82 Dams Removed to Restore Rivers in 2018


Nationwide, 1,578 dams have been removed from 1912 through 2018.

Dam removal brings a variety of benefits to local communities, including restoring river health and clean water, revitalizing fish and wildlife, improving public safety and recreation, and enhancing local economies. Working in a variety of functions with partner organizations throughout the country, American Rivers contributed financial and technical support in many of the removals.

Contact information is provided for dam removals, if available. For further information about the list, please contact Jessie Thomas-Blate, American Rivers, Associate Director of River Restoration at 202.347.7550 or jthomas@americanrivers.org.

This list includes all dam removals reported to American Rivers (as of February 11, 2019) that occurred in 2018, regardless of the level of American Rivers’ involvement. Inclusion on this list does not indicate endorsement by American Rivers. Dams are categorized alphabetically by state.

Dennett Dam, Tuolumne River, California

This project involved the removal of Dennett Dam, an abandoned low-head dam located on the lower Tuolumne River in Modesto, California. The dam has been an instream barrier to anadromous fish passage, controlling local hydraulic and sediment transport conditions, for over 60 years, while also impeding water flow in the river. It is also a significant safety hazard adjacent to a major park and has been the location of three drowning deaths in the last five years, including two children.

Contact: Patrick Koepele, Tuolumne River Trust, 209-236-0330, patrick@tuolumne.org

Cleveland National Forest Dam Removals (HJFD1, HJFD2, HJFD11, HJFD21, HJFD22, HJFD23, HJFD25, HJFD26, HJFD29, HJFD30, HJFD31, HJFD32, HJFD33, HJFD34, HJFD34.1/35, HJFD37, HJFD40, HJFD41, SJFD28, SJFD29, SJFD30, SJFD31, SJFD1, SJFD2, SJFD3, SJFD4, SJFD5, SJFD6, SJFD7, SJFD9, SJFD10, SJFD11, TCFD11), Holy Jim Creek, San Juan Creek and Trabuco Creek, California

The Cleveland National Forest in 2018 removed 33 dams in total—18 dams from Holy Jim Creek, four in upper San Juan Creek, 10 in lower San Juan Creek and one from Trabuco Creek. Originally the dams were constructed to create pools for a stocked rainbow trout fishery, conserve water and wildlife and provide water for fire suppression. However, with no maintenance for over 40 years, some of the dams were no longer serving their intended purpose. These dams in Cleveland National Forest were removed to improve stream conditions and provide adequate fish passage and wildlife habitat.

Contact: Kristen Winter, Cleveland National Forest, 858-674-2956, kwinter@fs.fed.us

Lagunita Diversion Dam, San Francisquito Creek, California

The 119-year-old dam obstructed the upstream migration of endangered steelhead trout. In July 2018, Lagunita Dam Diversion Project removed the dam to restore 480 feet of the creek, improving fish passage with pools, shallows and native plants, improved sediment flow, and exposure to areas needed for spawning.

Contact: Rachel Berjerano, Stanford University, 650-725-5482, rachelr@stanford.edu
Flock Process Dam, Norwalk River, Connecticut

The 15-foot high Flock Process Dam was built in 1879 to power a mill. This dam was impeding runs of migratory fish along the river. The project was a partnership between the City of Norwalk, the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Removal of the dam will eliminate the risk of failure and catastrophic flooding that has threatened local communities downstream, and promote a healthy, functioning ecosystem, including natural sediment transport to coastal wetlands and beaches.

Contact: Alexis Cherichetti, AECOM, 231-922-4301, troy.naperla@aecom.com

White Dam, Middle Oconee/Altamaha River, Georgia

Constructed between 1912 and 1913, White Dam was fully operational by 1916 as a hydroelectric power plant that powered a Whitehall textile mill, but it has been inoperable for decades. The dam was removed in July 2018, to maximize environmental and ecosystem benefits, increase human safety, and provide for recreational use of the river while conserving the historic value and a portion of the dam. This project has allowed native as well as migratory fish to travel upstream more easily, and improved hydrological function and flow of materials downstream.

