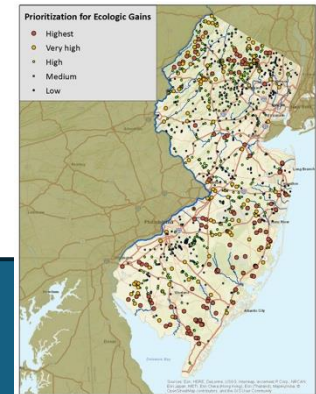




LOCAL GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP *and* DAM REMOVAL in NJ

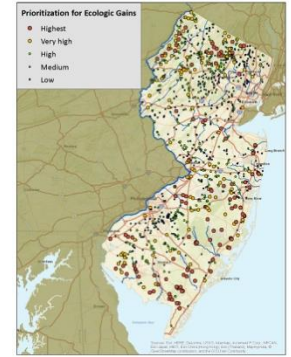
Presented By

**NJ STATEWIDE DAM REMOVAL PARTNERSHIP
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026**





Presentation Outline



- ❖ **Introduction** of NJ SDRP team
- ❖ **Dams 101** *Jessie Thomas-Blate, American Rivers*
- ❖ **Dam Ownership in New Jersey** *Beth Styler Barry, The Nature Conservancy*
- ❖ **SDRP / Voices of Dam Removal** Video *Michelle DiBlasio, The Nature Conservancy*
- ❖ **Municipal Case Studies** *Robert Lucas, Raritan Headwaters Association*
- ❖ **Dam Removal and MS4 Requirements** *Steve Tuorto, The Watershed Institute*
- ❖ **Upcoming: Resources Workshop/Training** *Laura Craig, AKRF, Inc.*
- ❖ **Contact SDRP:** *Bill Leavens, Musconetcong Watershed Association (Trustee)*
- ❖ **Q&A**



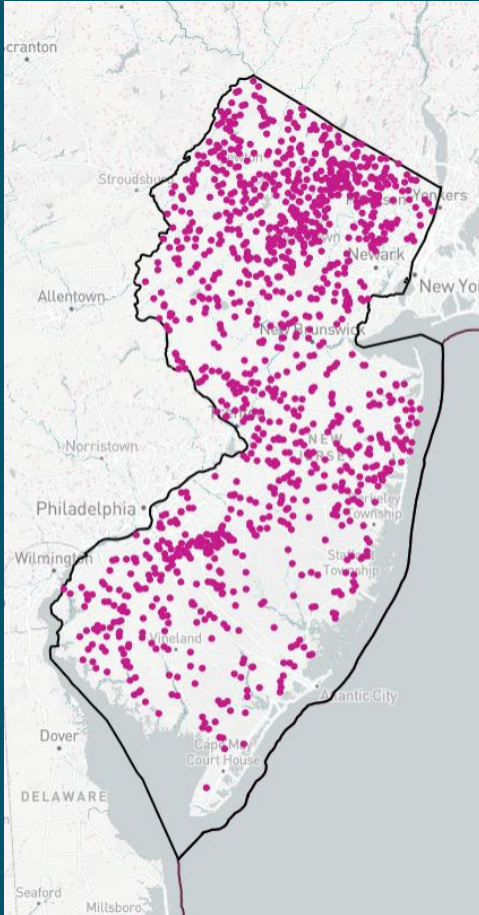
Michael Tranchitella

Dam Basics

Jessie Thomas-Blate
New Jersey Local Government Webinar
January 2026



**AMERICAN
RIVERS**



U.S Dams

The National Inventory of Dams (NID) includes 92,584 dams

<https://nid.sec.usace.army.mil/#/>

Current inventory by SARP includes 558,168 dams

New Jersey Dams

New Jersey has at least 1,826 dams (830 in NID)

