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Third Herring Brook Restoration Project



Restoring Third Herring Brook

View of Third Herring Brook upstream of former Mill Pond Dam at SSYMCA

Why Restore Third Herring Brook?

The Dam Situation

There are over 3,000 dams in Massachusetts – that’s one dam for every stream mile in the state! In our own North and South Rivers watershed there are over 65 dams and 400 road crossings. Most dams are leftovers from our industrial past when rivers were used for powering saw-mills, grist mills and factories. Many are failing or in poor condition, and many are privately owned.

Why Remove Dams?

Scientific evidence clearly shows that dams degrade the health of a stream.

Ponds created by dams are warmer than free-flowing streams, encouraging algae growth and invasive species. Slow moving water causes stagnation, diminishing water quality. Fish, such as river herring, that return from the ocean to spawn in freshwater, are blocked. In addition, other river dependent species such as native Eastern brook trout become isolated and their habitat reduced. Downstream habitat is prevented from receiving nutrient rich sediments that feed marsh growth. Free flowing rivers are one of the most endangered habitats on our planet.

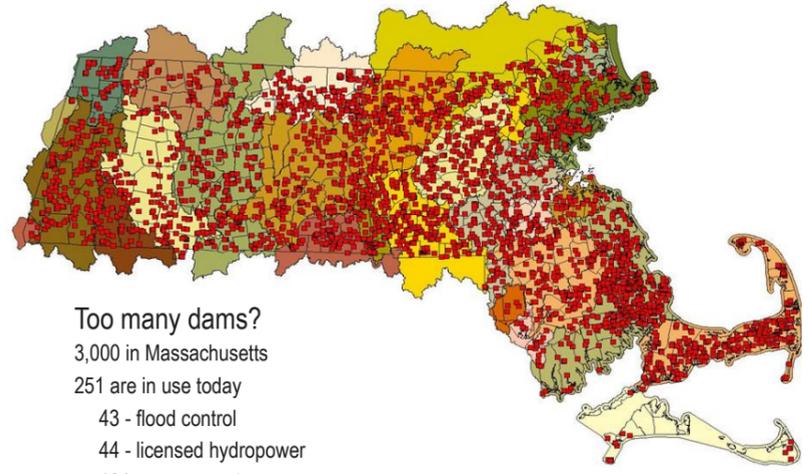
Unused dams can be a financial liability for their owners, requiring perpetual maintenance and insurance risk. If dams fail, there can be serious damage downstream, affecting property and even lives.

Fish and Dams

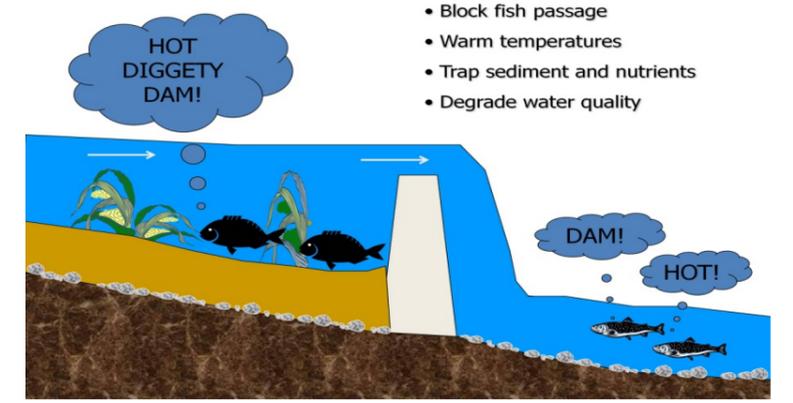
River herring populations, a major food source for large ocean fish, have declined precipitously, and one major reason for their steep decline has been loss of spawning habitat. Dams block access to their spawning grounds, and the dams on Third Herring Brook are no exception. This holds true for other river dependent species, such as the Eastern brook trout.

Third Herring Brook: four dams, four different situations

Our map shows the location of the four dams on Third Herring Brook. Each dam presents its own problems and solutions to the Third Herring Brook restoration. The good news? When all the dam issues are resolved, *9.7 miles of unfragmented river habitat and fish access to the 59 acre Jacob’s Pond will be restored*, connecting to the North River and eventually the ocean.



Dam Impacts on Rivers



NSRWA partners in the Third Herring Brook restoration

NSRWA
 MASSACHUSETTS BAY PROGRAM
 MA Div of Ecological Restoration
 clf conservation law foundation
 TROUT UNLIMITED
 NOAA FISHERIES
 the WCA
 Cardinal Cushing Centers
 MASSACHUSETTS ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST
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