ben don't forget practice payment schedule fluctuations**

# RCPP FISH Project

- Conservation partnership
- Leverages NRCS and partner resources to address instream habitat issues
  - Core resource concern: inadequate habitat for fish and other aquatic organism
  - Need NRCS 395 practices
- Six-year project (May 2024- May 2030)
- Supporting 10-12 project designs (DMR) and implementation (NRCS)
  - Financial Assistance in total $4,500,000

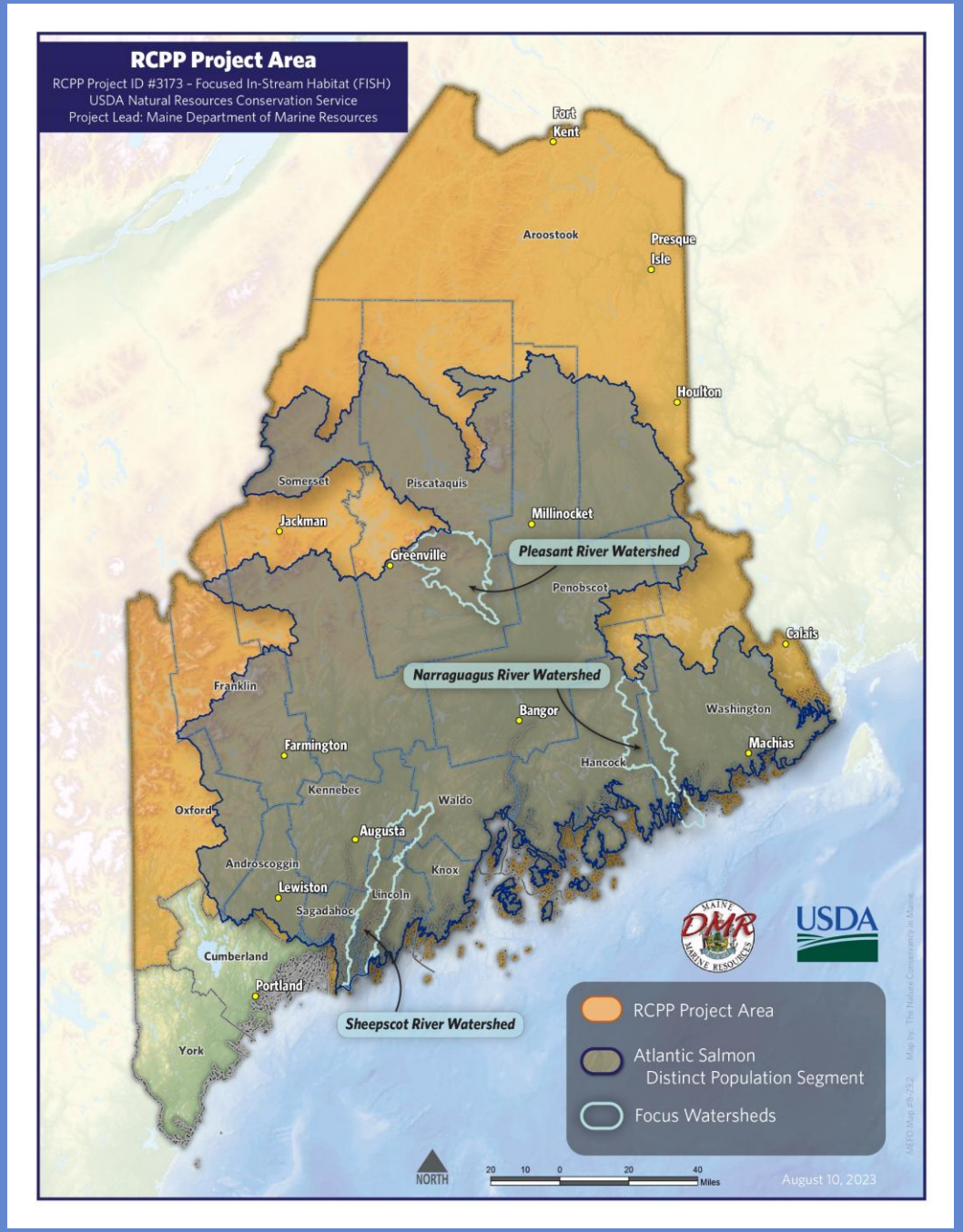
# FISH Goals

- Improve instream habitat (habitat diversity, instream cover, and sediment sorting) to create spawning and rearing habitat