<https://aquaticbarriers.org/>





Hydropower
3% of NID



Flood
Management
14.6% of NID



Water Supply
8% of NID

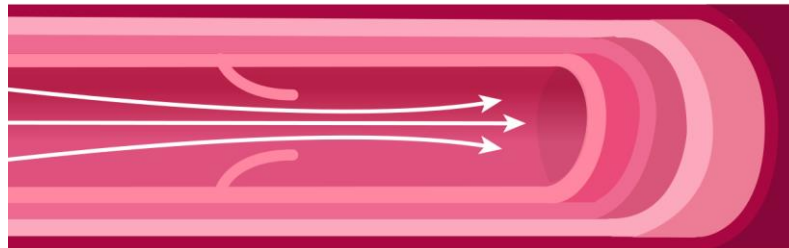
Dam Basics

Many dams serve important socioeconomic purposes

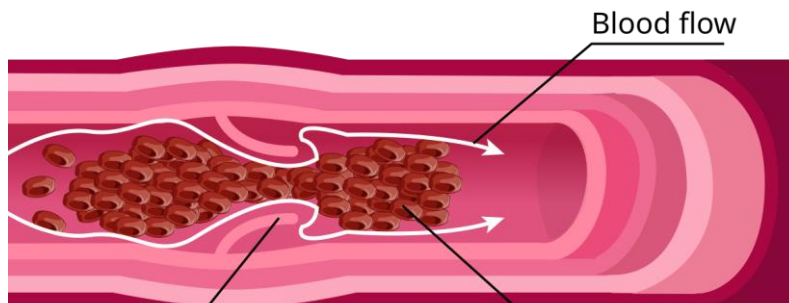
(But the number is surprisingly small)

At some point, dam owners with uneconomical dams may decide they are no longer worth maintaining





Normal



Valve

Blocked

Thrombus

Rivers = Arteries
Dams = Clots



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)



Benefits of Dam Removal Projects

Healthy rivers support everyone

Helping Fish and Wildlife

- Restore natural function of the river
- Reconnect habitat and passage for aquatic species
- Improve ecosystem's ability to withstand storms and drought
- Improve water quality and temperature



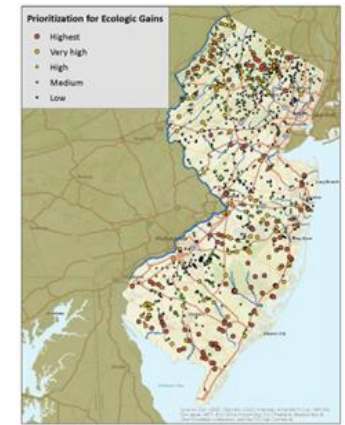
Helping People and Communities

- Eliminate maintenance costs
- Eliminate liability for owners
- Improve public safety by removing drowning and flooding hazards
- Reduce conflicts with downstream infrastructure
- Prevent crumbling infrastructure from failing



Dams in New Jersey

Dam Safety Laws and Regulations



N.J.A.C. 7:20-1.2 Definition

"Dam" means any artificial dike, levee or other barrier, together with appurtenant works, **which is constructed for the purpose of impounding water**, on a permanent or temporary basis, **that raises the water level five feet** or more above the usual, mean, low water height when measured from the downstream toe-of-dam to the emergency spillway crest or, in the absence of an emergency spillway, the top-of-dam.

NJ Safe Dam Act

N.J.S.A. 58:4

NJ Dam Safety Standards

N.J.A.C. 7:20

dep.nj.gov/wlm/drec/dam-safety/

Dam Ownership in New Jersey

Dam Size/Type	Regular Inspection	Formal Inspection
Class I Large Dam High-Hazard Potential	annually	once every 3 years
Class I Dam High-Hazard Potential	once every 2 years	once every 6 years
Class II Dam Significant-Hazard Potential	once every 2 years	once every 10 years
Class III Dam Low-Hazard Potential	once every 4 years	only as required
Class IV Dam Low-Hazard Potential	once every 4 years	only as required

All dam owners are required to develop and use a Department-approved Operations & Maintenance Manual.

Decision Making: Dam Removal in New Jersey

- **Relief from costs of inspection, maintenance and repair**
- **Decreased costs for insurance**
- **Reduction in local flooding**
- **Increased community resilience** against increasingly intense storms
- **Removal of a public safety hazard**
- Increased opportunity

Considerations of Return on Investment

- Ongoing operation and maintenance
- Deferred maintenance backlog
- Major capital repairs and upgrades
- Regulatory and compliance requirements
- Risk of failure and emergency response
- Downstream liability and damages
- Staff time and opportunity costs

Dam Removal in New Jersey

- 1) Initial Site Reconnaissance
- 2) Feasibility Studies – Early Engineering
- 3) Information from the feasibility studies is used to produce a Conceptual and/or Preliminary Design
- 4) Additional Studies, Regulatory Coordination and Permitting
- 5) Final Design
- 6) Project Implementation and Construction



FUNDING

Partnering With Local Governments to Remove Dams in New Jersey

For the full “Voices of Dam Removal” Series, visit njdams.org
OR the Statewide Dam Removal
Partnership's YouTube channel

