H

Public Comments and Responses

Included in Appendix:

1. Response to Verbal Comments
2. Submitted Written Comments
3. Response to Written Comments

Response to Verbal Comments

The Town of Exeter welcomes and appreciates the active participation and valuable insights shared by the community-at-large through public comments. To address the wide range of verbal comments and concerns made at various public meetings, we have grouped similar comments and questions into several categories. Please note that a unified response has been provided for each category, capturing common concerns and ideas. This approach ensures that we comprehensively address all shared perspectives. Even though individual replies are not provided for the verbal comments, every comment has been thoroughly reviewed and is being taken into account in the Town's decision-making process. Additionally, some comments have also been submitted in writing. All written comments have specific written responses found in Appendix H of the final Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study.

1) **Why has there been a lack of communication, transparency, abutter notification and stakeholder coordination as part of the Feasibility Study? And why hasn't the Pickpocket Dam been awarded the same level of public involvement as the Great Dam?**

We acknowledge concerns regarding the project's schedule and perceived lack of transparency and communication regarding this project. The Town has been, and remains, committed to taking into account all public input as part of the feasibility study process to ultimately come into compliance the NHDES rules and regulations. To-date, all public meetings, presentations, and project documents specific to Pickpocket Dam have been made available on the Town's website dating back to 2018. The Town will continue to post updates on its website.

Below is a table summarizing the public's involvement in this project. As shown, the project has been open to public discussion for several years.

Additionally, there are several factors contributing to the rate at which the project is progressing. First, the Letter of Deficiency and Request for Action that the Town of Exeter received from NHDES on Pickpocket Dam includes specific deadlines to address the dam's deficiencies. The Town must also address public health and safety issues in a timely matter. Every project has unique circumstances, timelines, funding levels and requirements which influence the number and nature of public meetings. Here, much of the Feasibility Study is funded through NHDES and NOAA grants, which also carry specific timelines and deadlines.

Date	Item
March 28, 2011	Numerous presentations and discussions since receiving Letter of Deficiency from NHDES
Ongoing	Public Presentations and studies completed posted to Town's website
March 26, 2018	Selectboard Presentation on Breach Analysis and Next Steps of Feasibility Study
April 22, 2021	Presentation on conceptual options to bring dam into compliance

May 18, 2023	Feasibility Study Update & NHDES Presentation on Dam Reclassification
Sept 21, 2023	Feasibility Study Update/NOAA Grant Availability Discussion
Oct 2, 2023	Select Board Meeting: Feasibility Study Update & Review of NOAA Grant
Nov 29, 2023	Feasibility Study Update
Feb 20, 2024	Feasibility Study Draft Report available for 30-day public comment
Feb 20, 2024	Start of open written public comment period on draft feasibility Study
Feb 27, 2024	Public Meeting: Presented on draft Feasibility Study & heard public comment & questions
Mar 21, 2024	Feasibility Study Update
Mar 21, 2024	Close of open written public comment period on draft feasibility Study

We are currently in the feasibility study phase of this project. This stage's purpose is to explore all potential options, their potential impacts and benefits, and potential risks and risk mitigation measures associated with each. We value public input at every phase, this is just the initial stage of assessment and exploration. The design phase of the preferred alternative will include a more intricate and detailed examination of potential impacts and benefits, mitigation options, and risks. The design phase will involve many more levels of review and permitting, all of which will require their own rounds of public involvement and consultation. These will include notifications to nearby abutters and stakeholders as required to meet the regulatory requirements.

2) What was the reasoning behind applying for the NOAA grant prior to the completion of the Feasibility Study?

The decision to apply for the NOAA grant prior to the completion of the Feasibility Study was based on several factors. First is the time-sensitive and competitive nature of the grant process. Applying for these grants often needs to begin well ahead of having every specific detail finalized or every decision made. Another significant factor was the unprecedented level of grant funding being offered by NOAA with no local match. The potential financial support provided by this grant could significantly influence the scope and feasibility of the dam removal alternative. For example, costs to revegetate the newly exposed portions of the river could be covered by the grant. Furthermore, our early application was submitted to assure the Town would meet the timeline proposed by NHDES in their Letter of Deficiency, and subsequent extension of time. With information available near the NOAA Grant Application deadline in the Fall of 2023, the dam removal option was identified as the preferred alternative at the time. Although dam removal has been identified as a preferred alternative, the Town has made no decision of an acceptance of a grant. Grant opportunities for dam modification projects are presented in the Feasibility Study, which is one factor that the Town must consider when weighing alternatives.

3) What are the potential environmental impacts of dam removal, particularly with respect to wetlands and wildlife, and what measures are being taken to mitigate these?

There is a perceived negative environmental impact of dam removal, specifically with regard to habitats, wetlands, and wildlife. The presence of the dam is a major anthropogenic (i.e., human-introduced) ecological factor that determines, in part, the types of animal species that occur in and adjacent to the impounded reach, as well as their distribution and abundance. If the dam is removed there will be changes to the ecosystem, including a decrease in habitat for some species on one hand, and increased benefits to other species which prefer free-flowing riparian and wetland habitat on the other. Many dam removals have occurred throughout the northeast and the nation, and the long-term changes that result from returning a river to a free-flowing condition have been universally welcomed by the ecologists and resource managers involved in those projects because they tend to favor native and sustainable ecological processes and have demonstrable benefits. The impacts and benefits of dam removal have been documented in peer-reviewed literature.

4) How would dam removal affect nearby properties?

Efforts will be made to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any potential damage to properties during the design phase of the chosen alternatives. First, no change to property boundaries or taxes is expected because property boundaries are generally set in deeds and related surveys. Second, there are no anticipated impacts to residences or structures. With the drawdown of the river and resulting shallow groundwater changes, the effective stress in the surrounding soils will increase. This increase in effective stress could also result in soil compression, which may result in settlement of relatively loose soil layers. The degree of potential settlement may be influenced by a variety of factors. Site-specific evaluations and assessments will be completed to ensure the proper precautions are taken before any potential construction related to dam removal begins.

The lowering of water levels from dam removal would trigger two main changes to slopes adjacent to the river valley. Firstly, a reduction in shallow groundwater levels can increase the total effective stresses within the slope section, typically improving overall slope stability. Gradual initial pond drawdown is, however, recommended to prevent short-term slope stability issues. Secondly, an altered flow regime can increase the potential for scour, or erosion, at the base of embankment slopes. In general, the hydraulic results show low water velocities where the river banks would be generally stable when vegetated. In cases where geomorphic and hydraulic modeling suggests the potential for scour near the toe of valley slopes, final design will evaluate long term stability of the slope and implement scour and erosion countermeasures if determined necessary.

5) Can evidence be provided to demonstrate that the dam currently acts as a barrier to fish passage?

The Pickpocket Dam clearly presents a barrier to upstream and downstream fish passage, and its removal would have a significant net benefit in restoring aquatic habitat connectivity within the Exeter River watershed. This would benefit not only anadromous fish, but also freshwater species present in the upstream and downstream reach of the river. The removal of the Pickpocket Dam would make available an additional 6.2 miles of unobstructed fish habitat on the mainstem of the river, and 8.1 miles of tributaries. Removal of the dam would not only restore river connectivity but also improve instream habitat that is available for fish and other aquatic species, as well as instream flow and better water quality for the river as a whole.

While a denil ladder is present at the Pickpocket Dam, it is important to understand that structural fishways act as "filters," since not all the fish below the dam are able to ascend the ladder. Thus, even with the fish ladder, the dam

still presents a barrier to upstream passage; its presence on the dam is simply an adaptation intended to mitigate but not eliminate the dam's impact on river connectivity. An example of this filtering effect was seen at the Great Dam when fish were observed below but not using the ladder prior to the removal of the Great Dam. And, at the Lamprey River in Newmarket, a study to evaluate passage efficiency of a fishway found that handling effects, diel movement patterns, and fishway saturation negatively affected passage success. The estimated probability of passage success of an average Alewife was 63% for males and 64% for females (Sullivan, Baily, and Berlinsky, 2023).

Additionally, while the denil ladder allows for some amount of upstream fish passage, there is no provision for downstream passage at all. Fish must swim over the spillway during periods of moderate to high flows, which leads to mortality of some fish due to the fall and turbulent flow below the dam. Further, downstream fish passage is entirely eliminated under low flow conditions or drought years where there is little to no flow going over the spillway to allow safe passage for herring and other species to pass over the spillway.

Finally, regarding the assertion that the NHF&G fish counts demonstrate that the Pickpocket Dam is not a barrier, this data reflects only the number of fish that are able to reach the top of the denil ladder, not the total number of fish able to reach the dam. The data does suggest that there has been a decrease of fish ascending the Pickpocket Dam ladder, despite the apparent increase in the anadromous fish run at the site of the former Great Dam. This may be because the removal of the Great Dam has improved habitat quality to such a degree that fish (especially blueback herring, the dominant species in the anadromous fish run) are able to find suitable habitat somewhere below the Pickpocket Dam, which would decrease the total number of fish needing to ascend above the Pickpocket Dam site. NH Fish and Game reports that the fish observed at the Pickpocket Dam are mostly alewives, which would again support the idea that Blueback Herring are finding suitable spawning habitat somewhere below the Pickpocket Dam. This data does not refute that removal of the Pickpocket Dam would benefit fish passage, nor do they support the assertion that the dam is an important resource to investigate the fishery resource in the Exeter River. Rather, they point to the success in restoring habitat for blueback herring as a result of the removal of the Great Dam.

6) What is the impact of dam removal on the historical and recreational components of the dam?

The Pickpocket Dam has been deemed eligible for the National Register by the New Hampshire Department of Historic Resources. This designation formalizes the dam's historic importance and the project, under any alternative, will be required to work with NHDHR during the permitting process to reduce the potential for an adverse effect.

We understand the concerns regarding potential changes to recreational activities as a result of dam removal. Places, where we recreate, often hold special value, providing relaxation and connection to nature. However, while some recreational opportunities might decrease, others would also be created or enhanced. For example, under dam removal the reestablished free-flowing river will restore the movement and spawning of fish species, bringing about potential improvements in fish diversity and abundance. This can enhance the overall quality of recreational fishing in the river. We do not anticipate an impact to hunting and bird watching. The improvement to water quality under dam removal and a healthier fish population, can indirectly support a more robust and diverse wildlife population, potentially enhancing bird-watching opportunities.

Under dam removal, the river will change from a more open water condition (due to the impoundment) and resemble its original run-of-river state in a narrower, unobstructed, free flowing form, similar to the river conditions present upstream and downstream of the impoundment. The still water bodies that are ideal for boating would be

significantly reduced in areas of the impoundment. This would impact the existing recreational condition of boating, skating, snowmobiling, swimming and cross-country skiing. However, the change doesn't necessarily mean an end to these activities, just a change in the opportunity. For example, while the water depth in the impoundment would not support motorized or non-motorized boating, there would still be opportunities for shallow draft kayaks and canoes. Current swimming spots in the still waters of the dam would undergo changes. However, the free-flowing river may carve out new, natural swimming holes. The increased water flow can also contribute to better water quality, enhancing the swimming experience. Seasonal activities like ice skating and snowmobiling would face changes too. The free-flowing river will make it less conducive for thick ice to form in the same spots as before. However, the restored river banks can provide increased access to sections of the river that might have been less accessible before and could provide new opportunities for hiking, cross country skiing, and hiking.

7) Does the Town have the authority to decide to remove the Pickpocket Dam?

Yes. The Town is required to comply with NHDES's Letter of Deficiency and Request for Action to bring the high-hazard dam into compliance with New Hampshire law. The Town has all necessary legal rights to either modify or remove dam. The Town's rights include, but are not limited to, deeded property rights, dam rights and privileges and water usage and flowage rights.

The Town's ultimate decision to either remove or modify the dam will also require State and federal approval.

8) What will the smell be like with all of the exposed organic material?

There may be a temporary release of odors as the previously submerged river comes into contact with oxygen in the air. However, much of the excess sediment will be excavated and disposed of as part of the channel reforming. Additionally, the newly exposed areas will be quickly reseeded to establish vegetation.

9) What would the construction timeline and process be for dam removal?

In general, the water level will be lowered slowly to minimize sediment release, protect aquatic life, minimize erosion, manage infrastructure risks and protect public safety. During construction, there will not be a significant impact on traffic, because the Cross Road bridge will not be modified as part of the project. The construction project would last for one construction season (July to October), with approximately three to five years of post-construction monitoring following the completion of the project.

10) Why does the dam need to be changed for an impact to one residence? And why can't the residence be purchased? And why weren't other combinations of alternatives considered, like hazard reduction and lowering the normal pool?

Section 2.6 of the Feasibility Study discusses this topic. The following is a summary of that section:

The hazard classification is primarily driven by potential impacts to the first floor of one residential property with a foundation, and secondarily for potential impacts to the structural support for multiple mobile residential structures during a dam breach during the 100-year flood event. If the impacted residential properties were purchased by the Town, it would reduce the potential threat to life and property. Notwithstanding the potential purchase of these properties, the dam breach analysis also showed overtopping of NH Route 111, a Class II roadway, accordingly, the dam would still be classified as a significant-hazard. The dam in its current state cannot pass the required discharge capacity with one foot of freeboard (required for significant-hazard dams). To alleviate impacts to NH Route 111,

the Town would be required to replace the Kingston Road Bridge to further reduce the hazard class. Even if the hazard class is able to be reduced to a low hazard, the dam in its current condition does not pass the current or potential future discharge capacity for low-hazard dams with the required 1-foot of freeboard without manual operations, as required by NHDES' Dam Bureau rules.

A combination of lowering the hazard classification to a significant hazard and modifying the dam to meet the requirements of a significant hazard dam is provided in Section 2.6 of the Feasibility Study. Combinations of the alternatives were not explored as part of the Feasibility Study, but we thank you for your comment and will take it under advisement.

11) For the dam modification alternatives, can the "L-shaped" dam be modified to reduce impacts to 23 Cross Road?

Yes, if dam modification is the chosen as the preferred alternative, the design team would work with the direct abutters where work on their property would be required during design development. Please refer to Section 2 of the Feasibility Study for the updates to the dam modification alternatives.

Submitted Written Comments

From: Paul Vlasich
To: Stephanie Hudock
Subject: [External] Fwd: Question for meeting
Date: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 8:36:56 AM

FYI - #1

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Nicole Sheaff** <nmsheaff@msn.com>
Date: Fri, Feb 16, 2024 at 8:37 AM
Subject: Question for meeting
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov <pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov>

Hello,
I am a resident who lives on Cross Road near the dam. My question is, if the dam is removed
C1.1 is it an option to use natual materials to create the cascading effect of the dam while also keeping the size of the current river area above the dam? Due to the dam a natural ecosystem has been created. By removing the dam completely the area will drastically change and it will directly impact the flora and fauna within it.

Nicole Sheaff

--
Paul Vlasich PE
Town Engineer
13 Newfields Rd
Exeter, NH 03833
Office: (603)773-6160
Fax: (603)772-1355

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of John Collins
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Property lines and pickpocket dam removal
Date: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 3:38:25 PM

Hello -- I live at 44 Rowell Road East in Brentwood, and my property abuts the Exeter river just upstream from the Pickpocket Dam. My deed describes the river as part of the bounds of the property.

