

FishAmerica Foundation

News Release



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For Immediate Release

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Completed Virginia Bridge Replacement Project Unveiled *Stimulus project benefits anglers, sportfish and the local economy*

Alexandria, VA– June 25, 2010 – Today, the FishAmerica Foundation joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), the City of Roanoke, Va., and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to unveil a river improvement project under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The partners provided the funding to replace Roanoke's aging Wiley Drive Bridge. The project was completed in May, 2010.

"The FishAmerica Foundation is pleased to have been part of this project which will not only improve sportfishing along the Roanoke River, but also provide a boost to the local economy," said Johanna Laderman, executive director of the FishAmerica Foundation. "This project benefits anglers, boaters and local businesses."

The project replaced the more than 50-year old upper low water Wiley Drive Bridge. The old bridge was an impediment to fish passage, flood flows and recreational boaters in an area where the Roanoke is developing a public greenway and waterway.

The new bridge improves fish passage for several species of sportfish and the federally-listed Roanoke logperch. With the bridge replacement and the recent removal of the Wasena Dam, more than 185 river miles in the Roanoke River watershed was opened to fish passage. This project will benefit many of the 858,000 anglers who fish in Virginia each year and whom generate more than \$1.3 billion annually for Virginia's economy.

In 2009, the Service brought this project to the attention of the FishAmerica Foundation. Since 2000, FishAmerica and the Service have invested more than \$2 million in projects such as this to restore more than 450 acres of wetlands and open 100 miles of stream from Maine to Virginia.

"FishAmerica's partnership with the Service is a perfect example of a federal agency and outdoor enthusiasts working together to conserve natural resources for future enjoyment while making an impact on the community, the fisheries and the economy today," said Laderman

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The FishAmerica Foundation, the conservation and research foundation of the American Sportfishing Association, is dedicated to keeping our fish and waters healthy. FishAmerica unites the sportfishing industry with conservation groups, government agencies, fishing tournaments, corporations and charitable foundations, investing in fisheries conservation and research across the country. FishAmerica's matching grants empower citizen conservationists in their own communities. Since 1983, FishAmerica has invested more than \$11 million in 1,000 fisheries conservation and research projects nationwide.