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'NEW JERSEY DAMS' website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: HOME, FAQ, DAMS 101, WHY REMOVE DAMS?, HOW TO REMOVE A DAM, CASE STUDIES, RESOURCES, and IN THE NEWS. Below the navigation bar is a large section titled 'VOICES OF DAM REMOVAL'. The text in this section describes a video series that explores the roles of local and county governments, homeowners, recreational users, federal agencies, and non-governmental partners in restoring rivers through dam removal. It mentions that each episode highlights collaborative efforts between government agencies, conservation organizations, and community members to remove outdated dams and revitalize freshwater ecosystems. The text also states that the series offers practical insights and inspiration for local leaders, municipal officials, and community advocates to take the next step toward a healthier, more resilient river.

Below the text are two video thumbnails. The first thumbnail is titled 'Helping Homeowners Remove Private Dams' and shows a woman in a green shirt standing by a river. The second thumbnail is titled 'Dam Removal Assistance for Private Dams' and shows a woman in a grey shirt standing outdoors. Both thumbnails have a red play button icon and a 'Watch on YouTube' button at the bottom.

Visit njdams.org for
more Webinars,
Videos, and Tools
for Dam Removal

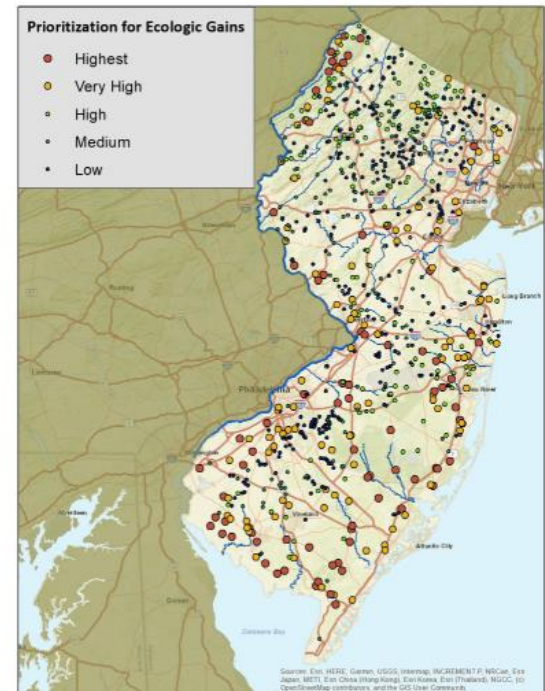


WELCOME TO THE NEW JERSEY STATEWIDE DAM REMOVAL PARTNERSHIP

The New Jersey Statewide Dam Removal Partnership (SDRP) is a collaboration of nonprofits and government agencies that seeks to advance the removal of antiquated, dangerous or ecologically detrimental dams. Its members meet quarterly to discuss beneficial dam removal projects and to exchange information regarding policy, regulatory issues, funding and the practical considerations of dam removal. The SDRP also provides information to the public about how dams and dam removal may affect their communities and their lives.

Partners include: American Rivers, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Sustainable Raritan River Initiative, Raritan Headwaters Association, Musconetcong Watershed Association, The Nature Conservancy of New Jersey, The Watershed Institute, North Jersey RC&D, US Fish and Wildlife Service, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Trout Unlimited

Our website is still being populated with information. If you find something is missing and you would like more information please use the contact us tab to let us know!