I understand that if the dam is removed, the level of the river will go down along the edge of my property, so the river's edge may retreat from its current position. My question is: what are the implications for local properties like mine? Will our property lines be extended to the new river's edge? Or will the retreat of the river create some new patch of (possibly public) property that will mean that I no longer have river frontage?

C2.1

Thanks for any information that you could provide.

-John Collins
671 967 6866

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Robert Span
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Question regarding Public Comments
Date: Thursday, February 22, 2024 7:03:46 AM

> You don't often get email from rspan7@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

C3.1 Will public comments sent to the Town be posted on the website?

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Eric Turer
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Fwd: Questions for Exeter-VHB Study Presentation on 2-27-2024
Date: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 9:19:57 AM
Attachments: ETurer - Questions for Exeter-VHB Study Presentation on 2-27-2024.docx
Anad19PRI_1_FINAL.pdf
Sullivan emails regarding fish passage at Pickpocket Dam.pdf
Anad21PRI_1_FINAL.pdf
Anad20PR1_1_FINAL.pdf
Anad22PRI_1_FINAL.pdf

My apologies - I mistyped the initial email address.

Eric Turer

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Eric Turer** <eric.turer@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Feb 26, 2024 at 7:21 PM
Subject: Questions for Exeter-VHB Study Presentation on 2-27-2024
To: <pickpocketdam@exeter.gov>
Cc: Robert Span <rspan7@gmail.com>, cc: Catherine Edison <catedison27@gmail.com>, Moe Shore <moeshore@gmail.com>

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept these two important questions for the 2/27 presentation of the Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study and related meetings and communications leading up to this point. Unfortunately, I am traveling out of state and cannot attend this presentation in person. I do hope that these questions will be addressed in full at the meeting and that appropriate follow up actions will be taken.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Sincerely, Eric Turer

Questions re. Pickpocket Dam, Submitted by Eric Turer, 33 Peabody Dr., Brentwood NH 03833 2/26/2024

C4.1 **Question 1: Why does the lengthy VHB feasibility study dedicate so little attention to the issue of fish passage, and ignore the small but critical bit of information included, which directly refutes the logic and wisdom of dam removal at this time.**

Given the recent decision to submit a NOAA grant application entitled, "Restoration of the Exeter River Herring Run through Removal of the Pickpocket Dam", it is interesting that just over two pages of the report's nearly 350 pages are dedicated to the section entitled, "Fisheries and Fish Passage". What's more interesting is how little attention is paid to the information found in those two pages, and in particular to Table 3.10-1 NHFGD Pickpocket Dam Fish Counts. This small section echoes the similar, and far more detailed, information to what we have found in documents obtained from NH Fish & Game dating back several years. In brief, the scientific information available clearly shows the following:

- The Pickpocket Dam fish ladder was providing effective upstream passage of anadromous fish prior to the Great Dam removal when comparative counting of fish passing both the Exeter and Pickpocket dams was possible - with approximately 1/3 of the fish that passed through the Exeter fishway found to also have passed through the Pickpocket fishway in 2016, the year that the Great Dam was removed. (2316 / 6622) This would seem to be a reasonable proportion of the fish that would seek to spawn in the upper reaches of the river.
- Despite repeated assertions that the Pickpocket Dam is now impeding critical fish passage, almost none of the greatly increased number of fish passing upriver in Exeter, as a result of the Great Dam removal, are actually now even reaching the Pickpocket Dam.
- Fish and Game has been aware of this situation for at least 6 years and has been unable to determine why these fish are not reaching the Pickpocket Dam in spite of repeated efforts to identify a cause.
- The presence of Pickpocket Dam and its fish ladder now constitute the key point for monitoring the situation regarding the near-total lack of fish migrating up river, which will not be possible if the dam is removed.

Some important quotes from NH Fish & Game's reports are noted on the page below, in contrast to statements included in the Exeter NOAA grant application. C4.1 **In short, the Pickpocket dam was not a barrier to fish in the past, and it is not a barrier now. Instead, it is a key resource needed to investigate the nature of what is actually preventing upstream fish migration in the newly accessible portion of the Exeter River.** Statements in the grant application are directly refuted by NH Fish & Game's communications and data. A few are included below and full materials are attached and should be distributed in full to the Exeter Selectboard and the Exeter River Advisory Committee members.

We hope these community leaders will recognize the error of submitting this grant application based on faulty logic, the lack of key information, and the absence of any constructive engagement with those community members who interact with the river daily. It is those individuals, myself included, who had stated that the assertions being made did not correlate with our first-hand experience on the river, and that the situation at the Pickpocket Dam was notably different from the situation that made the Great Dam removal a success. These voices were ignored in the hasty planning for the grant application, dismissed when attempts were made to engage after the grant application was submitted, and excluded from any role in the decision-making process. **In short, the entire premise of Exeter's NOAA grant application is false, and dam removal at this time would be both unwise and counter-productive to the goal of actually improving upstream passage of the anadromous fish.** I believe Exeter has a duty to inform NOAA of this information, and the grant application should be withdrawn to allow a full assessment, and the proper community process to take place. Those responsible for this situation should be asked to account for their actions in making hasty and uninformed decisions that undermined the necessary community process.

I will say that the only 'silver lining' from this whole incident is that it has shined light on a very troubling mystery regarding fish passage in the Exeter River, that the NH Fish and Game department has been aware of for several years

and has been unable to explain. Perhaps Exeter can use this information to request forbearance on the enforcement of the "high hazard" remediation requirement while this perplexing situation is investigated.

KEY PASSAGES FROM COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING FISH PASSAGE AT PICKPOCKET DAM:

(IN REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

Town of Exeter:

10/16/2023 - Exeter's dam removal grant application, Project Narrative

> The herring stack up at the base of the fish ladder at the Pickpocket Dam, but the counts there are not as good as they could be given the inefficient ladder. Dam removal would eliminate this impediment.

NH Fish and Game Reports/Communications:

> *(Note, the information below is public and was obtained through a series of public records requests made by my neighbor, Robert Span, under NH RSA 91-A)*

6/30/2023 – Progress Report: NEW HAMPSHIRE'S MARINE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS, Project I: DIADROMOUS FISH INVESTIGATIONS

> "The Great Dam and associated fishway on the Exeter River were removed during the summer of 2016. The ASMFC's Interstate American Shad and River Herring Fishery Management Plan requires NHFG to continue monitoring the Exeter River, despite removal of Great Dam. Fish have been monitored and enumerated at the Pickpocket Dam fishway since 2017. **With only 17 river herring passing through the Pickpocket fishway in 2020, it was determined that numbers of river herring reaching the Pickpocket fishway was not providing an accurate reflection of fish migrating past the former Great Dam location.** Therefore, enumerating fish at the former Great Dam location would provide a better estimation of returns to the Exeter River. During 2022, three 10-minute time counts occurred daily throughout the fish migration. River herring passage during the 2022 migration season was estimated at 273,228 fish"
> *And*
> **"It is unknown why river herring are not reaching Pickpocket Dam in greater quantities considering the passage estimate at the former Great Dam location."**

11/9/2022 – NH F&G email communications

> "**Kevin Sullivan is the person best suited to saying which rivers are high priority for anadromous fish restoration in NH**."
>
> *And from Mr. Sullivan in the same thread:*
>
> "Exeter/Squamsoctt River: The Great Dam and associated fish ladder at head of tide were removed a few years ago allowing free access to enter the river. There is a second dam , Pickpocket Dam, with a fish ladder in Brentwood (owned by Exeter) that is a topic of discussion for modification or removal, but NHFG is not involved in those conversations yet. The fish ladder does not have a trap to sample fish and only a few hundred fish have been recorded using the ladder and **large schools are not observed below it that might indicate the dam/ladder are preventing passage**. We have tried exploring the stretch of the river from the Pickpocket Dam to the former Great Dam site to look for barriers and did not find any that seemed impassable so **we are not**

> **sure why river herring are not making it up to the Pickpocket Dam**, although Sea Lamprey seem to be successful.
>
> *Note: We see that Kevin Sullivan was cc'ed on the NH Fish & Game's 10/10/23 letter of support for the Dam Removal grant, submitted by Cheri Patterson, Chief of Marine Fisheries. The letter does not mention this known situation regarding migrating fish not reaching the Pickpocket Dam.*

4/1/2022 – Progress Report: NEW HAMPSHIRE'S MARINE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS, Project I: DIADROMOUS FISH INVESTIGATIONS

> During 2021, three 10-minute time counts occurred daily throughout the fish migration. River herring passage during the 2021 migration season was estimated at 167,400 fish (Table 1.1-1). Biological samples for the Exeter River were obtained from the 329 river herring passed at the Pickpocket fishway in 2021. **It is unknown why river herring are not reaching Pickpocket Dam in greater quantities considering the passage estimate at the former Great Dam location.**

10/15/2021 – Progress Report: NEW HAMPSHIRE'S MARINE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS, Project I: DIADROMOUS FISH INVESTIGATIONS

> A fish counter has been installed at the Pickpocket Dam fishway each year since 2017 to enumerate the river herring return. Total river herring passage in 2020 was 17 fish, providing insufficient biological samples on the Exeter River for good age composition comparisons. **It is unknown why river herring are not reaching Pickpocket Dam in greater quantities since schools of river herring were observed by NHFG biologist passing through the former Great Dam site on several occasions during qualitative visual monitoring.**

4/1/2020 – Progress Report: NEW HAMPSHIRE'S MARINE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS, Project I: DIADROMOUS FISH INVESTIGATIONS

> **Total river herring passage in 2019 was 28 fish. This is similar to the return of 32 river herring in 2018.** It is unknown why river herring are not reaching Pickpocket Dam in greater quantities since schools of river herring were observed by NHFGD biologist passing through the former Great Dam site on several occasions during qualitative visual monitoring.

C4.2 **Question 2: Why have cost estimates for dam removal varies so widely between the presentations on this project at different times, and from the amount of the NOAA grant application:**

The VHB analysis presented estimates the cost of dam removal to be $1,513,000 including 30 years of future Operation and Maintenance Costs ($45k). This figure is $450,000 or 42% higher than the $ $1,063,000 estimate presented on Sept. 21, 2023 – the estimate upon which the decision to move forward with dam removal was based.

By contrast, the NOAA dam removal grant application requests a funding level that is $479,000 or nearly 32% higher than even the higher amount presented today. Quoting from the application, **"The total budget for the proposed project is $1,992,000. The Town is requesting the full balance of $1,992,000 under this NOAA funding opportunity to support the proposed project."**

C4.2 Please explain these three highly significant disparities in cost over just a few months, as determined by the same contracted organization for ostensibly the same project. Which value more accurately reflects the actual cost of such a project? How do the differential costs related to the dam removal option impact the other costs estimates presented in the VHB report?

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Pat <patty-l@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 4:31 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Cc: Carl Lundgren
Subject: [External] Feb 27 meeting

C5.1 I am asking if the meeting at town hall about Pickpocket Dam will be live streamed on Channel 22.
Thank you
Patty Lundgren
Patty-L@comcast.net
Sent from my iPhone

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of MARK RIEDER
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Comments on 2/27/24 presentation and 2/20/24 feasibility study
Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 1:37:37 PM

Some comments and questions on the presentation and study:

1. Section 3.13 Invasive species.

C6.1 The proposal does NOT include invasive species control for dam removal. Why not and can that be guaranteed? The area is inundated with invasives.

C6.2 Living in the area I have ID'ed invasives in addition to those mentioned. I would like consideration to adding the following which are prevalent in the area around the dam:

- on the NH Invasive Plant Species List: January 2023
Burning bush (Euonymus alatus (Thunb.) Sieb.)
Field Bindweed (Convolvulus arvensis L.)
Russian olive (Elaeagnus angustifolia L.)
Autumn olive (Elaeagnus umbellata Thunb. var.)
Leafy spurge (Euphorbia esula L.)
Glossy buckthorn (Frangula alnus P. Mill.)
Dame's rocket (Hesperis matronalis L.)
Yellow iris (Limniris pseudacorus (L.) Fuss)
Common buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica L.)
Thorny Smilax - Not recognized in NH - investing approx 2 acres along the river from the dam to approx 200 yards upstream.

C6.2 Can these be added to the list of invasive species?

2. Section 3.5.2 Wells

C6.3 Figures 3.5-1, 2 and 3. can NOT be fully viewed as the picture is cut off. Can this be corrected in the next revision?

C6.4 My neighborhood has 15 houses that use Geothermal from well water for heating and cooling the houses. The Geo systems use up 10X the water compared with normal well use. Has this been considered in the well analysis for dam removal?
I read the analysis stating that the dam removal will not affect wells in the area. Can the analysis include a statement such as, "Geothermal system in the affected area were considered in the analysis"?

3. Since I am very concerned with current level of invasive species in the area and the number of seedling invasives growing every year, I expect with dam removal that the invasives will quickly overrun the newly exposed open land.

C6.5 Is there any consideration for re-planting the newly exposed land with native species and control for the invasives? For Brentwood as well as Exeter?

Thank you for your time. I am looking forward to your response,

Mark Rieder
30 Spruce Ridge Dr.
Brentwood

From: Paul Vlasich
To: Jacob San Antonio; Stephanie Hudock
Subject: [External] Fwd: Soil erosion after dam removal
Date: Thursday, February 29, 2024 9:10:50 AM

FYI

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **mike edison** <edisonm44@msn.com>
Date: Wed, Feb 28, 2024 at 5:19 PM
Subject: Soil erosion after dam removal
To: Paul Vlasich <pvlasich@exeternh.gov>, jayegarnett@gmail.com <jayegarnett@gmail.com>

Hello Mr. Vlasich,
I too am very concerned about erosion and destabilization of my property if the dam should be removed.
After reading the report sent to Ms. Garnett it seems that no real in depth analysis has been done on our properties yet. In addition it sounds as if the potential volumes of water being used to justify removal of the dam are not being used to study erosion.
C7.1
I would insist that the same 2.5 times 100 year flood volumes be used for erosion studies as well.
Regards,
Mike Edison

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get Outlook for Android

--
Paul Vlasich PE
Town Engineer
13 Newfields Rd
Exeter, NH 03833
Office: (603)773-6160
Fax: (603)772-1355

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Robert Span
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Question
Date: Thursday, February 29, 2024 11:40:13 AM

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C8.1 Since the Pickpocket Dam is a run-of-the-river dam, how specifically would dam removal affect water temperature and dissolved oxygen levels downstream of the dam location? What, if any, other impacts would there be on water quality downstream?

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Robert Span
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Questions
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 3:29:39 PM

C8.2 1. At page 86 of the draft feasibility study, it says that currently there are 85 acres of impoundment available for canoeing, kayaking, and boating. Under the dam removal scenario, how many of those acres will disappear?

C8.3 2. Which of the wetland areas shown on Fig 3.9-1 or Fig 3.11-1 in the draft feasibility study will be affected by dam removal?

C8.4 3. What will be the effect of dam removal on water levels in the Little River in Brentwood?