Contact: Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy, American Rivers, 412-727-6130, lhollingsworth-segedy@americanrivers.org
James Shelton, University of Georgia, 706-614-6313, jshelton@uga.edu

Danville Dam, Vermilion River, Illinois

This 11-foot high by 207-foot long concrete dam was built in 1914 to supply water to public utilities and industry. The dam had altered flow, degraded habitat, and created a safety hazard for the public. This project included the concrete removal of the dam spillway, west abutment and the two abandoned piers. Completion of the dam removal project returned a section of the river to a more natural free flowing state, benefitting an extraordinarily high number of fish and other aquatic species in greatest need of conservation. This project reconnected 190 square miles upstream of Danville Dam in the Vermilion River Basin.

Contact: Lindell Loy, PE, SE, IL Department of Natural Resources, 217-782-4250, Lindell.Loy@illinois.gov

Ellsworth Park Dam, North Fork Vermilion River, Illinois

The project included two dam removals— Danville Dam (see above) and Ellsworth Park Dam. In total, this joint project opened 175 stream miles upstream of Danville Dam and Ellsworth Park Dam in the Vermilion River Basin, benefitting two federally listed mussel species (Northern riffleshell and clubshell), 26 state-listed species, and many game species, including smallmouth bass. The project will also open downstream access to the Middle Fork Vermilion River, Illinois’ only National Scenic River.

Contact: Prairie Rivers Network

Emerichsville Dam (16th Street Dam), West Fork White River, Indiana

In October 2018, this 10-foot high by 360-foot long concrete dam was removed after it began to breach. The project is anticipated to provide passage of warm water fish species and remove a safety hazard.

Contact: Steve Sumerlott, Citizen Energy
Fox Farm Road Dam (Warsaw Water Supply Dam), Tippecanoe River, Indiana

Indiana Department of Natural Resources led the effort to remove the 3-foot high by 50-foot long obsolete dam in August 2018. Built in the early 1960s, Fox Farm Road Dam was removed from the Tippecanoe River after becoming a safety hazard and future liability. Completion of the project is expected to improve the fish population in the river.

Contact: Doug Keller, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 317-232-409, dkeller@dnr.in.gov

Coopers Mill Dam, Sheepscot River, Maine

First constructed in the early 1800s, the 185-foot long, and nearly 20-foot tall Coopers Mill Dam removal opened habitat for Atlantic salmon, alewife, blueback herring, American shad, sea lamprey, American eel, and Eastern brook trout. Originally constructed to power a mill and serve as fire protection, the Coopers Mill Dam was removed in August 2018 when deferred maintenance led to a reduced level of service for fire protection, unsustainable operation and maintenance costs, and public safety concerns. The dam also blocked fish passage. The removed dam improved habitat and stream connectivity for seven species of migratory fish. The project also restored fire protection water supply through installation of a new run-of-river system. The project team also worked to preserve the history of the dam and mill site while improving public access.

Contact: Andrew Goode, Atlantic Salmon Federation, 207-725-2833, andy@asf.comcast.net

Bloede Dam, Patapsco River, Maryland

The Bloede Dam removal is the linchpin of a larger plan— including removal of the Union and Simkins dams in 2010— to restore more than 65 miles of spawning habitat for blueback herring, alewife, American shad, hickory shad, and more than 183 miles for American eel in the Patapsco River watershed. Originally built in the early 1900s to supply electrical power to the cities of Catonsville in Baltimore County and Ellicott City in Howard County, the 34-foot high by 220-foot long dam was owned by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. At the time of demolition, it served no functional purpose, but caused numerous injuries and deaths, with at least nine dam-related deaths since the 1980s.

Contact: Serena McClain, American Rivers, 202-347-7550, smcclain@americanrivers.org

Barstowe’s Pond Dam, Cotley River, Massachusetts

Built in 1800s, the Barstowe’s Pond Dam was the first and only impediment to stream fishes between the Taunton River and the headwaters of the Cotley River. Barstowe's Pond Dam was an 8.5-foot tall and 92-foot long wooden dam that provided no fish passage on a tributary to the Taunton River. The dam removal project is anticipated to benefit river herring by providing access to eight miles of riverine habitat, improving natural sediment movement and allowing access to miles of habitat for alewife and American eel. Removal of the dam will also eliminate a public safety hazard.