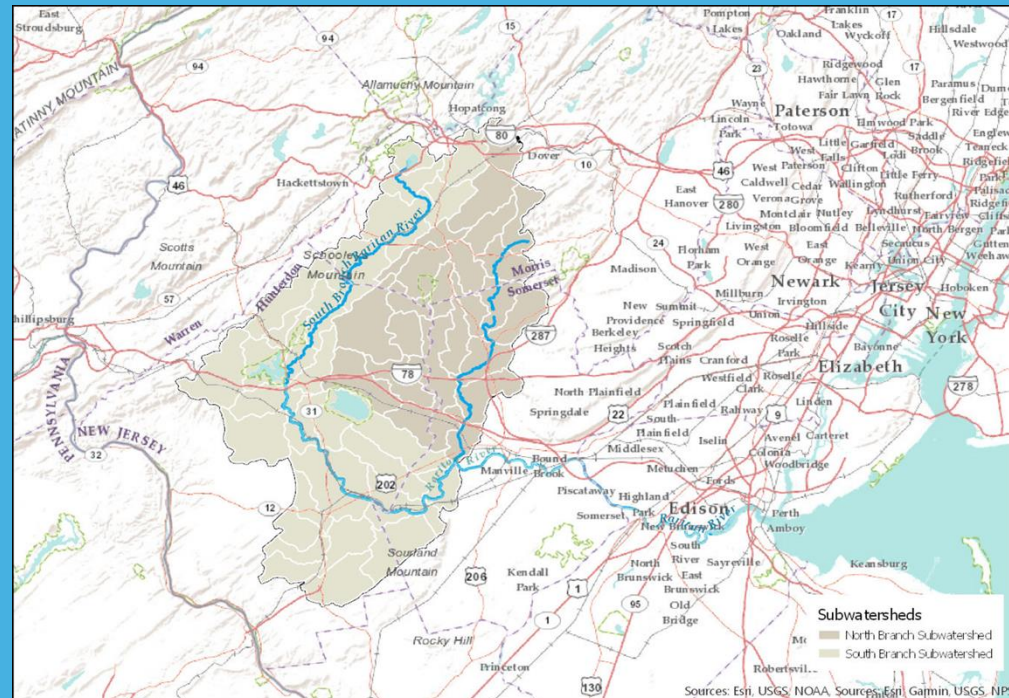


Dam Removal in the Upper Raritan Watershed



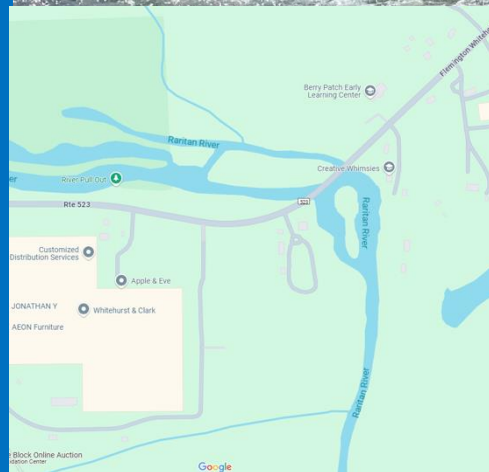
**Raritan
Headwaters**

Your water is our mission.



Dart's Mill Dam

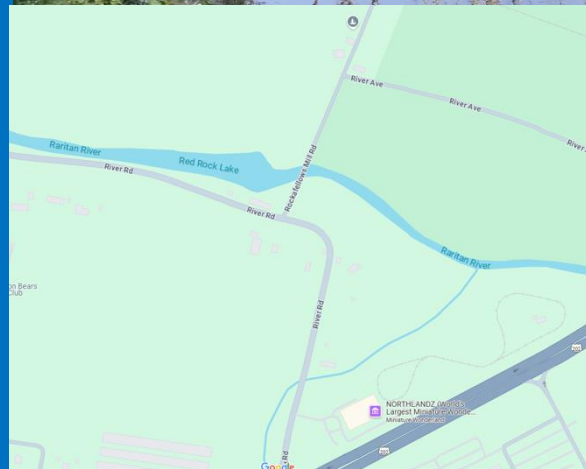
- Improved Water quality
- Improved Public Safety
- Historic Preservation



Township of
Readington
New Jersey

Rockafellow's Mills Dam

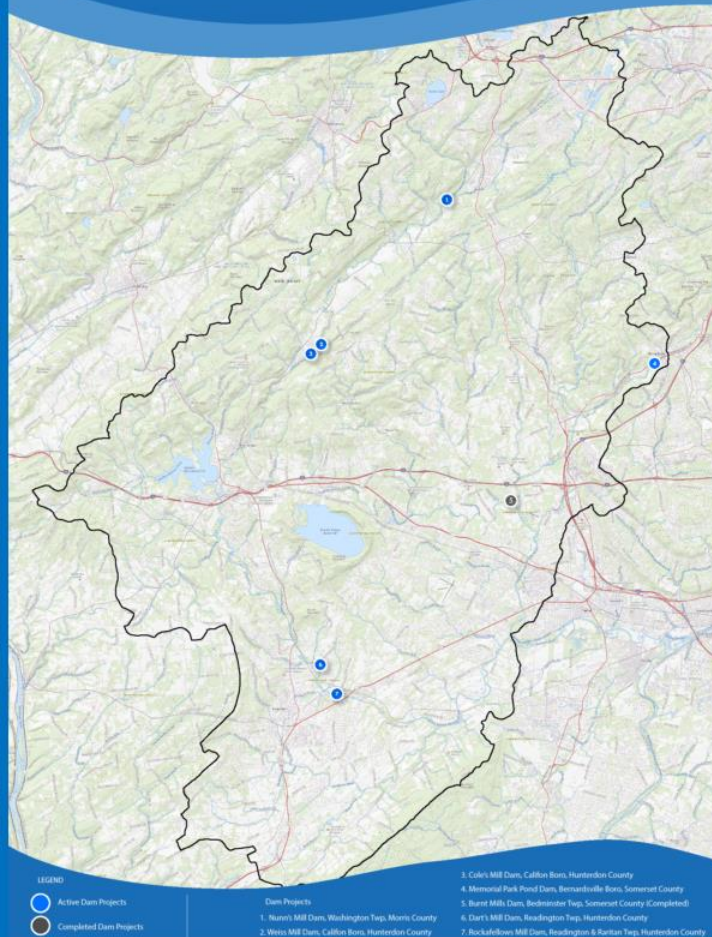
- 18+ acres Open Space Preservation
- Improved Water Quality
- Improved Public Safety