Robert Span

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Robert Span
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Questions
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 8:44:34 AM

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C8.5

I am trying to understand the VHB Breach Analysis. VHB's model assumes overtopping of the dam in a 100-year flood. Why is there a difference of 1.3 feet at Kingston Road and .8 feet at the mobile home park between the breach and non-breach scenario water levels? Where is the extra water coming from?
Robert Span

From: "Jonathan Flewelling" via Pickpocket Dam
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] [Virus Error] Pickpocket Dam - In Favor of Removal
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 1:08:29 PM

Hello,

I'm very in favor of removing the Pickpocket Dam. As we learned from removing the Great Dam in downtown Exeter, restoring the river to its natural state has many benefits for the environment. The dam serves no current purpose, and given the speed at which climate change is accelerating, maintaining the dam will result in higher risk for the community. Please proceed with seeking funds to remove the dam.

C9.1

Thank you,
Jon Flewelling
6 Wentworth St.
Exeter, NH 03833

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Thomas Cordy
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Pickpocket Dam-
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 4:45:45 PM

C10.1

I am a Brentwood resident who lives on Pickpocket and I am 100% against the removal of the dam! There is a lack of transparency with the study and the community should have an absolute say in what happens with this dam. I agree that it will negatively affect wildlife habitat and the environment too.

I happen to enjoy the river to fish throughout the year and would not like to see this impacted either! It is part of the history of this area and should be preserved with options that would result from a 1 in a 1000 year event...those are silly standard to retroactively apply for something that 'might happen 1x in 1000 years.

Keep the dam in place!!

Tom & Kate Cordy

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Matthew Hillman
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Please remove dam
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 9:46:55 AM

Hello,

C11.1 Thank you for going through the process to assess removal of the pickpocket dam. I have taken my sons fishing and canoeing above the dam and we have enjoyed these activities very much. However, the dam has long outlived its useful life, it is a hazard, and a barrier to fish migrations up and downstream. The only potentially negative effects are ones of sentimental value, which are important to hear and understand, but should not be used in the basis of making a decision as important as this one. Please pursue damn removal for the safety and ecological benefits of the area.

Thank you,

Matt Hillman
6 Sinclair Dr
Exeter

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Elliot Pope
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] dam removal
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 5:36:43 PM

To whom it may concern,

My name is Elliot Pope, and my wife Lindsay and I live at 106 Pickpocket Road in Brentwood. This is the property that abuts the Exeter dam property, just across the Brentwood line. Lindsay and I are both in favor of removing the dam, for both ecological, safety and monetary reasons. We understand that removal of the dam will disrupt the recreation of a few landowners who own property on the reservoir, but we feel that returning the river to its natural condition outweighs those recreational benefits. We also welcome the opportunity to have a natural waterfall at the current site of the dam, and to see the return of native species of fish like the alewife and other birds.

C12.1

Thanks for your time.

Elliot & Lindsay Pope

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Bruce Stevens
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Expressing FULL support of Exeter's initiative to pursue the NOAA grant for removal of the Pickpocket Road Dam.
Date: Friday, March 8, 2024 2:43:01 PM

C13.1

As a lifelong Brentwood resident of South Road I thank Exeter for the public presentation on 2/27/24 of the dam remediation/removal options. The formal assessment by the qualified engineering staff was an excellent opportunity for area townspeople to be informed of Exeter's extensive engineering research on the subject stretching back to at least 2016 when I attended one of the first public informational sessions covering both the Great Dam and Pickpocket structures.

I wish to have this note included in your "public written comment" file as being in full support of pursuing removal of the Pickpocket structure.

As a 45 year member of the Brentwood Planning Board I fully understand the emotional content involving any project of a similar scale - from a personal perspective I give some credence to these expressed concerns as my family has owned an 8 acre parcel (Brentwood tax map #24-219) with Exeter River frontage for more than a hundred years approximately a mile up-river from the dam - generations of Stevens' have enjoyed boating and fishing on that section of the river that has been enhanced by the Pickpocket impoundment. A lower water level will impact that use but it is of minor consequence to the greater good resulting from the dam removal - we should all reread Olive Tardiff's book on the Exeter River where she notes that the first human inhabitants arrived in the area 11,000 years (approx.440 generations ago) - by historical contrast, the dams have been in place for 375 years (approximately 15 generations!).

Many residents including myself will attend future meetings to learn more about expected water quality improvements derived from a "free flowing" river that should translate overall to improved health of the waters of Great Bay.

Lastly, I commend the Exeter BOS for pursuing the removal grant as the fiscally prudent solution to the hazards presented by the aging dam structure - if the dam were to be renovated there would certainly be ongoing inspection/maintenance costs forward to be funded by taxpayers - both Exeter and Brentwood are currently facing housing affordability issues among others that are stifling our communities.

In short, there are far more pressing financial challenges in our towns that would be better served than spending 2-3 MILLION DOLLARS on an obsolete dam.

I again, appreciate Exeter's listening.

Sincerely,

Bruce Stevens
84 South Road
Brentwood, N.H. 03833
603-702-8738

Sent from my iPad

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Bob Dudra
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Ram
Date: Friday, March 8, 2024 7:01:27 AM

[You don't often get email from bdudra@comcast.net. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

The time has come to move forward and make the decision to remove the dam. The cost to remove the dam is less expensive and in the long run a better alternative for our environment.

C14.1 All the reports are in and alternatives explained and removing the dam is the best decision of all the alternatives.

Bob

Bob Dudra
12 Pine Meadows Dr.
Exeter, NH 03833

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Robert Span
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Question
Date: Saturday, March 9, 2024 2:23:07 PM

> You don't often get email from rspan7@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

C15.1 In 1981, Exeter applied for permission to add hydro-electric generation to the Pickpocket Dam. I do not know why that project never materialized. At the time, town engineers estimated the project would generate 600,000 kwh per year. In looking at current alternatives, did VHB or the town study the feasibility of retaining the dam and adding hydro generation?

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Robert Span
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Comments for the record
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 12:13:43 PM
Attachments: 2.27 text.docx

The attached statements were read at the 2/27 meeting.

Impact on Wildlife

C16.1 The opinions and conclusions in the feasibility study -- as opposed to the facts – minimize the environmental impact of dam removal.

For example, the study states: With dam removal, "the current impounded portions of the river would recede into the central natural river channel, reducing the area of open water and shrinking the bordering wetlands as their periphery would likely become drier over time. Despite the habitat alterations expected to result from dam removal, that alternative would restore the Exeter River and the surrounding areas to a more natural ecological state (pre dam construction) **and any amphibian and reptile species present within the study area would adapt to the change in their environment**." 109

C16.1 That cavalier dismissal of the effect on wildlife – "they will adapt" – is not supported by any scientific evidence, and is contrary to the facts. For example, according to the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan, Blanding's Turtles and Spotted Turtles are threatened by such things as dam removal: "Removal of human dams may reduce or improve habitat quality depending on the availability of suitable wetland habitat before and after dam removal. This reduction in habitat quality or availability may harm turtle populations by causing indirect mortality due to increased dispersal across inhospitable habitat, increased predation, and increased desiccation."

Habitat loss is one of the major threats to wildlife in this country and the world. "They will adapt" is not the answer.

Submitted by Crystal Span
31 Peabody Drive
Brentwood NH

"THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT THIS WHOLE DAM THING"

The feasibility study repeats one central theme over and over again – that removal of Pickpocket Dam will result in increased fish passage upstream. This premise is the major justification for dam removal and for the NOAA grant.

C16.2 The fact is, however, that the Pickpocket Dam is not a barrier to fish passage. NH Fish & Game data show that eight years after the Great Dam was removed, fish are still not reaching the Pickpocket Dam.

NHF&G does an annual count of fish on the Exeter River. The feasibility study shows these counts on p.90. The study leaves the impression that the Pickpocket Dam is acting as a barrier to fish moving further upstream.

In fact, however, those same F&G reports contain the following language: "It is unknown why river herring are not reaching Pickpocket Dam in greater quantities

considering the passage estimate at the former Great Dam location." This is from the June 2023 report, but similar language has been in the reports since 2020.

Kevin Sullivan is a marine biologist at NHF&G. In a November 2022 email, he summarized the situation at Pickpocket "only a few hundred fish have been recorded using the ladder and large schools are not observed below it that might indicate the dam/ladder are preventing passage. We have tried exploring the stretch of the river from the Pickpocket Dam to the former Great Dam site to look for barriers and did not find any that seemed impassable so we are not sure why river herring are not making it up to the Pickpocket Dam." We have submitted all these documents for the record.

River herring are not being blocked by the Pickpocket Dam. This basic and essential fact is omitted from the feasibility study. It was also known to, but not mentioned by, several of those who wrote letters of support for the NOAA grant and who reviewed drafts of this study. This omission calls into question the objectivity and credibility of the study and those who endorse it. More importantly, it undercuts the only reason for the NOAA grant.

The participation of DES raises additional concerns.

C16.3 In New Hampshire, to obtain a permit to remove a dam, one must go through a complicated procedure at NHDES, in which all the impacts of dam removal are considered. Yet several representatives of NHDES helped draft the grant application and then three of them wrote letters to NOAA, supporting dam removal.

Those DES letters of support were written without any study of the upstream environmental impacts of dam removal, and with knowledge that the dam is not a barrier to fish passage.

Representatives of NHDES also helped edit and revise the very feasibility study we are considering tonight.

C16.3 If this were a trial in court, DES would be acting as prosecutor, judge, and jury. That is not fair. What assurances can we have from DES that any permitting process will be fair and impartial, and based on objective, independent evidence?

Submitted by Robert Span
31 Peabody Drive
Brentwood NH

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Robert Span
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Question
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 11:58:41 AM

C17.1 In the VHB presentation on 2/27, it was said that Alternative 6 was rejected because: "Reduced pool levels would have negative environmental and recreation impacts." What specifically would be the negative environmental and recreational impacts of Alternative 6?

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Rebecca Dunham
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Comments from a private citizen
Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024 3:37:34 PM

I am writing as a private citizen of Brentwood to list my concerns about the potential removal of Pickpocket Dam.

As a longtime resident with property along the river, I value the resource it provides to recreation for both towns, to wildlife habitat, a large amount of acres of wetlands along the riverfront, and the historic value, that it qualifies for, of the site and dam. The loss of any of these would be irreversible to this whole area, more than just Exeter and Brentwood.

If the dam is removed, the impact of the changes falls solely on Brentwood. The process was flawed and there was no notice to the town of Brentwood and abutters along the river, that a vote to apply for a grant and the Exeter Select Board's endorsement of that application was imminent, and without a public hearing.

C18.1

The NOAA application references Brentwood, with no mention of due diligence regarding the impact on Brentwood if the dam is removed. Due diligence was not done. At the Feb 27 meeting, a question was raised about damage to property and the Exeter representative stated it was the landowner's responsibility and that Exeter was not liable for damage. He also stated that individual abutters/landowners were responsible to seek legal advice on their own about changes to deeds or easements. This is a financial burden only on Brentwood residents.

C18.2

Since the NOAA grant program is available annually, I request that this application be tabled, and that a new application be submitted by Exeter next year that is the appropriate and better solution for both towns to repair the dam.

C18.1

With respect,
Rebecca Dunham

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Sean LaPierre
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Re: Well study
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 7:26:32 PM

[You don't often get email from sean.lapierre@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

Sending again since I have not heard back.

> On Mar 14, 2024, at 8:45 PM, Sean LaPierre <sean.lapierre@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> Hello!
>
> I have heard rumor that an impact study was performed on the wells in the surrounding area of pickpocket dam and that “no impact” was the end result. Do you happen to have a copy of the study? I’m just curious if specific factors were taken into account and the type of well usage was considered. I live in the neighborhood next to the dam and rely on an open loop geothermal system for heating (specifically fed from the well). I would feel more comfortable if I could see the impact calculations that were performed.

C19.1

>
> Best regards,
> Sean

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Cynthia Tucker
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Dam
Date: Saturday, March 16, 2024 7:18:21 AM

C20.1 I have become aware of the issue very recently and would like to put forth my desire to have the dam removed. Exeter's water is foul tasting and if removal of said dam were to improve our water, I am all for removing it. I have resided in Exeter for 27 years now and this is the first time I have heard of the issue.

Thank you for addressing this matter.

Cynthia Tucker

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Lisa Burk-McCoy
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Dam Input
Date: Sunday, March 17, 2024 8:34:51 PM

I am a long-time Exeter residents and have been living in the Pickpocket Woods neighborhood for 21 years. The Exeter end of Pickpocket Rd. is quiet; our dense woods, the narrow winding road, and the river impart a distinctly rural quality that I love. That feeling of being "tucked in" to this beautiful natural setting is what drew my husband and me – and so many of our neighbors – to live here. The dam is a defining part of this setting, the one-lane bridge and the double falls adding a beauty of its own. I go out of my way to drive by it, especially when it snows. My husband and I walk our dogs down to the dam and along the path by the river several times a week. The scene is always changing, from icy flows to the wild rush of water after a hard rain; the sweet smell in August when the summer sweet blooms, growing thick along the banks; a riot of color in the fall. We often pause by the rocky remains of the old mills, tracing the lines of the foundations and trying to image what it was like here once. This place is special; it's why people who move here, stay.

The river is an important recreational resource – a source of joy, year round. When the weather warms, my husband and I take our kayaks down to the dam. There's no easy put-in: we each drag our 12' kayak down the rocky embankment into the water, wedge it between a few rocks near the fish ladder, and do our best to climb in without tipping. The balancing act while hauling the kayaks out is more challenging (I took an unexpected dunk last fall). And we're not the only ones navigating this tricky entry. We often pass others enjoying a paddle up-river, or watch as someone scrambles up the rocks, dragging their kayak behind. In season, the river below the dam is dotted with people fly-fishing. Any day of the week, you'll see several cars parked along Cross and Pickpocket Roads – evidence of the constant flow of people enjoying all the river and the dam have to offer.

We learned a couple of months ago through a letter a neighbor placed in our mailbox that the town was considering removing the dam. In all this time, we have never heard directly from the town on this issue. The only "public notification" we received was the traffic sign advertising the recent town meeting to discuss the dam removal. As an effort at notification, it was unimpressive. My primary concert here is the lack of due diligence: how can the town consider such a significant change, without making any real effort to notify abutters and nearby residents? How can the town consider its options in the context of what this dam means to the neighborhood, without allowing sufficient time and opportunity for public input? How can the town seriously consider removing the dam, without having conducted environmental studies to assess the impact up-river (an area that has fully adapted to the presence of this and other dams over hundreds of years)?

C21.1

C21.2

Here's what I would ask those who will be making this decision: have you spent time here? Have you noticed the habitats this river supports? The area is rich with heron, geese, and river otters; in the spring and summer, areas of the river are covered in water lilies. It would be tragic if any of this is lost. And it would be sad beyond measure if the embankment was elevated such that area residents couldn't find some way to put in a kayak or canoe. We'd lose touch with this river that means so much to us.

I understand the necessity of ensuring public safety and recognize, per the potential change to NHDES regulations, that the town may be forced to consider removing the dam. But as NHDES hasn't actually approved those changes, any decision-making seems pre-mature. If these changes are approved and go into effect, and given (as I understand it) that only one home will be adversely effected in the event of a 1,000 year flood event, I have to ask: is it possible the state will have an appeal process? Is there a chance we may be able to avoid make any changes at all? Why does this all feel so rushed?

C21.3

I urge you to consider how critical this dam, the ecology it supports, and our access to the river as a source of recreation and relaxation are to those of us who live here. This neighborhood would lose something of immeasurable value, something irreplaceable, if any of this was lost. I understand that some things may need to change, and that at some point it may become clear that removing the dam is our best and most viable option. If it should come to this, this is what I ask: be thorough and diligent in conducting all necessary research: fully understand all options and their ramifications. Respect the Pickpocket area residents: keep us informed, invite and thoughtfully and seriously consider our input. Protect this natural resource: preserve its beauty, its rich ecology, and its value as a source of recreation and joy for all who call it "home".

