Road-stream crossings are receiving increased attention for their role in fragmenting stream networks and the potential for restoring aquatic connectivity through culvert replacement. Given the large number of road-stream crossings that could potentially affect aquatic connectivity it is essential to carefully evaluate opportunities and set priorities for culvert replacement projects. Although dams can generally be viewed as near complete barriers to fish and aquatic organism passage, culverts and bridges vary greatly in the degree to which they disrupt aquatic connectivity. Landscape modeling tools are now available that can account for the degree to which particular stream crossings represents a barrier when assessing their impacts on aquatic connectivity. To take advantage of these modeling approaches we need field-based information about the degree to which individual crossings represent barriers to aquatic organism passage.

A number of agencies, NGOs and academic institutions recently formed the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) to address these data needs. The North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative has developed a unified protocol for assessing stream crossings as well as programmatic infrastructure to support crossing assessments: a universal coding system for crossings, online training and certification, an online database with a map interface, digital collection and bulk uploading of data, scoring systems for aquatic organism passage, modeling to assist in the prioritization of crossings for assessment or replacement, and a system of distributed coordination to facilitate local involvement in data collection.