- Increase survival
- Improve connectivity
- Support Atlantic salmon and(or) sea-run Brook Trout projects that simultaneously benefit other diadromous species

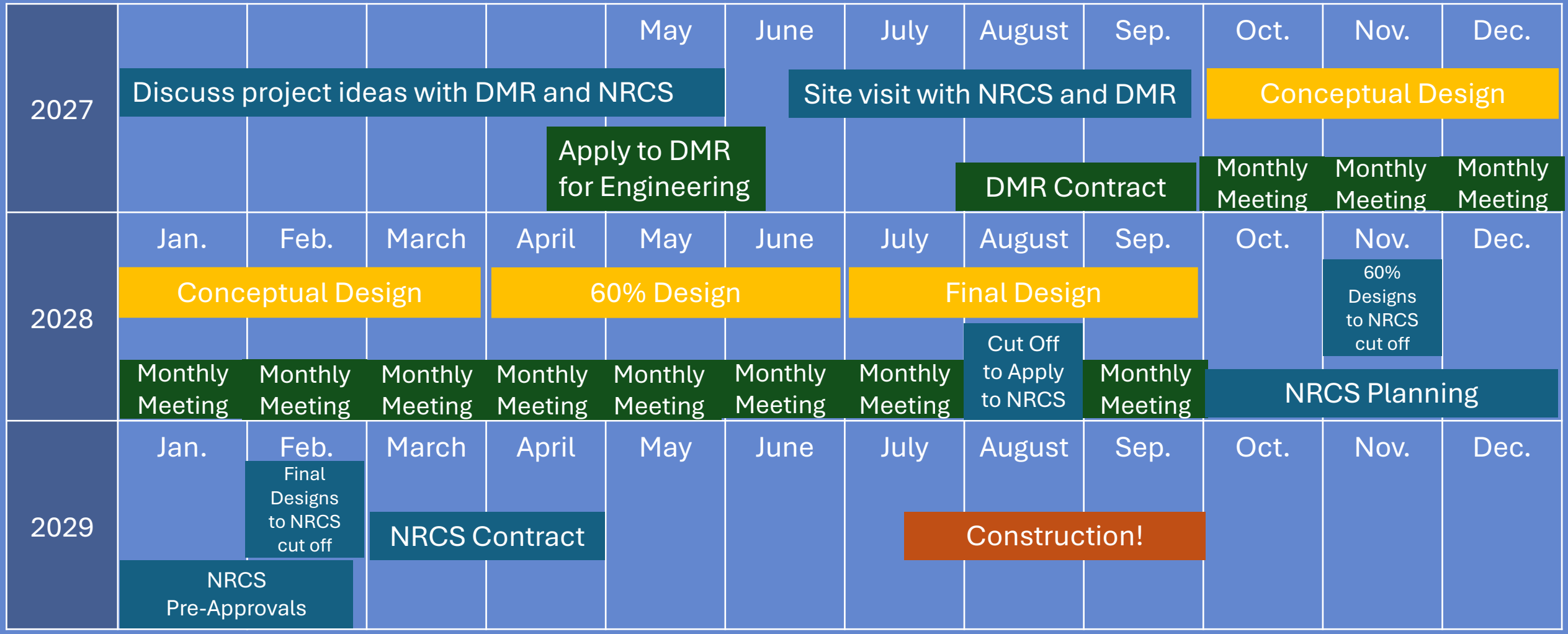


# FISH Project Area

- Third order streams or larger
- Currently six projects with DMR for design
  - Sheepscot, Narraguagus, and the Pleasant River Watersheds
  - Large wood structure, constructed riffles and pools, ice control structures, reconstruct side channel/floodplain, etc.