Thank you.

Lisa Burk-McCoy
4 Runawit Rd.
Exeter

Stephanie Hudock

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Bob Dudra <bdudra@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 10:18 AM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Dam

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi

C22.1 Based on the report the best alternative is to remove the dam. It is not only less costly but the benefits to the environment, fish, and general health of the river are all positive. The recent removal of the downtown dam in Exeter has demonstrated the benefits of doing this action.

The dam was built in 1920 for power for the mills. The mills are no longer around so best thing is to restore the river to its natural state.

Bob

Bob Dudra
12 Pine Meadows Dr.
Exeter, NH 03833

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Ann Dillon
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Keep the Pickpocket Dam
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 5:25:07 PM

Dear Pickpocket Committee,

C23.1 As an Exeter River abutter in Brentwood, I am strongly opposed to the removal of the Pickpocket Dam. The river area provides a habitat for fisher cats, deer, turkeys, possum, raccoons, otters, beaver, turtles, herons, ducks, geese and fish. It is why we purchased this piece of land 25 years ago and built our family home here. Lowering the river would cause harm to these creatures, our views and our enjoyment. It would also destroy or impeded the beautiful skating, kayaking, canoeing and other recreational opportunities the river allows.

Exeter may not feel the impact but those of us upriver will be negatively impacted. There has always been a great sharing and synchrony between our towns. It is hard to believe that Exeter would apply for a grant to destroy this dam without full consideration of Brentwood's residents and river lovers.

C23.2 It is time to find a solution that gets the dam fixed and does no harm to those upriver. Has Brentwood applied for a grant to help with costs? That would be a place to start.

Sincerely,
Ann Dillon
7 Wendell Drive
Brentwood

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Mike Porreca
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Cc: Mike Porreca
Subject: [External] Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study - February 27, 2024 Meeting Comments
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 10:40:58 AM
Attachments: Pickpocket Dam 03192024.pdf

Please see the attached PDF concerning my questions generated from the Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Meeting of February 27,2024

Thanks. Mike Porreca

March 19, 2024

To: Pickpocket Dam Committee

We are long term owners of property along the Exeter River, just upstream from the Pickpocket Dam. The mitigation plans discussed by the town during the the February meeting concerns most of the residents of this area. There are two major issues I would like to address:

First, the requirement by the State that the Town plan to the Thousand (1000) year storm capacity rather than the Hundred (100) year storm capacity is unrealistic. The Committee needs to petition the State or the Federal Government for a variance on this requirement because these criteria can't be based on practical data as the projection is so far in the future, it is just unrealistic. Risk development plans cannot eliminate all risks, nor are all risks known at the time of the development of any plan. The flooding impact assessment needs to be based on science and available practical information, not on a Doomsday projection using the One Thousand Year Storm milestone. If the 1000-year storm benchmark stands, the proposed solutions to this unlikely devastation would be costly, and environmentally irresponsible. Conversely, the practical data available and the experience we have seen since the dam's inception points to other more practical and realistic solutions rather than the dam's removal. This approach would maintain the recreational opportunities and keep the current natural ecosystem intact. From what we heard at the last meeting, none of the options discussed included Tidal surge impacts which during a severe storm can change the river's behavior regardless of dam or no dam. I bring up this example to show that all risk factors were not, and perhaps cannot be identified or mitigated with any plan because they would all have failure scenarios that are unknown to us today. All risks cannot be identified, particularly at a 1000 Year Storm benchmark. Therefore, a practical science-based solution that is not totally risk free needs to be implemented.

C24.1 1. Will the Town of Exeter be pursing a variance with the State and Federal Governments on this 1000 Year Storm benchmark?

C24.2 2. Will The Town be reconsidering a practical approach to solving the problem that utilizes a combination of solutions identified in the Consultant's analysis to minimize risk based on science and practical information like a One Hundred Year Storm benchmark.

The other issue of concern is the condition of the Aquifer that runs under the Exeter River. There is a study, done by Gidley Associates of Fairhaven MA, in the 1970s/1980s, of the Phenolic compounds dumped at the Cross Road landfill by Milliken Mills that ended up in the Aquifer at that time. Residents of Stoney Water Road, Cross Road and Connie Road that had been on Well water could no longer safely use their wells. The Town of Exeter had to bring these homes onto the Town Water Supply. If the Exeter Dam is removed and the tonnage of water above this Aquifer diminishes (by your study it would be 85% when dams are breached), it is possible that the Aquifer's phenolic compounds could end up contaminating the river as the pressure balance would be forever changed. The geologic movement of soils beneath the river could result in a breach of the Aquifer. This would damage the Ecosystem and the Town would not be able to utilize the Exeter River water as a supplemental water supply. The question is:

C24.3

1. Is anyone addressing the impacts of the dam breach considering this history of pollution in the immediate area?

Regards,

Michael Porreca
Stoney Water Road
Exeter, NH 03833

Stephanie Hudock

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Barb Swasey-Keir <deerhollow12@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 2:23 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Pickpocket Dam History Lesson

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Pickpocket Dam Historic Sight

I am a resident of Brentwood , an abutter with conservation land,have paid taxes in Exeter and my ancestors are from Exeter.

My comments are of the great historic significance this dam represents.
The destruction of so many historic buildings and sights these days for the almighty dollar is sad.
Some form of dam has existed here from the early development of the Exeter area. The steady growth of the area surely can be attributed to the many different mills that were built along the dam.

My great grandfather would have taken his wool to the Carding Mill as did many other sheep farmers.

The dam as we know it today provided an area above it for ice cutting in the winter. Here my grandfather would have cut ice blocks to keep his milk cans cold. This enabled him to have a dairy farm and haul his milk cans to Exeter train station and then on to Wasmaco Milk Company in Haverhill.

Pickpocket Dam has always been part of the fabric of my life for 80 years and also for countless others. I have fished on it,swam in it, ice skated on it, and x-country skied on it.

More thought should be put into how this New Hampshire Historical spot could be preserved. A teaching moment along with the Independence Museum and Gilman House.
C25.1 How Exeter became the important Revolutionary War Capital with its various industries at Exeter and Pickpocket Falls. Down river we have Powder Mill Rd where powder was produced for the militia and adding to the importance of our rich history making Exeter a destination history lesson.

Pickpocket Dam is a historical marker for the future to be reminded how we got here with our freedoms from the past.

Save Pickpocket Dam
Barbara Swasey
Pickpocket Road
Brentwood, New Hampshire

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Sheila Roberge
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Removal of the dam
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 5:30:55 PM

C26.1 I am in favor of removing the dam. I feel very badly for the residents of Brentwood who have property on the river. Their property will certainly change dramatically whereas down river will not. However, it is the environmentally correct thing to do. As one of the main tributaries that flow into Great Bay, it is imperative that we do everything we can to protect the water and species that inhabit the bay and the rivers in the watershed. One of the best ways is to get rid of the dams that for 100's of years have impeded the the fish runs and also the eels that go up the river to spawn. I love the falls at the dam and aesthetically they are important but that is just for humans. The fish and other aquatic life forms may not be picturesque, but it is their habitat and they need it more than our pretty photographs of it. I would like to urge the River Advisory Committee to take a trip to the

C26.2 Tucker French Forest in Fremont and see how the mill remains have been treated and also the historical significance of them. It would be great to have the remains at Pickpocket Dam treated in that way with signage. The Pickpocket Dam area was also an area with a lot of Native American history such as the trail that went along the river used by local tribes

C26.3 as they went to their winter camps. William White of Exeter found so many of his Native American artifacts right above the falls. So signage recognizing the Native Americans would be also great. Thank you, Sheila Roberge, 15 Pickpocket Rad

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Director MEB Library
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Pickpocket Dam Removal
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 3:35:34 PM

Please accept the following email from one of our patrons who needed a means of sending this communication:

I moved to Brentwood over 30 years ago to live beside the Exeter river. I'm an avid birdwatcher, fisherman, kayaker, canoeist, and I enjoy the deer, beavers, fishercats, turtles, otters, and many other wildlife species. Since I've been here there have been various government agencies that have limited the use of my land due to restrictions from the river. The net result is that I no longer can use my cottage, my outbuildings, or my wharfs. I can't even fertilize my grass within 75 feet of the river and now you want to take away the water. Enough is enough!

C27.1 I am adamantly opposed to removing the Pickpocket Dam and feel that there are other alternatives. I have considered putting my home and land into conservation easement but if this debacle goes through, I will sell my property and move to where citizens still have rights. I'm a 77 year old veteran and this project is ruining my peace and retirement and generates much anxiety. So please do not remove the dam!

Sincerely,
George B. Hussey, Jr.
603-778-2566
182 Rowell Rd. West, Brentwood, NH 03833

Janice Wiers
Library Director
Mary E. Bartlett Memorial Library
22 Dalton Road, Brentwood, NH 03833
ph: 603-642-3355
fax: 603-642-3383
http://www.brentwoodlibrarynh.org/
director@brentwoodlibrarynh.org
(Pronouns: she, her)

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Karen Prior
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Pickpocket Dam
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 7:37:02 PM

Hello,

I attended the recent meeting at the Exeter Town Hall regarding the potential removal of Pickpocket Dam and appreciated the presentation that was made.

While many Exeter residents were skeptical about the removal of the dam downtown, I think everyone would agree that the river has recovered and has found its natural flow. It is aesthetically beautiful and a delight to behold.

I have been a resident of Exeter living on Pickpocket Rd. for 30 years and I love our community. A community where all voices are heard and opinions matter. Our property abuts the Exeter River and I have the good fortune to be able to walk to the river's edge and to enjoy its beauty. I understand why there is concern, particularly on the part of Brentwood residents, about the removal of the dam on Pickpocket Rd.

C28.1 I am sensitive to the fact that a dam has been in place since 1652 and the concern about the ecosystem. However, I believe returning the river to its 'natural state' is important not just from a funding perspective but also from a wetlands and wildlife perspective. The river will change with the removal of the dam but it will return to its natural flow and in a relatively reasonable amount of time will once again be beautiful and will find its new balance within the ecosystem.

C28.2 I think one thing we need to remember is that while the current dam has been in place for a very long time, approx.100 years, there was once a time when there was no dam. A time when Native Americans lived in the area, which is reflected by the name of Pickpocket Rd., for those that settled here. Let us not just honor the 'white folk' who have lived here but let us honor the history of those who settled here long before we arrived.

I urge you to allow nature to take its course.

Thank you.

Karen Prior
16 Pickpocket Road
Exeter, NH

From: "Thomas Gregory" via Pickpocket Dam
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] support for pickpocket dam removal
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 11:49:08 AM
Attachments: Outlook-rehkllni.png

Hi,

We are Exeter homeowners at 8 Magnolia Lane. We fully support removal of the Pickpocket Dam as soon as reasonably possible.

C29.1

Dam removal, resulting in a free-flowing river that functions naturally, is important for water quality, flood risk mitigation, and ecosystem health. Dam removal is the only genuine course of action with respect to historical restoration for natural history and original human use.

These benefits of dam removal would be worthwhile even if removal was a costly endeavor that increased the taxpayer burden. That removal is actually the most fiscally prudent option, due to grant funding opportunities and lowest ongoing maintenance costs, presents the irrefutable case for dam removal.

Thank you,
Karen and Tom Gregory

Thomas K. Gregory
Ocean Process Analysis Lab
School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering
Jackson Estuarine Lab
85 Adams Point Rd., Durham, NH 03824
(603) 862-5136

From:	"Melissa Paly" via Pickpocket Dam
To:	pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Cc:	Melissa Paly
Subject:	[External] Comments on Pickpocket Dam
Date:	Thursday, March 21, 2024 8:11:20 AM
Attachments:	Outlook-1495826534.png 2024-3-21 CLF Comments on Pickpocket Dam.pdf

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> You don't often get email from pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov. Learn why this is important

To the Town of Exeter,

Please find my comments attached in support of Alternative 4 for dam removal.

Kindly confirm receipt.

Thank you,
Melissa

Melissa Paly
(she/her/hers)
Great Bay – Piscataqua Waterkeeper
Conservation Law Foundation
400 Little Harbor Road, #1106
Portsmouth, NH 03801

C: 603-502-0798
E: mpaly@clf.org

Facebook @Save the GreatBay-Piscataqua Estuary
Twitter @GBPWaterkeeper
Instagram @greatbaypiscataquawaterkeeper

For a thriving New England

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn

clf
conservation law foundation

For a thriving New England

CLF New Hampshire
27 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301
P: 603.225.3060
F: 603.225.3059
www.clf.org

Town of Exeter
13 Newfields Road
Exeter NH 03833
By electronic transmission via pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov

March 21, 2024

To the Exeter-Squamscott River Advisory Committee and Exeter Select Board:

I have been following the community's thoughtful consideration of the future of the Pickpocket Dam and commend the town for a thorough analysis of alternatives outlined in the February 20 Feasibility Analysis by VHB. I urge you to approve Alternative 4 for dam removal.

As detailed in the report, the Pickpocket Dam contributes to low dissolved oxygen levels and a state-designated impairment of the Exeter River. It impedes passage of migratory fish and elevates flood risks upstream of the dam. Removing the structure will increase oxygenation, reduce flood risk, and provide more than 14 river miles of fish habitat.

As you know, most segments of the Great Bay Estuary are classified as impaired and do not meet state water quality designations for aquatic life support, due in part to the precipitous loss of eelgrass meadows in recent decades. While many municipalities around the Great Bay watershed – including Exeter - have made enormous investments in improved sewage treatment and stormwater management, much more needs to be done to drive down pollutant loads from wastewater, nonpoint, and stormwater sources to create water quality conditions that enable the estuary to recover. So-called "natural solutions" such as land conservation, wetlands protection, enhanced vegetated buffers, and river restoration are important approaches to restoring the estuary's health. Removal of the Pickpocket Dam will be a significant achievement in the road to restoration.

While I appreciate the strong attachment to the dam expressed by some abutters to the impoundment, the overall health of the Exeter-Squamscott River and the downstream benefits to the Great Bay ecosystem will be the far bigger beneficiaries of a decision by the community to restore natural flow of the river. When the decision is not only ecologically warranted but also financially prudent, the interests of a vested few should not stand in the way.

No community in the Great Bay watershed knows better how both challenging dam removal decisions can be *and* how quickly and positively the community and ecosystem respond to a free-flowing river that reconnects upland and coastal waterways for *all* who live in and around them.

conservation law foundation

C30.1 For economic, ecological, climate resilience and long-term historical reasons, I urge the Town of Exeter to approve Alternative 4 to remove the Pickpocket Dam.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

c/ Melissa Paly
Great Bay-Piscataqua Waterkeeper
Conservation Law Foundation

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of theresawalker@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 9:10 AM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Cc: Bill Meserve; Don Clement
Subject: [External] Comment on Draft Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study

Hello – The Exeter-Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee submits the following statement regarding the Draft Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study:

C31.1 The Exeter-Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee's (ESRLAC) mission and concern are always for what is in the best interest of the river. The Committee has reviewed the Draft Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study and ESRLAC members have participated in public meetings about the Study. ESRLAC has reviewed and discussed the report and finds it well thought out and well presented.

