

USFWS Excerpt: October 2017

Middle Falls, 3rd Falls, Mill Street Falls, Factory Channel

The 3rd Falls (also known as Mill Street Falls) is located between the two dams and is a barrier to fish passage. At this site, the river bifurcates around Factory Island with the main channel (and falls) on river right and a small side channel on the east side of Factory Island that also connects the head and tailwaters of the falls. The Inter-Fluve report notes that removal of a small barrier on this side channel in 2012 may have partially or substantially improved passage. In the summer of 2017, Service staff surveyed the bypass to assess potential for passage in this side channel. Due to its long, circuitous path around Factory Island, the side channel is characterized by predominantly mild slopes with occasional drops and short, steeper slopes over ledge outcroppings. Remnant mill foundation stone can be found throughout the area. In general, the side channel appears passable over most of its length though water depths were shallow at the time of this survey. Two locations that may hinder fish movement were identified. Moving upstream, the first potential impediment was a wide ledge bench of moderate slope. The bench induced shallow, sheet flow over this flat bedrock section. The combination of fast water and shallow depth would clearly inhibit movement of American shad, and to a lesser degree, river herring. The second potential impediment was a short cascade towards the upstream end of the side channel. Alosines prefer to move over hydraulic drops through submerged nappes and, generally, are not known to leap over free overfalls (in the way salmonids do). The degree to which both sections impede upstream movement is highly dependent on flow in the channel. Significant improvements to the passage conditions at these sites might be accomplished through alternations to the ledge outcroppings and/or movement of large rocks. This work might be accomplished in 3 to 5 days by a small crew with access to a generator, compressor, pneumatic hammer, and grip hoists. These enhancements would be relatively low cost and should be considered viable alternatives.