
South Natick Dam Comments

Rui Coelho <rcoelho@gbtu.org>
To: mosthues@cbi.org, jwmartin@natickma.org
Cc: Charles@crwa.org

Thu, Apr 28, 2022 at 8:16 AM



April 28, 2022

Dear Members of the South Natick Dam Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proceedings surrounding the South Natick Dam.

Our mission at the Greater Boston Chapter of Trout Unlimited is to bring together diverse interests to care for and recover rivers and streams so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon. We engage with communities across America in the work of repairing and renewing the rivers, streams and other waters on which we all depend. Locally we represent almost 1,000 members of our chapter, with many of them in this watershed.

We encourage you to support the removal of the dam's spillway, restoration of the Charles River and the preservation of several trees on the present-day earthen portion of the dam.

The current mature trees on the earthen portion of the dam provide important shade, cooling of the water and surrounding air and habitat which would be lost if they were to be removed.

Additionally, this project has the opportunity for significant dam removal and river restoration with multiple benefits that we would like to express to you all and encourage you to consider in your decision-making process.

Removal of the dam will improve water quality in the Charles River. The current impounded area of the river upstream of the dam has higher temperatures, lower dissolved oxygen levels and traps sediments behind the dam. Freeing the Charles River at South Natick will lead to lower temperatures and higher dissolved oxygen levels as the water would flow more freely. Colder waterways with higher levels of dissolved oxygen are better for the wild trout that our organization supports. Free movement of sediments in a restored river would also improve the riverine bottom habitat for fish species. We have seen improvements in river ecology, flood prevention and community safety resulting from several dam removal restoration projects we have worked on regionally (Mill Pond Dam on Traphole Brook in Norwood) and [a great many projects nationally](#) under the auspices of Trout Unlimited National and leadership from scores of local TU chapters.

Removal of the South Natick Dam would reconnect two coldwater streams, the Noanet Brook and Trout Brook in Dover, to the largest free-flowing section of the Charles River: 19.6 miles of main stem river as well as additional tributary river miles. These streams have wild populations of eastern brook trout. This is important because these trout will be able to travel for food and mates, something ever more important with climate change. A total of 26.2 miles of the main stem of the Charles River would be free-flowing from Medway to Needham. Not only trout would benefit from the removal of the spillway, but other resident fish including bass, bullhead, catfish, perch and pickerel would also have increased habitat and access to food and mates.

Removing the South Natick Dam would advance the ultimate goal of connecting populations of wild brook trout in Dover to coldwater fisheries in Shepards Brook in Franklin for the first time in centuries. Removal of the dam will certainly benefit the upstream and downstream communities by raising the ecological health and recreation value of the Charles River watershed. One other dam, the Sanford Mill Dam, stands in the way upstream of Natick, and your decision will send a clear message to decision-makers and dam owners upstream and downstream.

Thank you for considering our comments. Please feel free to reach out to us for more information.

Sincerely,

Rui Coelho
President
Greater Boston Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Belmont, MA
617-285-1665

CC via email:
CRWA Charles@crwa.org