Thank you, Theresa Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Amanda Giacchetti <atgiacchetti@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 10:01 AM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Pickpocket Dam Removal

> You don't often get email from atgiacchetti@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Hello,

I am emailing to express my thoughts on the Pickpocket Dam removal.

C32.1 As a resident of Exeter, I believe the removal of this dam would be more beneficial than it would be harmful for several reasons. I believe the removal of the dam and restoration of the river would help reduce flood risk in our changing environment, where flooding is becoming more common. I also believe the removal would help restore the natural function of the Exeter River and improve water quality conditions, as well as ecosystem health, as it converts to a free-flowing system. Removing the dam also seems to be the most cost-effective for towns and its taxpayers.

As the dam is classified as a “high hazard” structure, I believe the best decision for residents and the environment would be to remove it altogether, instead of having to continue to come up with alternative ways to improve the dam and its functionality.

Thank you.

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Dale Pike <dalepike52@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 11:11 AM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Remove Pickpocket Dam

[You don't often get email from dalepike52@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification]

C33.1 As a recreational fisherman, and a member of multiple organizations (Great Bay Stewards, Coastal Adaptation Workgroup, Coastal Conservation Association) seeking a healthier Great Bay watershed, I would urge the removal of Pickpocket Dam. Removal of Exeter's downtown dam has been a huge success that the town can be proud of. Removal of this dam would build on that success.

Sincerely,
Dale Pike

Newmarket, NH
603.659.7722

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Jaye Garnett <jayegarnett@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 4:21 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Pickpocket Dam

> You don't often get email from jayegarnett@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

C34.1 223 people signed my petition. Please see the link below

https://www.change.org/Save-Pickpocket-Dam

Jaye Garnett
603-944-2519
2 Stoney Water Road
Exeter NH 03833

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Catherine Edison <catedison27@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 4:32 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Pickpocket DAM Comments
Attachments: Letter to the Town 03-21-24.docx

Please see attached my comments. Thank you for your anticipated attention to this matter.

Cathy Edison

C35.1 I oppose the actions taken by the Town of Exeter Select Board, which allowed the River Advisory Committee (RAC) of the Town of Exeter to apply for a NOAA Grant to remove the Pickpocket Dam completely in order to improve fish passage on the Exeter River. The RAC did not engage or contact or inform stakeholders or property owners or the community about this NOAA grant, and applied for $2MM to remove the dam entirely without talking with Exeter or Brentwood residents beforehand. This process of changing our town without engaging a full conversation on the impacts to the environment, the loss of this historical piece of Exeter, loss of recreational activity, the loss of wetlands, wildlife, and more Is UNACCEPTABLE.

C35.2 The Exeter River has been a reservoir within Brentwood and Exeter for over 100 years. The Pickpocket Dam dates back to the 1600's and has been a low-risk dam until recently when the rainfall numbers changed due to the impact of climate change. The members of the Friends of Exeter River (which includes Brentwood residents) agree that this process needs to be SLOWED DOWN and reviewed with ALL stakeholders prior to any decisions being made on dam removal. After all, I believe the town line of Exeter and Brentwood runs down the middle of the existing dam, does it not?

C35.3 In October, the River Advisory Committee posted a long list of questions during its meeting – these questions were on a piece of paper that ran floor to ceiling practically, and yet none of these questions have been answered due to limited time and another group meeting which followed this RAC meeting (they "needed the room".) Why aren't there multiple meetings scheduled in the town hall as there were for the community impact discussions re: the Great Dam?

C35.4 The Town of Exeter River Advisory Committee sought approval for the NOAA grant to have money in place to remove the structure BEFORE VHB of Bedford engineers had completed the study of the Pickpocket Dam, and whether it could be modified to meet state requirements OR whether the dam should be removed. There are FEMA grants available to modify and repair dams, vs. complete removal. This covert action on the part of the Town of Exeter is unfair to hundreds of taxpayers, abutters, and their friends and family who enjoy the river, the dam, and all that it brings to this community. No abutters to this day had been contacted by the Town of Exeter on this issue. I personally delivered notice to many abutters. The lack of transparency about the Pickpocket Dam is beyond reprehensible.

Less than 20 people combined are on the Town of Exeter Select Board and Town of Exeter River Advisory Committee and not all are for dam removal. There are over 15,000 people in the Town and all may be affected if those who lead continue to act with poor judgement and rush this through. We don't need hardheads here – we need reviews and input from all stakeholders who should have a say in the matter and love the river the way it is.

Sincerely,

Catherine Edison
8 Stoney Water Rd
Exeter
603-498-6841
Catedison27@gmail.com

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Daphne Allanore de Baritault <d.allanore@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 6:07 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Concerned neighbor

> You don't often get email from d.allanore@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

To whom it may concern:

As a neighbor of the Pickpocket dam, I am deeply concerned about the decision to remove it due to its impact on the upstream ecosystem:

C36.1 • Erosion caused by the dam's removal will pose a significant risk to many adjacent properties, compromising their safety.

C36.2 • The removal endangers species such as the spotted turtle, which may struggle to survive in the altered environment.

C36.3 • Invasive plant species (Smilax, a climbing vine) currently contained, will proliferate in the newly exposed areas, disrupting the local ecosystem.

C36.4 • The shallower waters resulting from the dam's removal will be unable to sustain current fish populations, further destabilizing the ecosystem.

C36.5 • Without the body of water, the cooling effect it provided will be lost, exacerbating heat and drought conditions in the summer, leading to fire risks.

C36.6 • Tourism and recreational activities, such as canoeing, yearlong fishing, hunting, will disappear, and the resulting swamp-like environment will create ideal conditions for mosquito breeding, impacting public health.

C36.7 • In the past, there was contamination by heavy metals due to industrial landfill activity on Crossroad. Over the years, the contaminated waters seeped into the Exeter River upstream of the dam. With the shallowing waters resulting from the dam's removal, these contaminated soils will be exposed to the air once again. This will lead to a fresh exposure of contaminated soils to the open environment, to wildlife, and to residents.

C36.8 Furthermore, it's important to consider that the ecosystem around the dam has developed over more than 400 years, surpassing the age of most nearby houses. What was once man-made infrastructure has evolved into a natural habitat, achieving a delicate balance over centuries. Unraveling the riverbanks could disturb Native American remains, necessitating costly archaeological excavations and involvement from appropriate authorities.

With kind regards,

Daphné and Antoine Allanore

Pickpocket Road

From: 'Beverly Barney' via Pickpocket Dam <pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 6:09 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Pickpocket Dam

C37.1 The Dam has provided family outdoor enjoyment for the 62 years I've lived here. For canoeing, fishing swimming and even shore camping. To take it down is wrong and uncaring. It would have been great if we had been notified about removing it. Perhaps money could be raised to pay for repairs??? Beverly Barney Sent from my iPhone

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Kristie Monge <kbsavard@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 7:34 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Brentwood Resident Comment

Good afternoon,

C38.1 As a Brentwood resident who uses the Exeter River for kayaking upriver of the Pickpocket Dam, I want to voice my support for the removal of the dam and restoring the natural river. Plus, I'm pretty sure the beavers who reside in the Brentwood section of the river will build and maintain a dam at no cost to either town.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kristie Monge
Brentwood, NH

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Scot Calitri <smcalitri@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 9:21 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Remove Pickpocket Dam

> You don't often get email from smcalitri@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Thank you for your work to solicit comments and do the right thing for our Seacoast.

C39.1 I chaired the Free The Oyster River group (Oyster River Conservation Alliance) when the Mill Pond Dam in Durham was needing action. Pickpocket has a very similar situation in that it is a local decision that impacts all our Seacoast and beyond. I know of no local dams that serve a real productive purpose and removing dams is likely the best action we can take for our local waters. The key reasoning:

Save taxpayer dollars: Removal is the most fiscally prudent option, is likely to be funded almost completely by grants and is the option with the lowest ongoing cost to maintain.

Improve water quality: A free-flowing river will help reverse building impairments and restore the natural function of the Exeter River.

Reduce risk of flooding: River restoration is proven to mitigate the impacts of flooding and other hazardous weather.

Restore ecosystem health: Removing the Pickpocket Dam will enhance native fish runs and habitat for other plants and animals.

Respect Indigenous History: Indigenous people lived on the Exeter River for thousands of years before the river was dammed by European settlers. Historical restoration is genuine when we restore the river toward pre-contact days.

Those who do not have a voice are counting on us.

Thank you,

Scot Calitri

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of CCA NH <info@ccanh.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 9:35 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Letter to support dam removal
Attachments: Exeter Pickpocket Dam removal Letter CCA.docx

> You don't often get email from info@ccanh.org. Learn why this is important

Good evening,
Please find a letter attached below to support dam removal and restoration of the dam site.

Thanks,
Zak

--

Zak Robinson
President - CCA NH
m: 603.731.2669
a: P.O. Box 4372 Portsmouth NH 03801
w: www.ccanh.org e: info@ccanh.org

CCA NH is a volunteer organization committed to promoting, protecting and enhancing the present and future availability of coastal resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public.

Coastal Conservation Association Of New Hampshire

Post Office Box 4372 • Portsmouth, NH 03802
Phone: (603) 731-2669 • E-mail - info@ccanh.org
Web Address - ccanh.org

C40.1

March 20th, 2024

Via Electronic Mail (pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov)

Re: Pickpocket Dam

Dear Pickpocket Dam Selectboard

The Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire is a non-profit conservation organization comprised of marine recreational enthusiast, fisherman, and concerned citizens. The stated purpose of CCA NH is to advise and educate the public on conservation of marine resources. The objective of CCA NH is to conserve, promote and enhance the present and future availability of these coastal resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public.

As such, CCA NH strongly supports the removal of the Pickpocket Dam. The proposed removal would continue the process of restoring habitat that is critical to our native diadromous fishes. Great Bay and its tributaries serve as nursery for a myriad of marine species of extreme ecological, economic, and recreational importance. It provides an environment, which if kept healthy and vibrant, is integral to the New Hampshire seacoast region's continued economic growth and continued practice of cherished cultural traditions.

The science is clear as to the benefits of dam removal on our Seacoast rivers feeding into Great Bay. Every dam removal is a step toward restoring our migratory fish populations in our estuaries. Allowing these critical rivers to flow freely is restoring them to their historic place where fresh and saltwater meet naturally.

We strongly urge the Town of Exeter to remove Pickpocket Dam.

Sincerely,

Zakary Robinson

Zakary Robinson, President CCA NH

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Zak Robinson <zak@risingtideanglers.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 9:44 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Letter for the removal of Pickpocket Dam
Attachments: Pickpocket Dam Removal Letter RTA.docx

Please find a letter attached below.

Thanks,
Zak

Zak Robinson
Rising Tide Anglers
Guided Fly Fishing

6038288290
Zak@risingtideanglers.com
www.risingtideanglers.com
Portsmouth, NH and Narragansett, RI

RISING TIDE ANGLERS

March 20th, 2024

Dear Pickpocket Dam Selectboard,

I'm writing today to ask for action to remove Pickpocket Dam and to restore natural fish passage.

As a fishing guide on the Piscataqua River for 19 seasons, I've seen our fisheries and the Great Bay degrade rapidly. Dams have proven to be a detriment to wild fisheries and water quality, and the science is clear that removal and restoration is the only option

C41.1 While this particular dam does provide habitat and recreational opportunities, the habitat is not ideal for ***native*** fishes and similar recreational opportunities exist nearby. The lack of dissolved oxygen behind the dam does not support the cold water diadromous species that were native to these drainages before the dam was built. Removing the dam would create an opportunity for the restoration of many species, and also allow the natural passage of diadromous fish.

The time to make a change is now, please vote to remove this dam for future generations of fish, wildlife, and humans.

Thank you,

Zakary Robinson

Captain Zak Robinson, *Owner and Guide*

603-828-8290
Zak@Risingtideanglers.com
www.risingtideanglers.com
1474 Islington St, Portsmouth NH 03801

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Michael Massicotte <mmassicotte@mascotsurgical.com>
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2024 12:01 AM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Cc: catedison27@gmail.com
Subject: [External] Loss of Pickpocket Dam and what it means today my family and community.
Attachments: 080wZgXvBnV9Mwf4sCt_RE9oA.jpeg; IMG_6798.heic

To whom it may concern in regards to the removal of Pickpocket Dam,

As a land owner on Pickpocket Road with Exeter River frontage, I am unfortunately just learning of the impending risk and potential loss of this dam, which is a treasured recreational outlet for my family along with a lot of my neighbors and community.

My ask in this comment is to merely take the time to look at other alternatives other than the destruction of this mainstay that has been here and appreciated in our community since 1652.

C42.1

In this regard, I would argue that the vote to just remove the dam is shortsighted, not factoring in the dramatic impact to the landowners abutting the river in Exeter and Brentwood who have treasured the beautiful waterfall and access point safely provided by this structure.

We moved here 10 years ago, with a great deal of our decision for home purchase based on the setting the Exeter River and dam presented as a special place for our children to grow, explore, appreciate and learn what this beautiful Exeter landscape offers. This dam is a safe and calm launch point appreciated by my family and community that allows easy access into the ecology and beautiful environment provided by the Exeter River. It is a a necessity as a launch point, never mind the beautiful waterfall setting and environment surrounding that has thrived as a result of its presence, that would be lost forever with its shortsighted removal.

Please look at these pictures. I am attaching to get a true understanding of what this dam means to my family personally, which is most certainly the sentiment of everyone directly impacted with land abutting the river along with so many more in the community unaware of the vote made to remove by a mere 8% of the town population represented.

To reiterate, my main ask here is to slow down with this rash decision and properly allow the Exeter and Brentwood community to be informed on what this dam removal would mean.

C42.2

It would be appreciated by all to be informed transparently with what this dam removal means along with the safe and viable alternatives that would preserve what we have all been accustomed to enjoying its environmental splendor.

Please just take a moment, and really factor in everything and everyone impacted with this dam removal that can be easily preserved if we all come together to look at alternatives.

Thank you for time and consideration.

Best Regards,

10 Items
share.icloud.com

10 Itemsshare.icloud.com

Michael E. Massicotte
Founder-Consultant
MASCOT Surgical, LLC
mmassicotte@mascotsurgical.com
Mobile #603-703-5017

From: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov on behalf of Patrick Seekamp <seekampp.sec@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 9:44 PM
To: pickpocketdam@exeternh.gov
Subject: [External] Dam Removal Questions

I have three questions/concerns regarding the Pickpocket Dam Removal:

C43.1 **1.** If the dam is removed completely and the impoundment is drawn down, I believe an effort should be made to canvass the draw down area from the Haig Road bridge downstream to the dam to identify any significant patches of **invasive species** in proximity to what will initially be an exposed mudflat along the river. Every effort should be made to seed/re-vegetate those areas in proximity to the invasives quickly so that nearby invasives do not get a foothold along the exposed mudflat until native wetland vegetation can become established.

C43.2 **2.** There was/is a population of **Redfin pickerel (*Esox americanus*)** located in the area of the old impoundment above the Great Dam. Has any sampling been done on the current fish populations in the impoundment above Pickpocket Dam to determine if among other species, Redfin are found there now? An important (and useful) study should be done to see if Dam removal will expand the range of this primarily coastal stream species, or what effect dropping the impoundment will have on the resident fish populations and species diversity once the dam is removed if that is the preferred alternative.

