

**From:** Diane Freedman <Diane.Freedman@unn.edu>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 06, 2022 10:55 PM  
**To:** Michael Behrendt <mbehrendt@ci.durham.nh.us>  
**Subject:** letter to all members of the Conservation Commission

February 6, 2022

Dear Jacob Ritzer, John Nachilly, Colleen Fuerst, Mary Ann Krebs, Walter Rous, Erin Hardin Hale, Roanne Robbins, Carden Welsh, and James Bubar

I have thought long and hard about the views expressed by members of our community and outside consultants and agencies about the fate of the Mill Pond Dam. I have read all commissioned reports and made thirty years of my own local observations as well as read widely in the literature of nature. Here is a part of my conclusions.

It is NOT the right thing to do to remove the Mill Pond dam. Above the Oyster River is the largest part of the highest rated wildlife habitat in New Hampshire, with at least 119 different species of animals (fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds—including the threatened northern leopard frog) and the open water, open space on which these species depend is a place where so many for so long have relished nature-watching, walking, skiing, skating, icebiking, snowshoeing, reaching contiguous trails, and kayaking and canoeing.

The open water will go away if the dam is removed. What will remain will be mud flats, a very shallow and very narrow stream (trickle or nothing), groves of glossy buckthorn (picture to come of how it grows when water is replaced by turf). The 119 species will suffer or expire there—as well as in the small bit of Oyster River itself that will remain, significantly more narrow and shallow itself, after dam removal. This impact includes endangered and threatened plant species (star duckweed, dwarf spike rush, and giant burr reed above the dam, including seaside brookweed and easter grasswort just below the dam) along with the northern leopard frog. The American eel (a species of “special concern”) is also doing well

Ironically, the two species mentioned by those in favor of dam removal, Alewives and blueback herrings, are not endangered or threatened, though of “special concern,” and—according to biologists and observant others who have been watching what happens when our specific dam has been opened in the past—will NOT be better off: Alewives need the still waters of a pond for their spawn, while the only area left for bluebacks will be above Thompson lane, as they need running water—but just when they need pools, late summer, the pools will be too shallow. The dam above ours, the UNH dam, will still exist, and there are sometimes scores of days no water passes over it into the lower river.

So much and so many are lost without our dam. Far better to clean up town and campus sources of pollution, release more water over the UNH dam and/or install a fish ladder or notch, shoring up our dam with ...

Why risk it all for but two species not likely to have their lots improved when we have so much fecundity now, including of endangered and threatened species and OTHERS of “special concern”?

These are but some of the reasons I plan to vote YES on article 2 on March 8 in Durham. I so appreciate the opportunity to share my findings.

Sincerely,

Diane P. Freedman  
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