



Randolph Dam Removal Project: Third Branch of White River



Randolph Dam in 2015



Brown trout failing to jump Randolph Dam

Project overview: The Randolph Dam is located on the east side (downstream) of the Main Street Bridge in Randolph village on the Third Branch of the White River. The dam is a complete barrier for spawning trout; removal would open up 98 miles of cold-water habitat. Removal would also open the Third Branch main stem to paddling, and improve flood resilience for the businesses located at the old Foundry on Prince Street. Ripple Natural Resources, a local engineering firm, is designing the removal. In fall 2015 the Randolph Selectboard voted to unanimously support the project. The White River Partnership will work with American Rivers/The Nature Conservancy, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Greater Upper Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited to remove the dam in summer 2016.

This site has had a dam since the late 1800's, supporting first a mill that produced spruce butter tubs, then later a foundry that produced farm equipment. The original dam, as well as the gristmill dam immediately upstream, were damaged in the spring flood of 1925. A new log and crib dam was constructed at the location of the old gristmill dam (just upstream of the bridge). Two years later, the dam and the bridge were destroyed in the 1927 flood. The bridge was rebuilt, but the dam was not.

The current structure, located at the approximate site of the original foundry dam, is a 5-foot-high log crib dam faced with sheet pile and a partial concrete cap along the left bank. Post-1927 photos of the area clearly show no dam at this location. Research shows that the current dam was built sometime in the 1940's to provide scour protection for the post-1927 bridge pier. That bridge was replaced in 2007, so the scour protection provided by the dam is no longer needed.

Project funders: Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Davis Conservation Foundation, Trout Unlimited/Embrace-A-Stream, Vermont Watershed Grant, Greater Upper Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited/White River Open