



## OTTER GOES OVER THE DAM

Talbot Mills Dam Updates

Happy Fish at Talbot Mills Dam

March, 2023

Talbot Mills Dam Removal news and updates from [OARS](#).



## PERMITTING



The project review process commences with filing an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) under the [Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act \(MEPA\)](#). The State-level MEPA process is for information-gathering to check that all relevant environmental information is in hand. The ENF will be filed with MEPA in May.

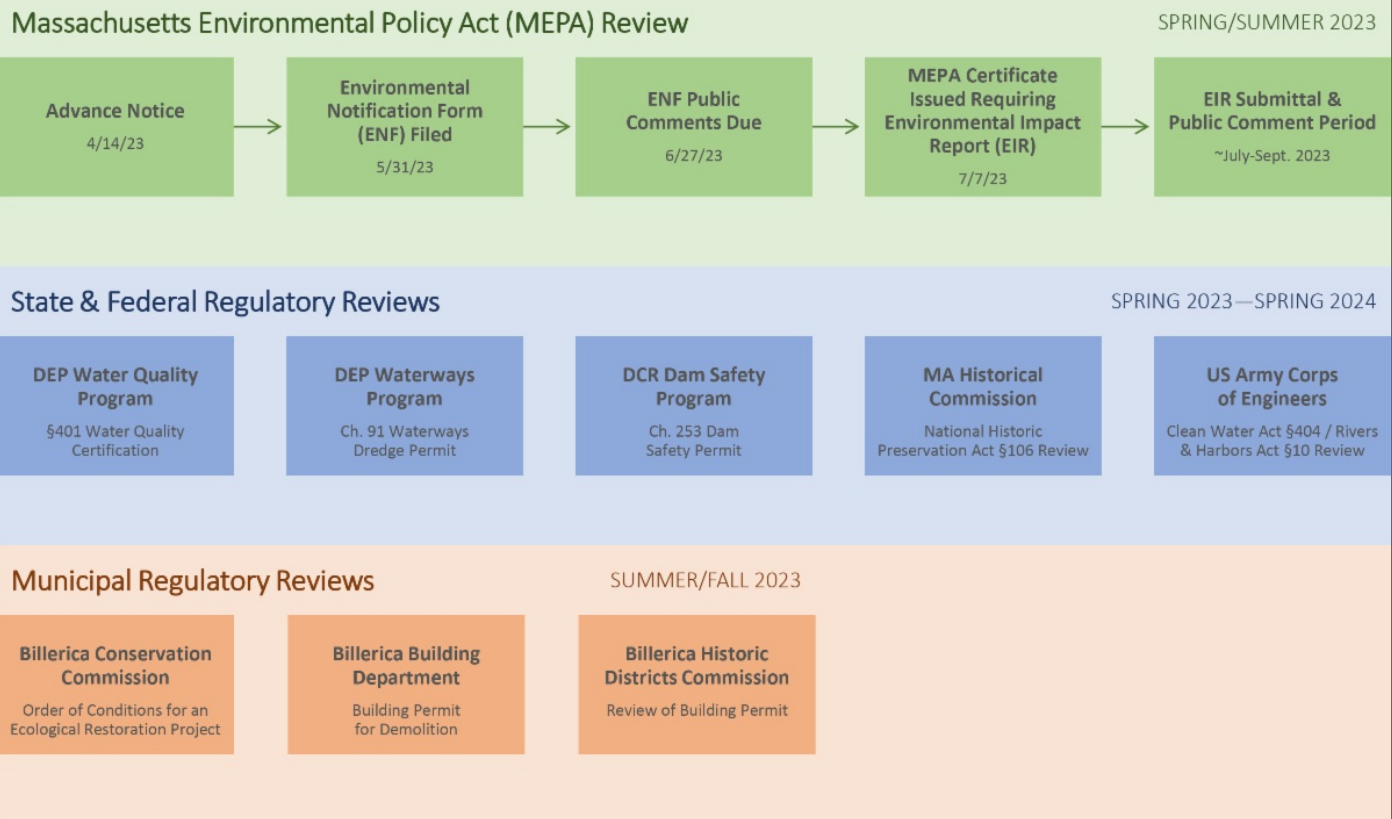
### HAPPY FISH

*“The MEPA review process provides meaningful opportunities for public review of potential environmental impacts of certain projects for which certain actions by state agencies are required. It requires state agencies to study the environmental impacts of projects requiring state permitting, financial assistance or land disposition, and to use all feasible measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate damage to the environment or, to the extent damage to the environment cannot be avoided, to minimize and mitigate damage to the environment to the maximum extent practicable.”*

A public Hearing and Site Visit will be scheduled by MEPA with a notice in the [Environmental Monitor](#), and comment letters are welcome. A Secretary’s Certificate is issued following the review process.

**Here is the full permitting process:**

# Talbot Mills Dam Removal Regulatory Review Timeline



## Informal Presentations

The project team updated the Billerica Planning Board and Conservation Commission on the project's progress and answered questions. These were not hearings but offered to provide open and transparent communications as the process goes forward. The project will come before the Conservation Commission for permitting under the Wetlands Protection Act and Billerica Wetlands Protection Bylaw after the state and federal-level reviews/permitting and historic consultations are completed. A recording of the Planning Board meeting will be added to the project website when available. OARS is also making informal presentations to various community groups.

## Funding

The US Fish and Wildlife Service [announced a grant of \\$800,000](#) for the removal of the Talbot Mills Dam, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law:

*“The dam removal will benefit blueback herring, river herring, American shad, American eel, sea lamprey, spotted turtle, and wood turtle. The Talbot Mills Dam has been cutting off native fish migrations since the 1700s. Major restoration work has been ongoing for more than 20 years by federal, state, non-profit, and municipal stakeholders to improve the water and habitat quality of the Concord River after more than 200 years of disruption. This is the largest dam removal ever in Massachusetts, opening 135 miles and 740 acres of habitat, including 260 acres of lakes and ponds, spawning, rearing, and thermal refugia habitat for native fish species. This dam removal will reduce flooding, improve water quality, and improve recreational boating.”*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS!

The updated FAQ is now available in four languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Khmer. Please share these translations with people who may find them helpful.

[FAQ: English](#)

[FAQ: Portuguese](#)

[FAQ: Spanish](#)

[FAQ: Khmer](#)

## THE LONG ARC OF HISTORY

From the receding glaciers to today, interactive maps and illustrations tell the fascinating story of the Concord River and the Talbot Mills site.

[VISIT THE STORYMAP](#)

## SIGN-UP for UPDATES

Stay informed, sign up for project updates, and share it with friends and neighbors.

[SIGN-UP for UPDATES](#)

[READ MORE ABOUT THE DAM](#)

## QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?

Reach out to any of the project contacts below:

[Alison Field-Juma,  
OARS](#)

[Eric Hutchins, NOAA](#)

[Jane Calvin, Lowell  
Parks and  
Conservation Trust](#)

The logo for OARS (Office for the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers) features the word "OARS" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below the text are several horizontal lines of varying lengths, some solid blue and some dashed, creating a stylized effect.

FOR THE ASSABET SUDBURY & CONCORD RIVERS

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