Contact: Nick Wildman, MA Department of Fish and Game, 617-626-1542, nick.wildman@state.ma.us

Coonamessett River Lower Dam, Coonamessett River, Massachusetts

The six-foot high and 400-foot long, Coonamessett River Lower Dam was built in the 1700s to supply water. Removed in May 2018, this project eliminated the aging mill and increased the benefits of a restored river system. The project is opening 30 miles of high-quality habitat for American eel and river herring, which are under consideration for federal listing. It will also reduce the probability of flooding and eliminate the potential for catastrophic dam breaches posed by this obsolete dam. This is the first of a two-phase project.

Contact: Beth Lambert, MA Department of Fish and Game, 617-626-1544, beth.lambert@state.ma.us
Roberts Meadow Upper Reservoir Dam, Roberts Meadow Brook, Massachusetts
Built in 1883 for water supply, the Roberts Meadow Upper Reservoir Dam was 30-foot tall by 65-foot wide. The dam was no longer in use and was in need of repair. It was removed in three stages over the course of the summer in 2018 in order to allow for natural redistribution of sediment within the eight acre impoundment. The removal opened 10 miles of cold-water habitat for brook trout and spiny sculpin.
Contact: Donna LaScaleia, City of Northampton

West Britannia Dam, Mill River, Massachusetts
Built in 1824, the West Britannia Dam was an earthen berm and masonry dam that blocked more than 30 miles of riverine habitat and approximately 560 acres of freshwater pond habitat for alewife, blueback herring and American eel. The eight-foot tall by 85-foot long dam was removed in March 2018 to reduce flood risk, eliminate a potential safety hazard, improve recreational opportunities and restore environmental health.
Contact: Amy Singler, American Rivers, 413-584-2183, asingler@americanrivers.org
Beth Lambert, MA Department of Fish and Game, (617) 626-1544, beth.lambert@state.ma.us

Alcott Dam, Portage Creek, Michigan
This 12-foot tall by 30-foot long, concrete dam was removed to restore native fish habitat. The dam no longer was serving a useful function, was preventing fish migration while holding contaminated sediment in place that required special handling and disposal. Removing the dam will improve habitat connectivity and provide a larger space for fish to move around, which will have a positive impact on the population throughout the creek.
Concrete: Troy Naperala, AECOM, 231-922-4301, troy.naperla@aecom.com

Cannon Creek #2 Flooding Dam, Cannon’s Creek, Michigan
In July 2018, Cannon Creek #2 Flooding Dam (less than 5-foot tall and 500-foot long) was removed as it was no longer serving a useful purpose.
Contact: Keith Fisher, MI Department of Natural Resources, 989-275-5151, Fisherk2@Michigan.gov

Heil Road Dam, Black Creek, Michigan
This 23-foot high by 120-foot long earthen dam built in 1970 for recreational purposes, was removed in November 2018 due to structural deficiencies.

Maple River Dam, Black Creek, Michigan
In November 2018, this 20-foot tall by 880-foot long, earthen structure built in 1966 was removed. It was originally built to produce hydropower.

Sabin Dam, Boardman River, Michigan
When fully implemented, the Boardman River Dams Ecosystem Restoration Project will reconnect over 160 miles of free-flowing, cold-water streams and restore hundreds of acres of wetland and upland habitat. It is one of the most comprehensive dam removal and restoration projects in Michigan’s history and one of the largest such projects in the Great Lakes Basin. The Sabin Dam is the last of three dams on the Boardman River to be removed. The project included numerous stakeholders and worked to provide full valley bottom restoration, including channel, floodplain and upland habitat restoration. The removed dam and restored channel is expected to increase upstream migration of aquatic organisms and eliminate thermal impacts of the existing dam to the Boardman River. The Boardman River is a top-quality trout stream with three linear miles designated with "Blue Ribbon" status.
Contact: Carl A. Platz, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 616-842-5510, carl.a.platz@usace.army.mil
**Solon Dam, Tager Creek, Michigan**

To eliminate warm water discharge and restore stream habitat, this 24-foot tall by 160-foot long earthen dam was removed in September 2018.

