

USDA Joint Chiefs Project
Mettowee Watershed Restoration
Reconnecting aquatic habitats and improving flood resiliency
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and USDA Forest Service

Watershed: Mettowee River

Square Miles: 210

Percent of watershed in agriculture: 16%

Length of Project: 3 years

Progress and Plans: Approximately 0.5 miles of fish habitat restored in east fork of headwaters on National Forest lands; topographic survey of Tower Rd. culvert to be used for design; 90% completion of design for stream crossing structure at Tower Road; watershed-wide assessment of road-stream crossings; grant dollars awarded for construction of Tower Road culvert replacement.



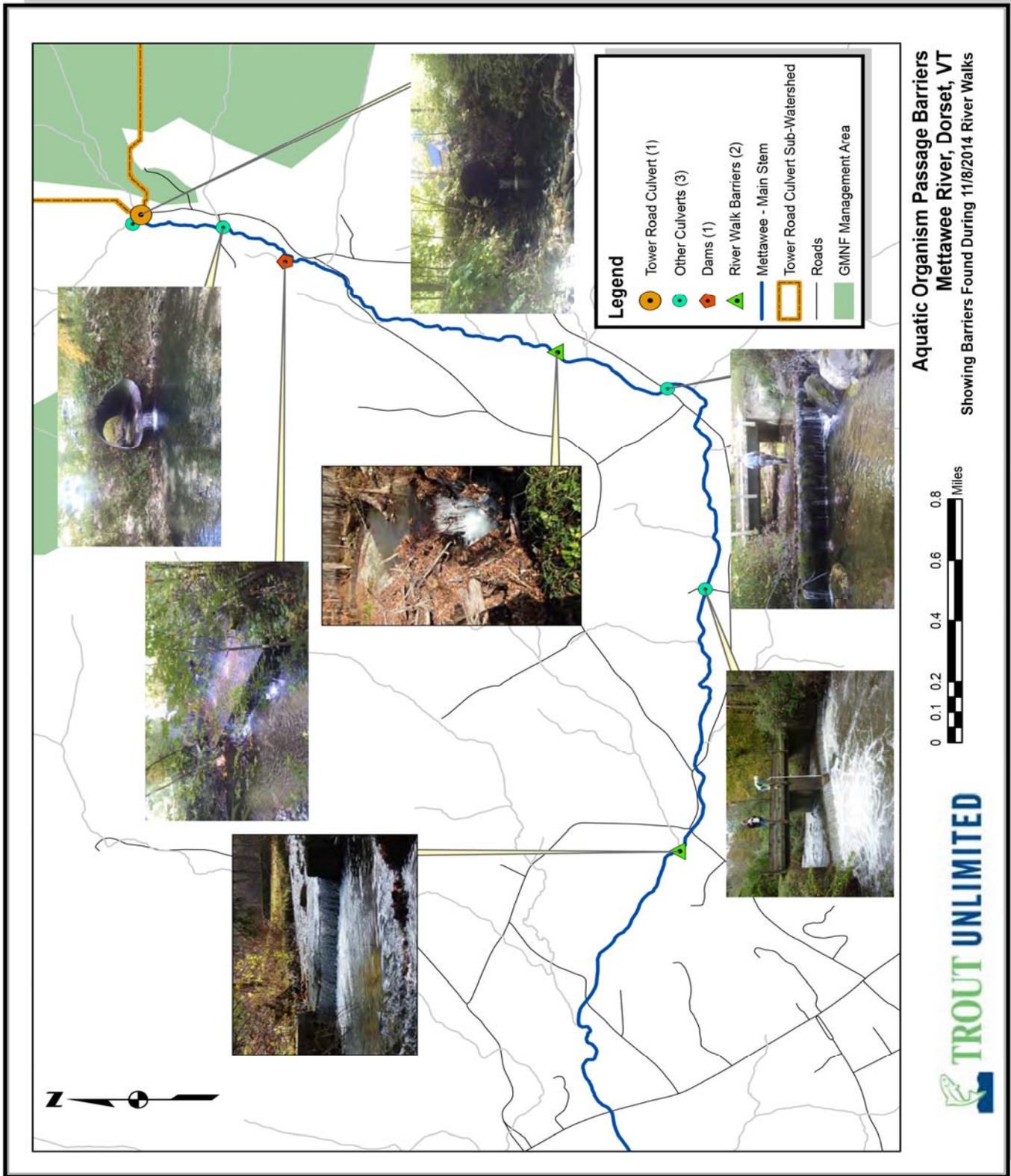
The headwaters of the Mettowee River: Originating on Dorset Mountain within the Green Mountain National Forest, this is one of the most productive fisheries in Vermont, which boasts wild populations of Brook, Brown and Rainbow trout. Yet, it is not without its challenges from an aquatic perspective. Aquatic habitat is highly fragmented **by stream crossings that limit aquatic organism passage in the headwaters.**

Understanding the Natural Resource Concerns: Undersized stream crossing structures, such as culverts, do not allow the stream to behave naturally. These structures **prevent or reduce sediment and debris movement through the stream system during storm events and can lead to plugging of the structure causing erosion of streambanks, roads, or driveways.** In addition, these structures usually lead to unsuitable conditions (e.g. perched culvert) for fish and wildlife to move freely throughout the stream system.

Conservation Highlight: Expand partnership efforts to protect and improve water quality in the Mettowee watershed and Lake Champlain; improve flood resiliency; restore riparian function and processes; and reconnect and enhance aquatic habitats. Engage with private landowners.

Key Partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Forest Service, Poultney-Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District (PMNRCD), Bennington County Conservation District (BCCD), Southwest Vermont Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Vermont Fish & Wildlife, Vermont Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Trout Unlimited's New England Culvert Project, US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife.





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