

PIGG RIVER RESTORATION AT POWER DAM PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions

10/21/2015

1. When is work on the dam scheduled?

If the project is fully funded, work is scheduled to begin after January 2016. No work will occur between March 15 and June 30 of any year to minimize disturbance to fish spawning and the federally listed endangered Roanoke logperch.

2. Why is the dam being altered?

Power Dam was built in 1915 to provide power for the Light and Power Company of Rocky Mount and later for the Appalachian Electric Power Company. The dam has been inoperable since the late 1950s. The project will remove a public safety hazard, restore flood control, protect infrastructure downstream, provide recreational boat passage, and improve native fish passage and habitat.

3. Who is involved and funding the project?

The Friends of the Rivers of Virginia owns the dam. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funded contaminant, hydraulic, and flood studies; biological surveys; and design and permitting services. Other partners include Franklin County, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Appalachian Electric Power, and the Town of Rocky Mount.

4. Will the dam be partially or completely removed?

The dam will be partially removed.

5. What will be done with the sediment behind the dam?

The dam will be removed in one or two phases. Supported by a sediment fate study, this approach will minimize sediment impacts to downstream resources.

6. What will be done with the woody debris behind the dam?

The material will be removed, allowed to dry on site, chipped, and hauled away. The woody material may be used as biomass fuel for electricity generation.

7. Is the dam historic?

Review by an architectural historian determined the dam was potentially eligible for listing on the national register of historic places. Section 106 of the National Historic Resources Act coordination has been initiated with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and will be completed prior to the start of construction. Portions of the dam and power house are proposed to be left undisturbed for historic interpretation.

8. Will public use be permitted?

A public park providing boating and fishing access is proposed for the area.

9. What studies have been completed as part of the planning process?

The following studies have been completed: (1) sediment contaminant and quantity surveys, which did not detect any contaminants, (2) pre-removal water quality and fish biomonitoring, (3) Hydrologic Engineering Centers River Analysis System (HEC RAS) modeling, (4) sediment fate and transport modeling, and (5) wetlands assessment.

10. Will the public be provided an opportunity to review and comment on the project prior to construction?

The Friends of the Rivers of Virginia and the project partners welcome public involvement. Please contact one of the project managers listed below if you wish to be involved or kept informed about the project. If sufficient interest exists one or more informal meetings may be scheduled and public comments solicited as a part of the permit process.

11. I own property upstream of the dam. How will this project affect my property?

Water levels upstream of the dam within the reservoir pool will lower to historic (pre-dam) levels. A channel will form as sediment is transported out of the former pool area. Bedrock may be exposed during the channel forming process. Natural vegetation will reestablish upon the newly exposed riverbanks.

12. I own property downstream of the dam. How will this project affect my property?

There are no anticipated effects to property downstream. As floods occur there will be pulses of sediment released that will temporarily affect water clarity. Released sediment is expected to increase the diversity and complexity of instream habitat and channel morphology downstream. A sediment fate study documents these effects and is available upon request.

13. Will Power Dam Road (Route 713) be closed during project construction?

It is anticipated that the road and/or individual lanes may be closed for brief periods of time to allow heavy equipment ingress and egress. Those closures, if necessary, will be coordinated with the Virginia Department of Transportation and Franklin County and will be accompanied by appropriate signage and flagging personnel, as will the construction activities.

14. Will the project affect Power Dam Road (Route 713)?

Protection of downstream infrastructure, such as Power Dam Road, from potential damage due to dam failure is one of the benefits of this project. The dam owner and other project proponents have been coordinating with representatives from the Virginia Department of Transportation to ensure Power Dam Road is not negatively impacted by the project. The selected contractors will be required to ensure that the Power Dam Road bridge crossing is protected during the demolition process.

15. Will the project affect the Rocky Mount Wastewater Treatment plant immediately downstream of Power Dam?

Partial removal of the dam will eliminate the threat to the plant posed by a potential dam failure.

For more information

Visit <http://www.forva.org/>

or

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/virginiafield/partners/powerdam.html>.

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