**Trout Brook Pond Dam, Trout Brook, Michigan**

The Trout Brook Pond Dam was a 9-foot tall by 295-foot long earthen dam, built in 1958 to create a fishing pond. In August 2018, the dam was removed to reconnect and restore a headwater stream channel.

*Contact: Neal Godby, MI Department of Natural Resources, 989-732-3541, godbyn@michigan.gov*

**Marsh Lake Dam, Minnesota River, Minnesota**

This fixed-crest concrete dam (28-foot high by 11800-foot long) was built in 1938 to control flooding. Owned and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this dam was removed in October 2018 to restore fish habitat, provide fish passage, improve fish diversity, and allow for better access to the site along with new walking/biking trails.

*Contact: Shahin Khazrajafari, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 651-290-5219, shahin.khazrajafari@usace.army.mil*

**Pelican Lake Dam, Pelican River, Minnesota**

This seven-foot tall by 140-foot long fixed-crest concrete dam was built in 1938 to control lake levels. In June 2018, the dam was removed to improve fish passage, reduce bank erosion, improve habitat, and support public safety and recreation.

*Contact: James Wolters, MN Department of Natural Resources Fisheries, 218-739-7576, james.wolters@state.mn.us*

**Lower Sawyer Mill Dam, Bellamy River, New Hampshire**

The Lower Sawyer Mill Dam was the first dam on the Bellamy River and was located approximately 2,000 linear feet upstream of the head of tide (tributary to Great Bay). The dam removal was the first phase of a two phase project, which also includes removal of the Upper Sawyer Mill Dam. The Upper Dam is located approximately 350 feet upstream of the Lower Dam and removal is planned for the summer of 2019. Removal of both dams will reconnect approximately 1 mile of mainstem river, provide passage and access to freshwater habitat for diadromous fish species and improve fish passage and help facilitate restoration efforts for an additional 5.9 miles of mainstem river. Additionally, removal of the dams will restore approximately 21 acres of previously inundated wetlands, eliminate two unsafe dams, improve flood resiliency and restore water quality.

*Contact: Kevin Lucey, NH Department of Environmental Services, Coastal Program, 603-559-0026, Kevin.Lucey@des.nh.gov*

**Columbia Lake Dam, Paulins Kill, New Jersey**

This project was led by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) with American Rivers managing the design phase (Princeton Hydro engineer) and TNC managing the construction phase (Sumco/River Logic contractors). Columbia Lake Dam was an operational hydropower dam at the outset of the project, which took approximately five years from initiation to the start of the removal in June 2018. The project consisted of the removal of Columbia Lake Dam and a downstream remnant dam on Paulins Kill, which collectively acted as the first physical barrier to fish migration and negatively impacted river flow.

Owned by NJ Department of Environmental Protection Division of Fish and Wildlife, the dam was 18-foot tall and 330-foot long, and originally built in 1909. The removal of the dam reconnected aquatic habitat for migratory fish including American shad, restored 32 acres of floodplains, and provided safe
and new recreational opportunities. The project is also anticipated to increase abundance and diversity of macroinvertebrates, including freshwater mussels, that are indicative of good water quality. 

Contacts: Laura Craig, American Rivers, 856-786-9000, lcraig@americanrivers.org  
Barbara Brummer, The Nature Conservancy, 908-879-7262, bbrummer@tnc.org

**Kincaid Lake Dam, Big Clems Run, New Jersey**

Originally built in 1926 for recreational purposes, this 16-foot tall by 100-foot long earthen dam was removed in May 2018. The dam was removed as the owners could not afford the rehabilitation cost. Removal of the dam reconnected 10 miles upstream and 3.4 miles downstream to Mullica Hill Pond Dam. 

Contact: Jillian Lawrence, NJDEP, 609-984-0859, Jillian.Lawrence@dep.nj.gov

**Lake Basgalore Dam, Tributary to Raccoon Creek, New Jersey**

This 13-foot tall by 180-foot long earthen dam built for recreational purposes was removed in September 2018 because the owner could not afford the rehabilitation cost.

Contact: Richard Tamagno, NJDEP, 609-984-0859, Richard.Tamagno@dep.nj.gov

**Oriskany Falls Dam, Tributary to Oriskany Creek, New York**

In 1917, Oriskany Falls Dam was built to supply water. It was a 15-foot tall by 95-foot long buttress dam that was removed in October 2018.

