



# The Future of Eagle Dam

## Building Climate Resilience in Wrentham

**Eagle Dam is a crumbling, functionless earthen dam with a concrete and stone spillway on Eagle Brook in Wrentham, MA.**

According to 2012 and 2022 inspection reports, the dam is in poor condition and poses a flood hazard to surrounding communities due to its deteriorating condition and the presence of several large trees growing on top of the dam.

In 2019, the Town of Wrentham investigated the feasibility of breaching or removing the dam, and both options were deemed feasible. Now, a second phase of the feasibility study will look at the downstream flooding impacts of breaching the dam and further community outreach.

*The study is being conducted by the Town of Wrentham, Charles River Watershed Association, and engineers from Weston & Sampson.*

### TIMELINE

- 1600s records of Atlantic Salmon migrating from the ocean to Eagle Brook
- 1700s Whiting family built a dam with a grinding mill at the current location of Eagle Dam
- 1878 Dam experienced a catastrophic collapse and flooded Norfolk
- 1968 Eagle Dam failed again due to tree rot
- 1972 Eagle Dam remained breached
- 1977 Army Corps of Engineers reports "Eagle Dam is in such disrepair that it is no longer functional" remains breached
- 2000s Eagle Dam breached and amateur unauthorized repairs made to spillway
- 2018 Town of Wrentham listed Eagle Dam as a hazard in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness planning report
- NOW Evaluation of options for the future of the dam



### Degrades Stream Health

When dams are constructed, they disrupt the natural ecology of the river. Eagle Dam degrades water quality-- creating a slow-flowing pond where pollutants can accumulate, water temperatures rise, and oxygen levels drop-- causing invasive species growth, severe cyanobacteria blooms, and devastating fish kills. Eagle Dam also blocks aquatic passage, limiting fish habitat space to eat, find refuge and mate.



### Financial Cost

Eagle Dam has significant operation, maintenance, and liability costs that the Town of Wrentham is required to pay directly out of the town's budget. As long as the dam is in place, the Town is under strict liability for any damage or injury caused by dam failure. Instead, dam removal is a one-time cost, and one covered by numerous state and federal grant programs for dam removal and stream restoration.



### Susceptible to Failure

In its current condition, Eagle Dam is a liability. If the dam failed during a severe storm, downstream flooding could damage homes, businesses, cranberry bogs, and critical infrastructure including Route 140. With increasingly intense storms due to climate change, dam failure is an even greater concern.

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## Ways to Get Involved!



### Attend an Event!

Join us to learn more about the future of Eagle Dam! Bring your friends, family, and neighbors to discuss the benefits of dam removal and river restoration.

 608 Franklin Street, Wrentham, MA

### Winter Eagle Dam Tour

Saturday January 21, 2023, 10 AM  
Storm Date: January 28, 2023 10 AM

### Spring Eagle Dam Tour

Thursday April 13, 2023, 5:30 PM  
Rain or Shine



### Share Your Thoughts!

We want to hear from you, your friends, family, and neighbors about what you think about the future of Eagle Dam.

TAKE THE SURVEY >>> [bit.ly/eagledam](https://bit.ly/eagledam)



### Learn more!

Learn more about Eagle Dam by visiting our website, [www.crwa.org/dam-removal](http://www.crwa.org/dam-removal)

**Removing Eagle Dam offers the opportunity to create climate resilience, restore the Eagle Brook ecosystem, improve water quality, create wildlife habitat, and new recreation opportunities.**

### The Numerous Benefits of Dam Removal

- Improved habitat connectivity for fish and wildlife
- Restored river ecosystem and water quality
- Restored floodplain and floodwater storage
- Elimination of hazard potential of dam failure
- Freedom from dam maintenance and liability costs for the Town