

Virginia Field Office

Pigg River Restoration at Power Dam

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with Friends of the Rivers of Virginia (FORVA), which owns the dam, Franklin County, the Town of Rocky Mount, FishAmerica Foundation, and others to partially remove Power Dam and restore 2.2 miles of the Pigg River upstream of the dam. Power Dam is located east of the Town of Rocky Mount in Franklin County, Virginia. Constructed in 1915 for power generation, the dam is 25 feet high and 200 feet long and in poor condition.

Dam construction is listed as one of the major threats to the federally listed endangered Roanoke logperch (*Percina rex*), which inhabits this section of the Pigg River. Restoring connectivity of the upstream and downstream sections of the Pigg River will assist in recovery of the Roanoke logperch and will benefit game fish such as Roanoke bass and largemouth bass.

Partial dam removal will also eliminate a threat to local infrastructure downstream, including the State Route 713 bridge and the Franklin County Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Elimination of the majority of the dam will reduce flood levels upstream of the dam by decreasing the base flood elevation within the existing impoundment area.

In addition, demolition of most of the dam will assist the county in fully implementing a long-planned blueway along the Pigg River, by eliminating a safety hazard for recreational boaters and anglers. The blueway will be enhanced by a small public parking area and river access point provided by FORVA.

Ultimately, breaching of Power Dam would provide additional resiliency to the Pigg River ecosystem and surrounding localities from hurricanes and other large storm events.

Progress toward partial dam removal includes completion of a sediment analysis for contaminants, initiation of historic resources review that may preserve the powerhouse and a portion of the dam, and biological monitoring. Future efforts involve determining the most appropriate breaching option, cost of partial removal,

performing hydrology studies and modeling sediment transport, and public notification and involvement.

Project Goals

- Remove a public safety hazard
- Restore native fish habitat and health
- Reduce fragmentation of habitat for endangered Roanoke logperch
- Provide resiliency to the Pigg River ecosystem and surrounding communities
- Protect downstream state and county infrastructure
- Improve existing blueway
- Reduce flooding

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