



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

# RIVERWAYS PROGRAM

*Building Partnerships, Protecting Rivers*

## Riverways & Conservation Commissions Dam Removal for Aquatic Habitat Restoration

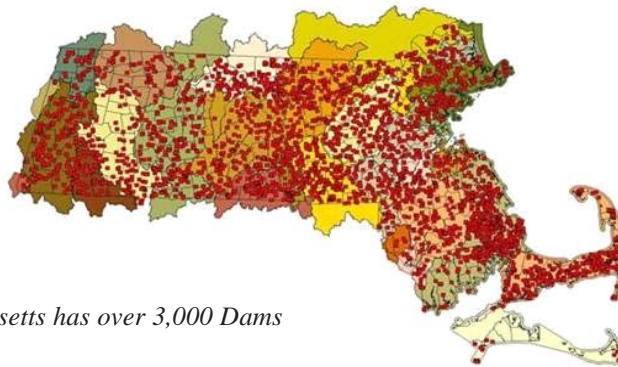
In 2006, working with partners including dam owners, local municipalities and federal, state, private and non-profit funders, Riverways removed three dams, one in eastern Massachusetts, *Red Brook in Wareham and Plymouth*, one in central Massachusetts, *Galloway Brook in Barre*, and one in western Massachusetts, *Yokum Brook in Becket*. Each of these dam removals was reviewed and permitted by the local Conservation Commission under the Wetland Protection Act.

Each of these projects provided outstanding improvements to the ecosystem as well as restored functioning riverine wetland systems. In particular, the removals restored habitat, river connectivity and fish and wildlife passage. On the coast, passage is improved for sea-run brook trout (“salters”)—and they have been seen! Passage has also been improved in mid-state for trout, and in western Massachusetts for both salmon and trout. Riverways ensures that its projects are designed by experienced environmental consulting firms (ones with staff versed in engineering, ecology, river restoration and fluvial geomorphology) that have proven prior experience with dam removal and river restoration. The Conservation Commissions brought their permitting expertise and understanding of local conditions to the projects. At the end of the process, we were so pleased with results. Each successful project builds our collective knowledge and promotes additional aquatic restoration projects.



For each project, the Conservation Commission reviewed dam removal and habitat restoration as a *limited project* under the Act (10.53 (4)). Under the limited project provision commissions agreed that the dam removals would increase the capacity of the river, despite temporary or short term disturbances to other resource areas. In each case listed species were not impacted.

Conservation Commissions were consulted with early in the permit process, and Riverways staff attended informational hearings and pre-permitting site visits. Discussions with the Commissions included siting, staging access, proper dewatering procedures, erosion control and time of year restrictions as well as resource area changes.



*Massachusetts has over 3,000 Dams*

**stream  
restoration  
through  
small dam  
removal**

Deval L. Patrick, Governor  
Timothy P. Murray, Lt.  
Governor

**The Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts**

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary  
**Executive Office of  
Environmental Affairs**

Thomas W. French, Acting  
Commissioner

**Department of Fish and  
Game**

Joan Kimball, Director  
**Riverways Program**



**The mission of the Riverways Program is to promote the restoration, protection and ecological integrity of the Commonwealth's rivers, streams and adjacent lands.**

**For more information:**

**Riverways Program**  
[www.massriverways.org](http://www.massriverways.org)

**American Rivers**  
[www.americanrivers.org](http://www.americanrivers.org)

**Trout Unlimited**  
[www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org)

**Mass Office of Dam Safety**  
[www.mass.gov/dcr/pe/damSafety/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/pe/damSafety/index.htm)

**Mass Wetlands Restoration Program**  
[www.mass.gov/czm/wrp/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/czm/wrp/index.htm)

**Dam Removal Clearinghouse**  
[www.lib.berkeley.edu/](http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/)

Tim Purinton,  
Restoration Planner  
617-626-1542  
[tim.purinton@state.ma.us](mailto:tim.purinton@state.ma.us)

Nick Wildman,  
Priority Project  
Coordinator  
617-626-1527  
[nick.wildman@state.ma.us](mailto:nick.wildman@state.ma.us)

Riverways Program  
Department of Fish and Game  
251 Causeway St.  
Suite 400; Boston,  
MA 02114  
[www.massriverways.org](http://www.massriverways.org)

## Dam Removals in Massachusetts

Since 2000, Riverways and partners have removed six dams as part of its aquatic restoration work. Each of these dams had outlived its usefulness and required substantial repair to meet current dam safety standards. Removal restored habitat and passage for aquatic species, specifically improved fish passage for salmon, eels, trout, dace and darters, as well as restoring the river ecosystem, and improving public safety in each case.

Riverways works with dam owners to remove failing or unnecessary dams on rivers with high habitat value and where there is community support. Riverways uses its *Priority Project* program to select dams for removal. After soliciting proposals, staff conducts a rigorous review process that matches the projects with existing resources. Riverways provides (1) *technical assistance* (2) *technical services from pre-approved consulting firms* and/or, (3) *funding*. Riverways works closely with Conservation Commissions, DEP and other permitting agencies to make sure dam removal projects are consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.

**Red Brook Dam Removal, Before and After, Owner the Trustees of Reservations**



**Galloway Brook dam removal, Before and After, Owner Mass Audubon**



**Yokum Brook dam removal, Before and After, Owner Town of Becket**



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