C43.3 **3.** In a related note; many studies are done prior to dam removal and models developed to forecast/ anticipate vegetation communities changes, hydrology changes, fisheries changes etc. as a result of dam removal. I think that **follow up studies need to be done** (maybe tap into UNH for some possible help) to see how well these predictors panned out after dam removal and the river environ reverts back to more natural flow characteristics.

Having **metrics as a follow up** will provide be valuable insight into what conditions were predicted right, what if any, missed the mark and what we have learned from the effects of dam and impoundment removal. All of this data is useful and unless we have follow up metrics, a missed opportunity going forward to learn more and plan better for future dam removal projects.

Thank you for your consideration on these points.

Patrick S.

Patrick D. Seekamp, PWS, CWS
Seekamp Environmental Consulting, Inc.
129 Route 125

Kingston, NH 03848

Ph: (603) 642-8300
Fx: (603) 642-8500

Response to Written Comments

Comment #	Date	Commenter	Comment	Response
C1.1	2/21/2024	Nicole Sheaff	"If the dam is removed is it an option to use natural materials to create the cascading effect of the dam while also keeping the size of the current river area above the dam?"	Creating a "cascading effect", typically called a "roughened ramp" to maintain the impoundment would still be considered a dam. There would still need to be improvements to this type of dam to meet NHDES dam safety requirements.
C2.11	2/21/2024	John Collins	"What are the implications for local properties [on the river's edge] like mine? Will our property lines be extended to the new river's edge? Or will the retreat of the river create some new patch of (possibly public) property that will mean that I no longer have river frontage?"	The Town cannot offer personalized legal advice. However, no change in property taxes is expected because property boundaries are generally set in deeds and related surveys. To understand where your property lines lie, we recommend that you review your deed or land survey and consult with your own land surveyor and/or attorney if necessary.
C3.1	2/22/2024	Robert Span	"Will public comments sent to the Town be posted on the website?"	Public comments and responses are provided in the Appendix of the Feasibility Study.

Comment #	Date	Commenter	Comment	Response
C4.1	2/27/2024	Eric Turer	"Why does the lengthy VHB feasibility study dedicate so little attention to the issue of fish passage, and ignore the small but critical bit of information included, which directly refutes the logic and wisdom of dam removal at this time. (...) In short, the Pickpocket Dam was not a barrier to fish in the past, and it is not a barrier now. Instead, it is a key resource needed to investigate the nature of what is actually preventing upstream fish migration in the newly accessible portion of the Exeter River. Statements in the [NOAA] grant application are directly refuted by NH Fish and Game's communications and data."	The Pickpocket Dam clearly presents a barrier to upstream and downstream fish passage, and its removal would have a significant net benefit in restoring aquatic habitat connectivity within the Exeter River watershed. This would benefit not only anadromous fish, but also freshwater species present in the upstream and downstream reach of the river. The removal of the Pickpocket Dam would make available an additional 6.2 miles of unobstructed essential fish habitat on the mainstem of the river, and 8.1 miles of tributaries. Removal of the dam would not only restore river connectivity but also improve instream habitat that is available for fish and other aquatic species, as well as instream flow and better water quality for the River as a whole. While a denil ladder is present at the Pickpocket Dam, it is critical to understand that structural fishways act as "filters," since not all the fish below the dam are able to ascend the ladder. Thus, even with the fish ladder, the dam still presents a barrier to upstream passage; its presence on the dam is simply an adaptation intended to mitigate but not eliminate the dam's impact on river connectivity. An example of this filtering effect was seen at the Great Dam when fish were observed below but not using the ladder prior to the removal of the Great Dam. And, at the Lamprey River in Newmarket, a study to evaluate passage efficiency of a fishway found that handling effects, diel movement patterns, and fishway saturation negatively affected passage success. The estimated probability of passage success of an average Alewife was 63% for males and 64% for females (Sullivan, Baily, and Berlinsky, 2023). Additionally, while the denil ladder allows for some amount of upstream fish passage, there is no provision for downstream passage at all. Fish must swim over the spillway during periods of moderate to high flows, which leads to mortality of some fish due to the fall and turbulent flow below the dam. Further, downstream fish passage is entirely eliminated under low flow conditions or drought years where there is little to no flow going over the spillway to allow safe passage for herring and other

Comment #	Date	Commenter	Comment	Response
				species to pass over the spillway. Finally, regarding the commenter's assertion that the NHF&G fish counts demonstrate that the Pickpocket Dam is not a barrier, it is important to realize that the data reflects only the number of fish that are able to reach the top of the denil ladder, not the total number of fish able to reach the dam. The data does suggest that there has been a decrease of fish ascending the Pickpocket Dam ladder, despite the apparent increase in the anadromous fish run at the site of the former Great Dam. This may be because the removal of the Great Dam has improved habitat quality to such a degree that fish (especially blueback herring, the dominant species in the anadromous fish run) are able to find suitable habitat somewhere below the Pickpocket Dam, which would decrease the total number of fish needing to ascend above the Pickpocket Dam site. NH Fish and Game reports that the fish observed at the Pickpocket Dam are mostly alewives, which would again support the idea that Blueback Herring are finding suitable spawning habitat somewhere below the Pickpocket Dam. This data does not refute that removal of the Pickpocket Dam would benefit fish passage, nor does it support the assertion that the dam is an important resource to investigate the fishery resource in the Exeter River. Rather, the data points to the success in restoring habitat for blueback herring as a result of the removal of the Great Dam.
C4.2	2/27/2024	Eric Turer	"Why have cost estimates for dam removal varies so widely between the presentations on this project at different times, and from the amount of the NOAA grant application. (…) Please explain these three highly significant disparities in cost over just a few months, as determined by the same contracted organization for ostensibly the same project. Which value more accurately reflects the actual	The cost estimates have become more refined, as the conceptual alternative designs progressed. Depending on the context of the cost estimate, the values are also adjusted. The cost estimates in the Feasibility Study are calculated based on the value of "today's dollar", whereas the NOAA grant application included escalation of the cost for the estimated future dollar value for the anticipated construction year of 2026. Additionally, the grant application included additional monitoring, adaptive

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			cost of such a project? How do the different costs related to the dam removal option impact the other cost estimates presented in the VHB report?"	management, and grant management costs that we anticipate would be required if the grant application is successful.
C5.1	2/27/2024	Carl Lundgren	"I am asking if the meeting at town hall about Pickpocket Dam will be lived streamed on Channel 22"	Yes, the public meeting on 2/27/2024 was live streamed on Channel 22. The recording of the meeting is also available on the Town's website.
C6.1	2/28/2024	Mark Rieder	"The proposal does NOT include invasive species control for dam removal. Why not and can that be guaranteed? The area is inundated with invasives."	Section 3.13 of the Feasibility Study discusses several techniques for controlling invasive species, and commits to seeding the newly exposed river bed to limit the ability of invasive species to colonize the newly exposed area of the dam removal alternative. Additional components of an integrated vegetation management plan could be considered to reduce the impact of invasive species in the river valley to the degree possible. However, as mentioned in the comment, invasive species have become well established in the seacoast region, including portions of the impoundment. Thus, the effectiveness of invasive species control would also depend on additional efforts, including permitting, which are beyond the scope of this project.
C6.2	2/28/2024	Mark Rieder	"I would like consideration to adding the following [listed invasive plants] which are prevalent in the area around the dam: (...) Can these be added to the list of invasive species?"	The list of invasive species in Section 3.13 is not meant to be all encompassing and was limited to the species identified during field visits, which focused on areas within and directly adjacent to the river. Additional assessment and planning would occur as the project progresses into the design and permitting phase. Mapping or observations provided by Mr. Rieder or others could be considered at that time.
C6.3	2/28/2024	Mark Rieder	"Figures 3.5-1, 2 and 3. can NOT be fully viewed as the picture is cut off. Can this be corrected in the next revision?"	We are sorry that you had trouble viewing portions of the figures. We have confirmed that all figures in the report were visible in the full PDF version posted on the town's website.

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C6.4	2/28/2024	Mark Rieder	"My neighborhood has 15 houses that use Geothermal from well water for heating and cooling the houses. The Geo systems use up to 10X the water compared with normal well use. Has this been considered in the well analysis for dam removal? I read the analysis stating that the dam removal will not affect wells in the area. Can the analysis include a statement such as, 'Geothermal system in the affected area were considered in the analysis'?"	The geothermal wells based on the public records were evaluated and found to also be connected to the deep bedrock aquifer. The removal of the dam will not affect groundwater levels in the deep bedrock aquifer and therefore there will be no impact to the geothermal well water supply. Additionally, it was found that the geothermal systems are "open loop" and any water drawn from the aquifer is also injected back into the aquifer. A more detailed discussion of the impact of dam removal on water supplies is provided in Section 3.5 of the Feasibility Study.
C6.5	2/28/2024	Mark Rieder	"Is there any consideration for re-planting the newly exposed land with native species and control for the invasives? For Brentwood as well as Exeter?"	Yes. As described in Section 3.13 of the Feasibility Study, the detailed design of the dam removal alternative would include seeding the newly exposed land with native and appropriate species for land located in both Towns. Additional measures at the dam site may also be considered. These measures will help to limit the spread of invasives into the newly exposed land. There is currently no plan to address invasive species for the dam modification alternatives.
C7.1	2/28/2024	Mark Edison	"After reading the report sent to Ms. Garnett it seems that no real in depth analysis has been done on our properties yet. In addition it sounds as if the potential volumes of water being used to justify removal of the dam area not being used to study erosion. I would insist that the same 2.5 times 100 year flood volumes be used for erosion studies as well."	VHB performed an analysis of potential changes in river characteristics along the entire length of the river for each alternative identified in the Feasibility Study. This includes the section of the Exeter River along Stoney Water Road. The flow rates used to meet dam safety requirements, are different than what is used to evaluate erosion and sediment transport. It is industry standard to evaluate erosion and sediment transport for the bankfull flow, the 2-year storm is typically used as an approximation of bankfull flow and is used to estimate sediment transport as bankfull flow is considered to channel forming flow.
C8.1	2/29/2024	Robert Span	"Since the Pickpocket Dam is a run-off-the-river dam, how specifically would dam removal affect water temperature and dissolved oxygen levels downstream of the dam location?...What, if any, other impacts would there be on water quality downstream?"	The Pickpocket Dam reduces water quality in the impoundment created by the dam. Impounded waters are typically prone to low DO conditions due to the oxygen demand caused by decomposition of organic material in the bottom waters. Additionally, impounded waters are warmer and therefore have lower DO saturation thresholds, with less opportunity for aeration and oxygen exchange in slow moving waters as compared to free-flowing waters with riffles. For example, with the reduced surface water size, decreased residence time and reduced solar

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				thermal input will help to lower water temperatures, which would improve DO conditions. Dam removal is expected to significantly improve water quality downstream, since removal would reduce, if not eliminate, the various causes for low DO levels in the upstream segment, and therefore provide better water quality inputs to the downstream river reaches. More detail is provided in Section 3.6 of the Feasibility Study.
C8.2	3/1/2024	Robert Span	"At page 86 of the draft feasibility study, it says that currently there are 85 acres of impoundment available for canoeing, kayaking, and boating. Under the dam removal scenario, how many of those acres will disappear?"	As discussed in Section 3.2 of the Feasibility Study, the 85 acre impoundment would be reduced to 26 acres during normal flow conditions.
C8.3	3/1/2024	Robert Span	"Which of the wetland areas shown on Fig 3.9-1 or Fig 3.11-1 in the draft feasibility study will be affected by dam removal?"	Figure 3.12-1, which shows wetlands (mapped by the National Wetlands Inventory) along the impounded reach of the Exeter River, is a better depiction of potentially affected areas. Wetlands bordering the existing impoundment would be influenced to some degree under the dam removal alternative (Alternative 4) due to changes in the water surface elevations and potential changes to subsurface groundwater influence. The large wetland complex which includes open water, aquatic bed, scrub-shrub and forested habitats north of the Peabody Drive loop along the northern bank of the Exeter River would be particularly affected. This area routinely floods and may contain some persistent ponded water which would likely be absent post-dam removal. Other bordering wetlands may recede along their peripheries and extend further into the exposed drained impoundment areas under the dam removal alternative. Ultimately, any changes in the surrounding habitats as a result of the dam removal alternative would occur gradually, allowing the natural communities and ecosystem as a whole time to adapt. Please refer to Section 3.12.2 of the Feasibility Study for more information regarding the potential dam removal impacts on wetlands.
C8.4	3/1/2024	Robert Span	"What will be the effect of dam removal on water levels in the Little River in Brentwood?"	The removal of Pickpocket Dam is expected to reduce the normal water level at the confluence of the Exeter and Little River by approximately 6-inches. Please refer to Section 3.2 of the Feasibility Study for a detailed discussion relating to the hydraulic findings for the alternatives.

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C8.5	3/1/2024	Robert Span	"VHB's [breach analysis] model assumes overtopping of the dam in a 100-year flood. Why is there a difference of 1.3 feet at Kingston Road and .8 feet at the mobile home park between the breach and no-breach scenario water levels? Where is the extra water coming from?"	The dam breach analysis assumes an overtopping breach, or catastrophic failure, of the dam at the peak of the 100-year storm. The model simulates the flood wave that would move downstream due to this failure, accounting for the topography, land cover, and river crossings (i.e. bridges). As the flood wave moves downstream, the difference between the breach water surface elevation and the non-breach water surface reduces as the flood wave attenuates, which accounts for the water level differences at Kingston Rd and the mobile home park.
C9.1	3/6/2024	Jonathan Flewelling	"The dam serves no current purpose, and given the speed at which climate change is accelerating, maintaining the dam will result in higher risk for the community. Please proceed with seeking funds to remove the dam."	Thank you for your comment.
C10.1	3/6/2024	Tom & Kate Cordy	"I am a Brentwood resident who lives on Pickpocket and I am 100% against the removal of the dam! There is a lack of transparency with the study and the community should have an absolute say in what happens with this dam. I agree that it will negatively affect wildlife habitat and the environment too. I happen to enjoy the river to fish throughout the year and would not like to see this impacted either! It is part of the history of this area and should be preserved with options that would result from a 1 in a 1000 year event...those are silly standard to retroactively apply for something that 'might happen 1x in 1000 years."	The 30-day public comment period was provided to solicit feedback from the public. Fish habitat and connectivity would be improved under dam removal and would therefore improve fishing opportunities. The New Hampshire Department of Historical Resources recommended the Pickpocket Dam as eligible for listing on the National Register, however the dam would be impacted under both dam modification and removal options. See Section 3.8 of the Feasibility Study for more detail. The NH Dam Bureaus safety standards require the dam to pass the flow from 250% of the 100-year storm with 1 foot of freeboard without manual operations, the state is currently under rulemaking to change this regulation to the 1000-year event. The 100-year storm refers to a rainfall event that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year based on a statistical analysis of record data. A 1000-year storm event has a 0.1% chance of occurring in any given year. Refer to Section 1.8 of the Feasibility Study for a more detailed discussion of the hydrologic evaluation and the implications to the Pickpocket Dam. See also Response to Comment C4.1, C8.3, C16.1, and C21.1.