**Prison Dam, New York**

The Prison Dam was removed in New York in 2018.

**Rome Dam, West Branch Ausable River, New York**

This 37-foot tall by 205-foot long concrete structure used to be a paper mill dam. It was removed in November 2018.

Contact: Roy Schiff, Milone and MacBroom, 802-882-8335

**Sidney Reservoir Dam, Peckham Brook, New York**

Originally built in 1908 to supply water, this 20-feet tall by 300-feet long earthen structure was removed in October 2018.

**Hoosier Dam, Rocky River, North Carolina**

Built in 1922, Hoosier Dam was successfully removed in November 2018 with the help of groups such as National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Unique Places LLC., U. S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), NC State Historic Preservation Office, and Wildlands Engineering. The dam was a monumental obstacle to an endangered species, Cape Fear shiner, found only in central North Carolina. It blocked fish migration, which led to a decline in population upstream of the dam; therefore, removal of the dam is believed to provide critical habitat for Cape Fear shiner.

Contact: Aaron Aho, Unique Places LLC., aaho@uniqueplacesllc.com

**Ballville Dam, Sandusky River, Ohio**

Built in 1911 to produce hydropower, this 34.4-foot tall by 423-foot long concrete gravity structure was removed in September 2018. Removal of the dam is anticipated to improve fish passage.
Pres Vannes Lake Dam, Tributary to Sugar Creek, Ohio
This 17.6-foot tall by 211-foot long earthfill dam built in 1951 was removed in April 2018 to replace the principal spillway so that the dam can become a roadway embankment.

Tait Station Dam, Great Miami River, Ohio
In July 2018, this four-foot tall by 625-foot long concrete structure was removed as a mitigation solution for unavoidable stream impacts in the Great Miami River Watershed. Built in the year 1935, Tait Station Dam was originally used for water cooling for power plant production.

C-2 Meyers 1, Salt Creek (Little Butte Creek), Oregon
This 3-foot tall by 9-foot long structure was originally used for a water diversion for irrigation. C-2 Meyers 1 was removed to eliminate the need for annual push up dam construction, and to enhance fish passage and benefit the native fish species.

C-2 Meyers 2, Salt Creek (Little Butte Creek), Oregon
In 2018, this 2.5-foot tall by 6-foot long push-up dam was removed to improve fish passage and provide greater resiliency for native as well as migratory fish species. Removal of the dam reconnected 0.4 river miles.

Forest Creek Dam, Forest Creek, Oregon
Built in early 1950s to divert water to mill ponds and a bridge, this 8-foot tall by 20-foot long concrete dam was removed in 2018. Removal of this abandoned and obsolete dam will benefit species such as South Oregon Northern Californian Coast Coho salmon, steelhead trout and cutthroat trout.

Hartman Ditch Dam, Humbug Creek, Oregon
Removal of this abandoned dam has reconnected 0.4 river miles and is anticipated to benefit cutthroat trout.

Jamison Dam, Jamison Creek, Oregon
Originally used for irrigation and domestic purposes, Jamison Dam was removed in 2018 to benefit fish species such as summer steelhead and resident cutthroat trout.

Delp Dam, Indian Creek, Pennsylvania
Delp Dam is a low-hazard dam originally built to provide water for Philip Swartley's Mill (later Keller's Creamery). The dam was no longer serving a useful purpose and was removed as compensatory mitigation for construction on the Northeast Extension of the PA Turnpike. This project was completed in two phases. Phase I involved the removal of the dam and limited, required stabilization directly around the dam. Phase II will take place approximately one year after the dam removal to allow the stream to stabilize, and will include any additional bank grading and in-stream stabilization work that is needed. Removal of the dam helped restore natural form and function to a stream that supports habitat for resident fish and wildlife. American Rivers, the PA Turnpike Commission, and the PA Fish and Boat Commission were the primary partners for this project. 
Contact: Jessie Thomas-Blate, American Rivers, 202-347-7550, jthomas@americanrivers.org

Downing Ridge Dam, East Branch Brandywine Creek, Pennsylvania
Funded by PA Department of Transportation through PA Fish and Boat Commission and managed by American Rivers, removal of Downing Ridge Dam on East Branch Brandywine Creek was designed to eliminate a public safety hazard and improve fish passage. Built in 1917, this 5.25-foot tall by 182-foot
long concrete structure used to be a water diversion for a paper company. This project is anticipated to improve fish passage along with upstream utility and downstream public water supply intakes.