Township of
Readington
New Jersey



Raritan Headwaters Dam Removal Projects



Dam Removal Projects In the Upper Raritan

- 7-8 active projects
- 1 completed project
- 201+ upstream miles
- Improved Public Safety, Water Quality & Recreation



NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION



The Nature
Conservancy 



Township of
Readington
New Jersey

Califon
NEW JERSEY



RARITAN
TOWNSHIP
New Jersey



HUNTERDON
COUNTY *nj*



Hunterdon Land Trust



New Jersey Conservation
FOUNDATION



Raritan
Headwaters

Robert Lucas
Restoration Coordinator
rlucas@raritanheadwaters.org

Dam Removal to Meet MS4 Requirements

PHASE 1: Watershed Inventory Report

PHASE 2: Watershed Assessment Report

PHASE 3: Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP)

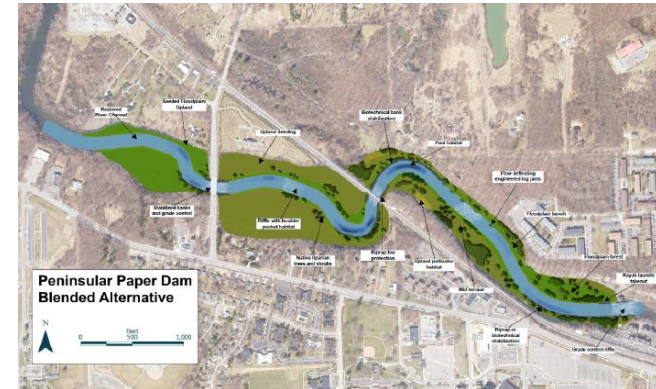
The WIP: A plan describing what municipalities will do to:

1. Improve water quality of water bodies that have TMDLs.
2. Improve water quality of water bodies that are listed as impaired (303d listed).
3. Reduce or eliminate flooding

Dam Removal to Meet MS4 Requirements

Improve Water Quality

Increase Upstream Flood Storage Capacity



Example from Peninsular Papermill Dam removal project
website/presentation: <https://cityofypsilanti.com/804/Peninsular-Dam>

Interested in learning more?

Dam Removal Workshop (Virtual)

March 25th 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Workshop is free, registration is required.

- For those interested in further investigating dam removal

Dam Removal Project Manager Training

April 15th and 16th

Location is TBD

- Course topics include:
 - Planning and Project Implementation
 - Introduction to Managing a Dam Removal Project
 - Basics of Engineering and Construction Design
 - Permitting
 - Community Engagement



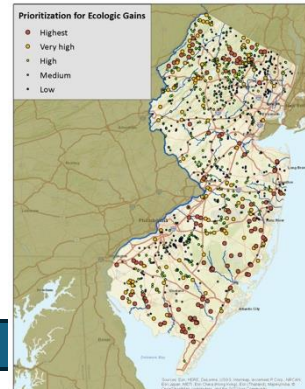
Here is all you need to know:

NJdams.org

info@njdams.org

beth.stylerbarry@tnc.org

**Or you can use the information in the letter
or postcard that you received.**



An underwater photograph showing several fish swimming in murky, yellowish water. A bright light source, likely the sun, is visible in the lower right, creating a strong glare and illuminating the scene. The fish are silhouetted against the lighter water.

Thank you for listening.

It's time for questions.