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C11.1	3/6/2024	Matt Hillman	"Thank you for going through the process to assess removal of the pickpocket dam. I have taken my sons fishing and canoeing above the dam and we have enjoyed these activities very much. However, the dam has long outlived its useful life, it is a hazard, and a barrier to fish migrations up and downstream. The only potentially negative effects are ones of sentimental value, which are important to hear and understand, but should not be used in the basis of making a decision as important as this one. Please pursue damn removal for the safety and ecological benefits of the area."	Thank you for your comment.
C12.1	3/7/2024	Elliot & Lindsay Pope	"Lindsay and I are both in favor of removing the dam, for both ecological, safety and monetary reasons. We understand that removal of the dam will disrupt the recreation of a few landowners who own property on the reservoir, but we feel that returning the river to its natural condition outweighs those recreational benefits."	Thank you for your comment.
C13.1	3/8/2024	Bruce Stevens	"As a lifelong Brentwood resident of South Road I thank Exeter for the public presentation on 2/27/24 of the dam remediation/removal options. The formal assessment by the qualified engineering staff was an excellent opportunity for area townspeople to be informed of Exeter's extensive engineering research on the subject stretching back to at least 2016 when I attended one of the first public informational sessions covering both the Great Dam and Pickpocket structures. I wish to have this note included in your "public written comment" file as being in full support of pursuing removal of the Pickpocket structure."	Thank you for your comment.

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C14.1	3/8/2024	Bob Dudra	"All the reports are in and alternatives explained and removing the dam is the best decision of all the alternatives."	Thank you for your comment.
C15.1	3/9/2024	Robert Span	"In looking at current alternatives, did VHB or the town study the feasibility of retaining the dam and adding hydro generation?"	The March 2011 Hydroelectric Review Assessment, found that adding hydroelectric modifications is not financial feasible. It was estimated that the financing of the project would cost $148,344/year for the 20 year bond period while only producing an estimated revenue of $22,101/year. Additionally, the Pickpocket Dam is far away from any of the Town's existing electrical services, making the interconnection to the grid one of the factors that made it not financially feasible.
C16.1	3/12/2024 and Read during public meeting 2/27/2024	Crystal Span	"The opinions and conclusions in the feasibility study -- as opposed to the facts -- minimize the environmental impact of dam removal. (...) That cavalier dismissal [in the feasibility study] of the effect on wildlife - 'they will adapt' - is not supported by any scientific evidence, and is contrary to the facts."	Sections 3.9 through 3.12 of the Feasibility Study provide a discussion of the existing ecosystem present in the impoundment, including wildlife, fisheries, wetlands, rare species, and invasive species, as well as the potential effects on these natural resources that could result from dam removal. Clearly, the presence of the dam is a major anthropomorphic (i.e., human introduced) ecological factor that helps to determine the types of animal species that occur in and adjacent to the impounded reach, as well as their distribution and abundance. Dam removal will cause change, which would decrease habitat for some species, while benefitting other species which prefer free-flowing riparian and wetland habitat. Many dam removals have occurred throughout the northeast and the nation, and the changes that result from returning a river to a free-flowing condition universally have been welcomed by the ecologists and resource managers involved in those projects since they tend to favor native and sustainable ecological processes and have demonstrable benefits. The impacts and benefits of dam removal have been documented in both peer-reviewed and gray literature. The removal of the Great Dam and subsequent restoration of the Exeter River's ecosystem has been considered successful by many stakeholders. Quantitative analysis has shown increased fish passage upstream of the dam and improved water quality.

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				Under all alternatives, the project team would consult with the NH Fish and Game Department to further assess, avoid, minimize, and mitigate the potential impact to amphibian and reptile species, including the Spotted Turtle. (Note: Blanding's Turtle, referenced by Ms. Span, is not known to occur in this reach of the Exeter River.) Additionally, after removal of the Great Dam, activities were organized to help with the wildlife's adaptation such as the "mussel chuck" event that was held where NOAA, NHDES and other kayakers and canoeist paddled the Exeter River and relocated exposed freshwater mussels to deeper water.
C16.2	3/12/2024 and Read during public meeting 2/27/2024	Robert Span	"The fact is, however, that the Pickpocket Dam is not a barrier to fish passage. NH Fish and Game data show that eight years after the Great Dam was removed, fish are still not reaching the Pickpocket Dam. "	See response to Comment C4.1.
C16.3	3/12/2024 and Read during public meeting 2/27/2024	Robert Span	"In New Hampshire, to obtain a permit to remove a dam, one must go through a complicated procedure at NHDES, in which all the impacts of dam removal are considered. Yet several representatives of NHDES helped draft the grant application and then three of them wrote letters to NOAA, supporting dam removal. (...) What assurances can we have from DES that any permitting process will be fair and impartial, and based on objective, independent evidence?"	NHDES has many different bureaus charged with overseeing and enforcing the State's many different environmental laws and regulations. The NHDES Dam Bureau is separate and distinct from the NHDES Wetlands Bureau, which is charged with reviewing applications for wetlands fill and dredge permits and/or shoreland protection act permit. Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certificates are issued by yet another different bureau, namely, the Watershed Bureau. The entire NHDES permitting process for any of the alternatives is open to the public and opportunities for further public comment will be available. Federal approvals through Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is also required for all of the options being considered.
C17.1	3/12/2024	Robert Span	"In the VHB presentation on 2/27, it was said that Alternative 6 was rejected because: 'Reduced pool levels would have negative environmental and recreation impacts.' What specifically would be the negative	A reduced pool level would perpetuate the negative environmental impacts associated with a dam, including increased water temperatures, low dissolved oxygen, and habitat and migratory disruption. Similarly, pool levels would be lowered enough to reduce the area of "open water" related recreational activities. The environmental and new recreation opportunity

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			environmental and recreational impacts of Alternative 6?"	benefits associated with a lowered pool level do not materialize until the river has been restored to a natural free flowing river.
C18.1	3/14/2024	Rebecca Dunham	"The process was flawed and there was no notice to the town of Brentwood and abutters along the river, that a vote to apply for a grant and the Exeter Select Board's endorsement of that application was imminent, and without a public hearing. The NOAA application references Brentwood, with no mention of due diligence regarding the impact on Brentwood if the dam is removed. Due diligence was not done. (...) Since the NOAA grant program is available annually, I request that this application be tabled, and that a new application be submitted by Exeter next year that is the appropriate and better solution for both towns to repair the dam."	Public meetings and discussions have been ongoing since the initial Letter of Deficiency for Pickpocket Dam was issued by the New Hampshire Dam Bureau in 2011. See also Response to Comment C21.1 and Response to Verbal Comments 1-2. The Town of Brentwood has been invited to numerous public meetings regarding the fate of the Pickpocket Dam. Meanwhile, the Town of Exeter is obligated by State law to address the safety deficiencies associated with the dam, and therefore, the application will not be withdrawn. The Feasibility Study fully evaluated the impact of all alternatives to both Brentwood and Exeter.
C18.2	3/14/2024	Rebecca Dunham	"At the Feb 27 meeting, a question was raised about damage to property and the Exeter representative stated it was the landowner's responsibility and that Exeter was not liable for damage. He also stated that individual abutters/landowners were responsible to seek legal advice on their own about changes to deeds or easements. This is a financial burden only on Brentwood residents."	See Response to Verbal Comments 4 and 7. In addition, if the dam is removed, the Town does not expect any damages to abutters' properties. As described in the feasibility study, if the dam is removed the Town will take all necessary precautions to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential property damage by drawing down the impoundment slowly, among others. In fact, if the dam is removed, water levels will reduce thereby reducing the risk of flooding. After removal of the Great Dam there were no requests from abutters to repair or pay for damages relating to the removal of the dam. The Town did organize volunteer river clean-up efforts after the dam removal to remove trash from the river. The Town hauled the collected trash and debris to the landfill.

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C19.1	3/14/2024	Sean LaPierre	"I have heard rumor that an impact study was performed on the wells in the surrounding area of pickpocket dam and that "no impact" was the end result. Do you happen to have a copy of the study? I'm just curious if specific factors were taken into account and the type of well usage was considered. I live in the neighborhood next to the dam and rely on an open loop geothermal system for heating (specifically fed from the well). I would feel more comfortable if I could see the impact calculations that were performed."	The Feasibility Study has been posted on the Town's website since February 20th, 2024. It is true that under the dam removal alternative there would be no impact to the deep aquifer bedrock wells identified within the project area, this includes the geothermal wells. See also Response to Comment C6.4.
C20.1	3/16/2024	Cynthia Tucker	"I have become aware of the issue very recently and would like to put forth my desire to have the dam removed."	Thank you for your comment.
C21.1	3/17/2024	Lisa Burk-McCoy	" We learned a couple of months ago through a letter a neighbor placed in our mailbox that the town was considering removing the dam. In all this time, we have never heard directly from the town on this issue. The only "public notification" we received was the traffic sign advertising the recent town meeting to discuss the dam removal. As an effort at notification, it was unimpressive. My primary concern here is the lack of due diligence: how can the town consider such a significant change, without making any real effort to notify abutters and nearby residents? How can the town consider its options in the context of what this dam means to the neighborhood, without allowing sufficient time and opportunity for public input?"	The Town has gone above and beyond any regulatory requirements for providing notice to the public. Since 2011, there have been numerous public meetings associated with the fate of the dam, which is detailed in Section 1.6 of the Feasibility Study. The Town released the draft Feasibility Study for public review and comment on February 20th, 2024 for a 30-day public comment period. The availability of the draft Feasibility Study and February 27th Public Meeting was properly noticed. By making the draft Feasibility Study available for public comment and by holding the February 27th Public Meeting, the Town encouraged public feedback before moving forward with any alternative. There will be required regulatory abutter notification and additional public comment periods during the design and permitting phases of the project.
C21.2	3/17/2024	Lisa Burk-McCoy	"How can the town seriously consider removing the dam, without having conducted environmental studies to assess the impact of up-river (an area that has fully adapted to the	The Feasibility Study includes an environmental evaluation in Section 3 to assess the impact of dam removal on the impoundment and the River sections upstream and downstream.

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			presence of this and other dams over hundreds of years)?"	
C21.3	3/17/2024	Lisa Burk-McCoy	"If these [potential changes to NHDES safety regulations] are approved and go in to effect, and given (as I understand it) that only one home will be adversely effected in the event of a 1,000 year flood event, I have to ask: is it possible the state will have an appeal process? Is there a chance we may be able to avoid making changes at all? Why does this all feel so rushed?"	The Town is required by law to address the dam's safety issues. The Town of Exeter is following the New Hampshire Dam Bureau specified regulations. A Breach Analysis, which evaluates the downstream impact if the dam were to fail during the 100-year event (the state regulatory standard) would result in water levels rising above the 1st floor of one residence greater than 1 foot. This result triggered the reclassification of the dam to a High Hazard dam which requires the dam to pass the flow rate from 250% of the 100-year event. NHDES is currently undertaking rulemaking where NHDES is proposing to change the 250% of the 100-year event to the 1000-year event. The public may refer to NHDES's website and the State's rulemaking register for the status of such proposed rule changes and the opportunity to comment on those changes. See also Response to Comment C10.1. There are also other impacts to mobile home residences and the Kingston Road bridge, which require modification or removal of the dam. more detail is provided in Section 2.6 of the Feasibility Study. See also Response to Comment C21.1.
C22.1	3/18/2024	Bob Dudra	"Based on the report the best alternative is to remove the dam. It is not only less costly but the benefits to the environment, fish, and general health of the river are all positive. The recent removal of the downtown dam in Exeter has demonstrated the benefits of doing this action."	Thank you for your comment.

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C23.1	3/18/2024	Ann Dillon	"As an Exeter River abutter in Brentwood, I am strongly opposed to the removal of the Pickpocket Dam. The river area provides a habitat for fisher cats, deer, turkeys, possum, raccoons, otters, beaver, turtles, herons, ducks, geese and fish. It is why we purchased this piece of land 25 years ago and built our family home here. Lowering the river would cause harm to these creatures, our views and our enjoyment. It would also destroy or impeded the beautiful skating, kayaking, canoeing and other recreational opportunities the river allows. Exeter may not feel the impact but those of us upriver will be negatively impacted. There has always been a great sharing and synchrony between our towns. It is hard to believe that Exeter would apply for a grant to destroy this dam without full consideration of Brentwood's residents and river lovers. "	Under the dam removal alternative, the area would continue to provide habitat for the same species. Please refer to Section 3.9 of the Feasibility Study for additional information about the change in recreational opportunities.
C23.2	3/18/2024	Ann Dillon	"Has Brentwood applied for a grant to help with costs?"	Exeter is unaware of Brentwood applying for a grant to help with costs associated with the Pickpocket Dam.
C24.1	3/19/2024	Mike Porreca	"Will the Town of Exeter be pursuing a variance with the State and Federal Governments on this 1000 Year Storm benchmark?"	See Response to Comment C21.3.
C24.2	3/19/2024	Mike Porreca	"Will the Town be reconsidering a practical approach to solving the problem that utilizes a combination of solutions identified in the Consultant's analysis to minimize risk based on science and practical information like a One Hundred Year Storm benchmark."	The Town of Exeter is following the New Hampshire Dam Bureau safety regulations.
C24.3	3/19/2024	Mike Porreca	"Is anyone addressing the impacts of the dam breach considering this history of pollution in the immediate area?"	Yes. See Section 3.6 of the Feasibility Study.

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C25.1	3/19/2024	Barb Swasey-Keir	"More thought should be put into how this New Hampshire Historical spot could be preserved. A teaching moment along with the Independence Museum and Gilman House. How Exeter became the important Revolutionary War Capital with its various industries at Exeter and Pickpocket Falls. Down river we have Powder Mill Rd where powder was produced for the militia and adding to the importance of our rich history making Exeter a destination history lesson. Pickpocket Dam is a historical marker for the future to be reminded how we got here with our freedoms from the past. Save Pickpocket Dam."	Potential impacts to above-ground historic resources and archeological resources will be addressed in the Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act, review process.
C26.1	3/19/2024	Sheila Roberge	"I am in favor of removing the dam."	Thank you for your comment.
C26.2	3/19/2024	Sheila Roberge	"I would like to urge the River Advisory Committee to take a trip to the Tucker French Forest in Frement and see how the mill remains have been treated and also the historical significance of them. It would be great to have the remains at Pickpocket Dam treated in that way with signage."	Thank you for your comment and we will take it under advisement. See also Response to Comment C25.1.
C26.3	3/19/2024	Sheila Roberge	"The Pickpocket Dam was also an area with a lot of Native American history such as the trail that went along the river used by local tribes as they went to their winter camps. (…) So signage recognizing the Native Americans would also be great. "	See also Response to Comment C25.1 and Comment 36.8. An archeological investigation was completed with the Feasibility Study (Section 3.8) and further investigation will be done in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
C27.1	3/20/2024	George B. Hussey, Jr.	"I am adamantly opposed to removing the Pickpocket Dam and feel that there are other alternatives."	Dam modification alternatives are presented and evaluated in the Feasibility Study.
C28.1	3/20/2024	Karen Prior	"… I believe returning the river to its 'natural state' [via dam removal] is important not just from a funding perspective but also from a wetlands and wildlife perspective".	Thank you for your comment.