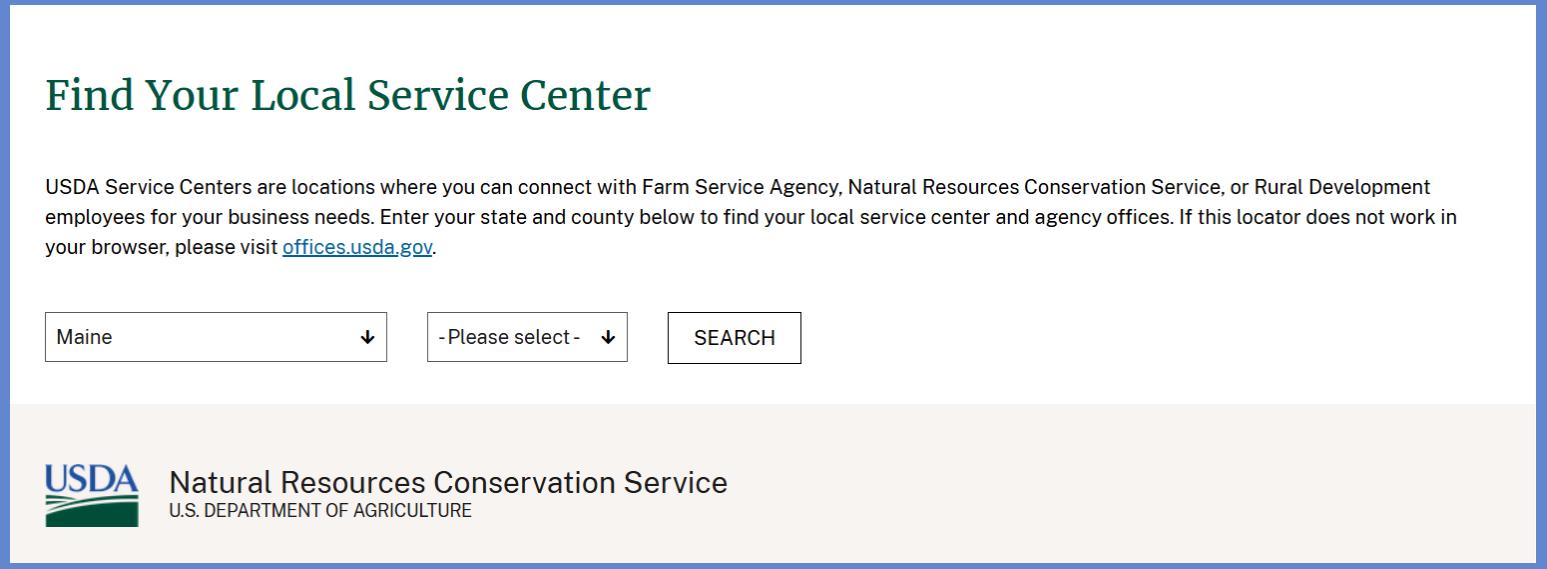


# FISH Processing



# Apply to DMR and NRCS

- Qualified project managers with identified habitat concerns and initial technical designs
- Annual May DMR Request for Applications
- Annual September NRCS Application (September 18th 2026)
- Applicants are required to:
  - Meet with their local NRCS service center
  - Meet with their local Farm Service Agency center




- https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator

# Deliverables for DMR

- Within 365 day of contracting
  - 30% conceptual designs
  - 60% designs
  - Final designs stamped by a licensed engineer in the state of Maine
- Meet with DMR and NRCS staff monthly and to review each design stage
- Provide a progress report annually March 1st to DMR

maret.smithmiller@maine.gov
ben.naumann@usda.gov