Contact: Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy, American Rivers, 412-727-6130, lhollingsworth-segedy@americanrivers.org
Jan Bowers, Chester County, 610-344-5400, jbowers@chesco.org

**Dunbar #1 Dam, Dunbar Creek, Pennsylvania**

Dunbar #1 Dam was built in 1901—a 16-foot tall by 450-foot long concrete structure initially used to supply water for coke ovens. It was breached in September 2018 to improve fish access and passage, and eliminate a public safety hazard. The removal project consists of two phases—phase I consisted of the removal of the stream barrier from across the stream channel, and phase II (2019) will be removal of the remaining dam structure from across the floodplain.

Contact: Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy, American Rivers, 412-727-6130, lhollingsworth-segedy@americanrivers.org

**Johns Run Dam, Johns Run, Pennsylvania**

This project consisted of removal of a log and stone dam that was a remnant of the early settlement of the area, and a complete barrier to fish passage. Logs were cut and removed by hand, as were the cobbles, boulder, and mortar forming the dam foundation. Removal of the dam will allow passage for trout, recolonization of the upstream watershed by blacknose dace, improve fishing access, and eliminate a public safety hazard. Copper mesh material removed from the dam was donated to the Brockway Center for Arts and Technology to be recycled into art projects.

Contact: Luke Bobnar, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, 814-776-1114, lbobnar@paconserve.org

**Krady Mill Dam, Chiques Creek, Pennsylvania**

Krady Mill Dam (D36-200) was a low-hazard dam originally built in the late 1800s to provide water power to a historic mill (still onsite). The concrete dam was approximately 5-foot high by 100-foot long. The dam was disconnected from the mill and no longer was serving a useful purpose. Removal of Krady Mill Dam opened up access to a network of 9.7 river miles and restored natural form and function to a stream that supports American eel, resident fish, and historic diadromous fish runs.

Contact: Jessie Thomas-Blate, American Rivers, 202-347-7550, jthomas@americanrivers.org

**Trexler Dam, Jordan Creek, Pennsylvania**

Trexler Dam was a 15-foot tall by 175-foot long concrete dam originally built for recreational purposes. The project included dam removal and wetland restoration of an impounded spring along the Jordan Creek tributaries, in order to restore fish and wetland habitat. Furthermore, this project is expected to enhance species diversity and habitat, contribute cool spring water to the Jordan Creek, and eliminate a public safety hazard.

Contact: Kristie Fach, Wildland Conservancy, 610-965-4397 ext. 124, kfach@wildlandspa.org

**Wagners Dam, McMichael Creek, Pennsylvania**

Wagners Dam was removed in 2018 from McMichael Creek in Pennsylvania.
Estabrook Dam, Milwaukee River, WI

Milwaukee County and Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District have worked on fish passage alternatives and ultimately the removal of the Estabrook Dam in Glendale, Wisconsin. The dam was built in historic limestone quarries within the floodplain and near-bank areas of the Milwaukee River. The removal of the nine-foot tall by 784-foot long gravity and earthen dam improved water quality, reduced sedimentation, and reconnected fish with upstream habitat.

Contact: Tom Chapman, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, 414-225-2154, TChapman@mmsd.com

Monterey Dam, Rock River, WI

Built in 1846, the Monterey Dam was created to generate electricity. Years of wear and structural deficiencies pushed the City of Janesville to remove the 10-foot high dam in July 2018. Removal of the dam will increase coastal resiliency by protecting against storm surge, improve connectivity throughout the floodplain to allow natural water flow and maintain the health of a self-sustaining river and wetland ecosystem supporting local wildlife, as well as habitat for river herring, American eel, and other native species.

Contact: Tim Whittaker, City of Janesville, 608-755-3169, whittaker@ci.janesville.wi.us