Comment #	Date	Commenter	Comment	Response
C28.2	3/20/2024	Karen Prior	"I think one thing we need to remember is that while the current dam has been in place for a very long time, … there was once a time when there was no dam. A time when Native Americans lived in the area … Let us not just honor the 'white folk' who lived here but let us honor the history of those who settled here long before we arrived."	Thank you for your comment.
C29.1	3/20/2024	Karen & Tom Gregory	"We fully support removal of the Pickpocket Dam as soon as reasonably possible. Dam removal, resulting in a free-flowing river that functions naturally, is important for water quality, flood risk mitigation, and ecosystem health. Dam removal is the only genuine course of action with respect to historical restoration for natural history and original human use.These benefits of dam removal would be worthwhile even if removal was a costly endeavor that increased the taxpayer burden. That removal is actually the most fiscally prudent option, due to grant funding opportunities and lowest ongoing maintenance costs, presents the irrefutable case for dam removal."	Thank you for your comment.
C30.1	3/21/2024	Melissa Paly, Conservation Law Foundation	"For economic, ecological, climate resilience, and long-term historical reasons, I urge the Town of Exeter to approve Alternative 4 to remove the Pickpocket Dam. "	Thank you for your comment.
C31.1	3/21/2024	Theresa Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission	"The Exeter-Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee's (ESRLAC) mission and concern are always for what is in the best interest of the river. The Comittee has reviewed the Draft Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study and ESRLAC members have participated in public meetings about the Study. ESRLAC has reviewed and discussed the report and finds it was well thought out and well presented."	Thank you for your comment.

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C32.1	3/21/2024	Amanda Giacchetti	"As a resident of Exeter, I believe the removal of this dam would be more beneficial than it would be harmful for several reasons. I believe the removal of the dam and restoration of the river would help reduce flood risk in our changing environment, where flooding is becoming more common. I also believe the removal would help restore the natural function of the Exeter River and improve water quality conditions, as well as ecosystem health, as it converts to a free-flowing system. Removing the dam also seems to be the most cost-effective for towns and its taxpayers."	Thank you for your comment.
C33.1	3/21/2024	Dale Pike	"As a recreational fisherman, and a member of multiple organizations... seeking a healthier Great Bay watershed, I would urge the removal of Pickpocket Dam. Removal of Exeter's downtown dam has been a huge success that the town can be proud of. Removal of this dam would build on that success."	Thank you for your comment.
C34.1	3/21/2024	Jaye Garnett	"223 people signed my petition [to save Pickpocket Dam]. Please see the link below."	Thank you for sharing the petition.
C35.1	3/21/2024	Catherine Edison	"I oppose the actions taken by the Town of Exeter Select Board, which allowed the River Advisory Committee (RAC) of the Town of Exeter to apply for a NOAA Grant to remove the Pickpocket Dam completely in order to improve fish passage on the Exeter River. The RAC did not engage or contact or inform stakeholders or property owners or the community about this NOAA grant, and applied for $2MM to remove the dam entirely without talking with Exeter or Brentwood residents beforehand. This process of changing our town without engaging a full conversation on the impacts to the environment, the loss of this historical piece of Exeter, loss of	See Response to Comment C21.1, C21.3, and Response to Verbal Comments 1 – 2. The Feasibility Study discusses the potential impacts and benefits of dam removal and the modification alternatives on the cultural resources, recreational activity, wetlands, and wildlife.

Comment #	Date	Commenter	Comment	Response
			recreational activity, the loss of wetlands, wildlife, and more Is UNACCEPTABLE. "	
C35.2	3/22/2024	Catherine Edison	"The Exeter River has been a reservoir within Brentwood and Exeter for over 100 years. The Pickpocket Dam dates back to the 1600's and has been a low-risk dam until recently when the rainfall numbers changed due to the impact of climate change."	The impact of climate change was not a consideration when NHDES reclassified the dam as a high-hazard dam. NHDES follows its own rules and regulations when classifying dams.
C35.3	3/23/2024	Catherine Edison	"The members of the Friends of Exeter River (which The members of the Friends of Exeter River (which includes Brentwood residents) agree that this process needs to be SLOWED DOWN and reviewed with ALL stakeholders prior to any decisions being made on dam removal."	See Response to Comment C21.1 and Response to Verbal Comments 1-2 In addition, the Town of Exeter has been in contact with the Town of Brentwood and invited them to attend the public meeting and River Advisory Committee meetings. The Town of Exeter received a letter from the Town of Brentwood on March 27th, 2024 requesting involvement in all current and future discussions relating to the decision of how to address the deficiencies associated with the Pickpocket Dam.
C35.4	3/24/2024	Catherine Edison	"In October, the River Advisory Committee posted a long list of questions during its meeting – these questions were on a piece of paper that ran floor to ceiling practically, and yet none of these questions have been answered due to limited time and another group meeting which followed this RAC meeting (they "needed the room".) Why aren't there multiple meetings scheduled in the town	See Response to Comment C21.1.

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			hall as there were for the community impact discussions re: the Great Dam?"	
C35.5	3/25/2024	Catherine Edison	"There are FEMA grants available to modify and repair dams, vs. complete removal. This covert action on the part of the Town of Exeter is unfair to hundreds of taxpayers, abutters, and their friends and family who enjoy the river, the dam, and all that it brings to this community. No abutters to this day had been contacted by the Town of Exeter on this issue."	There are several available grants to help partially cover the cost of a dam modification process outlined in Section 4.1 of the Feasibility Study. See also Comment Response C21.1 and C21.3 and Response to Verbal Comment 1-2.
C36.1	3/21/2024	Daphne and Antoine Allanore	"As a neighbor of the Pickpocket Dam, I am deeply concerned about the decision to remove it due to its impact on the upstream ecosystem: Erosion caused by the dam's removal will pose a significant risk to many adjacent properties, compromising their safety."	Under the dam removal alternative, it is estimated that there will be a small increase to river velocities within certain sections which could increase the potential for erosion. Any potential negative impacts from erosion will be further evaluated to avoid, minimize, and mitigate during the detailed design phase and permitting phase. Section 3.2 of the Feasibility Study provides additional detail related to the hydraulic findings of the alternatives.
C36.2	3/21/2024	Daphne and Antoine Allanore	"The removal endangers species such as the spotted turtle, which may struggle to survive in the altered environment."	Sections 3.9 through 3.12 of the Feasibility Study provided a discussion of the existing ecosystem present in the impoundment, including wildlife, fisheries, wetlands, rare species, and invasive species, as well as the probable effects on these natural resources that could result from dam removal. See also Response to Comment C16.1.

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C36.3	3/21/2024	Daphne and Antoine Allanore	"Invasive plant species (Smilax, a climbing vine) currently contained, will proliferate in the newly exposed areas, disrupting the local ecosystem."	Please see Response to Comment C6.1 and C6.2. The potential spread of invasive species is a factor that is being considered in the Feasibility Study. However, we note that all of the several species of *Smilax* observed in the northeast are classified as a facultative or facultative-upland species. *Smilax* spp. is typically found in open or disturbed areas but is infrequently observed in wetland or riparian areas - which is the habitat expected to develop in the majority of area exposed if the dam is removed.
C36.4	3/21/2024	Daphne and Antoine Allanore	"The shallower waters resulting from the dam's removal will be unable to sustain current fish populations, further destabilizing the ecosystem."	The fish species present within the impoundment prefer flowing riverine habitats. Restoring this section of the Exeter River to a natural river state will improve habitat conditions for fish populations which will in turn improve the overall health, biodiversity and resilience of the river ecosystem. See also Response to Comment C4.1.
C36.5	3/21/2024	Daphne and Antoine Allanore	"Without the body of water, the cooling effect it provided will be lost, exacerbating heat and drought conditions in the summer, leading to fire risks."	Any minimal cooling effect provided by the impoundment is localized within the impoundment (i.e., it does not extend to uplands). The impoundment itself does not reduce potential fire risks. The heat absorbed by the water stored in impoundment increases water temperature, which has negative impacts on aquatic species.
C36.6	3/21/2024	Daphne and Antoine Allanore	"Tourism and recreational activities, such as canoeing, yearlong fishing, hunting, will disappear, and the resulting swamp-like environment will create ideal conditions for mosquito breeding, impacting public health."	Under the dam removal alternative, existing recreational activities will not disappear. More detail about the changes to recreation are provided in Section 3.9 of the Feasibility Study. Dam removal will restore the natural free and unobstructed run-of-river flow and re-establish a healthy river ecosystem. An unobstructed river results in faster moving water, not stagnant water, minimizing the conditions for "ideal" mosquito breeding. Additionally, dam removal has been shown to come with an increase in the diversity of the species including those that prey on mosquitoes.

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C36.7	3/21/2024	Daphne and Antoine Allanore	“In the past, there was contamination by heavy metals due to industrial landfill activity on Crossroad. Over the years, the contaminated waters seeped into the Exeter River upstream of the dam. With the shallowing waters resulting from the dam's removal, these contaminated soils will be exposed to the air once again. This will lead to a fresh exposure of contaminated soils to the open environment, to wildlife, and to residents.”	Soil testing both upstream and downstream of the dam was completed as described in Section 3.3 of the Feasibility Study. Testing demonstrated that neither pesticides nor PCBs were present in any of the sediment samples. PAHs and metals were detected in all the samples, however the ecological resource risk for these contaminants is considered low for the upstream sediment samples and moderate for the downstream sediment samples. Regardless, much of the sediment upstream of the immediate impoundment area will be excavated and disposed of as part of the channel reforming. Accordingly, the potential for any adverse to the ecosystem is low.
C36.8	3/21/2024	Daphne and Antoine Allanore	"Unraveling the riverbanks could disturb Native American remains, necessitating costly archaeological excavations and involvement from appropriate authorities."	An archaeological investigation was completed as part of the Feasibility Study, see Section 3.8 of the Study for more detail. A Phase 1B Intensive Archaeological Investigation will be conducted to determine the extent of the Pre- and Post-Contact archaeological resources within each of the two identified archaeological sensitive areas. See also Response to Comment C25.1.
C37.1	3/21/2024	Beverly Barney	“The Dam has provided family outdoor enjoyment for the 62 years I’ve lived here. (...) To take it down is wrong and uncaring. It would have been great if we had been notified about removing it. Perhaps money could be raised to pay for repairs???”	Please refer to Section 2.8 of the Feasibility for estimated costs of each alternative.
C38.1	3/21/2024	Kristie Monge	“As a Brentwood resident who uses the Exeter River for kayaking upriver of the Pickpocket Dam, I want to voice my support for the removal of the dam and restoring the natural river.”	Thank you for your comment.

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C39.1	3/21/2024	Scot Calitri	"I chaired the Free The Oyster River group (Oyster River Conservation Alliance) when the Mill Pond Dam in Durham was needing action. Pickpocket has a very similar situation in that it is a local decision that impacts all our Seacoast and beyond. I know of no local dams that serve a real productive purpose and removing dams is likely the best action we can take for our local waters. The key reasoning [includes 'save taxpayer dollars', 'improve water quality', 'reduce risk of flooding', restore ecosystem health', and respect indigenous history']."	Thank you for your comment.
C40.1	3/20/2024	Zak Robinson, Coastal Conservation Association of NH	"...CCA NH strongly supports the removal of the Pickpocket Dam. The proposed removal would continue the process of restoring habitat that is critical to our native diadromous fishes. Great Bay and its tributaries serve as nursery for a myriad of marine species of extreme ecological, economic, and recreational importance. It provides an environment, which if kept healthy and vibrant, is integral to the New Hampshire seacoast region's continued economic growth and continued practice of cherished cultural traditions."	Thank you for your comment.
C41.1	3/21/2024	Zak Robinson, Rising Tide Anglers	"While this particular dam does provide habitat and recreational opportunities, the habitat is not ideal for native fishes and similar recreational opportunities exist nearby. The lack of dissolved oxygen behind the dam does not support the cold water diadromous species that were native to these drainages before the dam was built. Removing the dam would create an opportunity for the restoration of many species, and also allow the natural passage of diadromous fish. "	Thank you for your comment.

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C42.1	3/22/2024	Michael E Massicotte	"My ask in this comment is to merely take the time to look at other alternatives other than the destruction of this mainstay that has been here and appreciated in our community since 1652. In this regard, I would argue that the vote to just remove the dam is shortsighted, not factoring in the dramatic impact to the landowners abutting the river in Exeter and Brentwood who have treasured the beautiful waterfall and access point safely provided by this structure."	The Feasibility Study assesses the impact from multiple alternatives as described in Section 2 and 3 of the Study. Although Dam Removal has been identified as a preferred alternative, the Town has made no decision of an acceptance of a grant.
C42.2	3/22/2024	Michael E Massicotte	"To reiterate, my main ask here is to slow down with this rash decision and properly allow the Exeter and Brentwood community to be informed on what this dam removal would mean. It would be appreciated by all to be informed transparently with what this dam removal means along with the safe and viable alternatives that would preserve what we have all been accustomed to enjoying its environmental splendor."	See Comment Response C21.1 and C21.3 and Response to Verbal Comment 1-2.
C43.1	4/4/2024	Patrick Seekamp	"If the dam is removed completely and the impoundment is drawn down, I believe an effort should be made to canvass the draw down area from the Haig Road bridge downstream to the dam to identify any significant patches of invasive species in proximity to what will initially be an exposed mudflat along the river. Every effort should be made to seed/re-vegetate those areas in proximity to the invasives quickly so that nearby invasives do not get a foothold along the exposed mudflat until native wetland vegetation can become established."	See Section 3.13 of the Feasibility Study, which summarizes several techniques for controlling invasive species. Also see Response to Comment C6.1 and C6.5.

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C43.2	4/4/2024	Patrick Seekamp	"There was/is a population of Redfin pickerel *(Esox americanus)* located in the area of the old impoundment above the Great Dam. Has any sampling been done on the current fish populations in the impoundment above Pickpocket Dam to determine if among other species, Redfin are found there now? An important (and useful) study should be done to see if Dam removal will expand the range of this primarily coastal stream species, or what effect dropping the impoundment will have on the resident fish populations and species diversity once the dam is removed if that is the preferred alternative. "	No fish sampling has been completed specifically for this Feasibility Study analysis however, we will take the comment under advisement for potential future phases of the project. The NHFG has plentiful data on fish populations within the Exeter River. For redfin pickerel (RFP), there are records of this species upstream of the Pickpocket Dam in Brentwood, Fremont, Chester, and Sandown. The Brentwood RFP records are from 2019, while other records of RFP upstream of the dam are as current as 2022. We acknowledge that under the dam removal alternative, the aquatic habitat area immediately upstream of the dam would narrow. But what would be lost in impounded width would be offset with the increased upstream habitat accessibility resulting from the removal of the existing barrier to aquatic organism passage. In this way, dam removal is expected to expand the range of many fish species currently present within the Exeter River.
C43.3	4/4/2024	Patrick Seekamp	"In a related note; many studies are done prior to dam removal and models developed to forecast/ anticipate vegetation communities changes, hydrology changes, fisheries changes etc. as a result of dam removal. I think that follow up studies need to be done (maybe tap into UNH for some possible help) to see how well these predictors panned out after dam removal and the river environ reverts back to more natural flow characteristics."	Scientists at the University of NH and Dartmouth College, among other institutions, have included long-term studies of several NH river systems in their research programs on dam removal. (See, for example, the work of the Dr. Frank Magilligan at Dartmouth.) In general, the town would support engagement of resource agency or academic scientists to measure the effect of dam removal.