

DAM RECONNAISSANCE QUESTIONS

The following are issues to note when visiting a dam and assessing the site for possible removal. This list is not meant to be exhaustive and it is not necessary to answer every question. The list will help to paint a picture of the project for you and also for others who may not have visited the site. Some of the questions will be answered during a site visit. Other questions are “desktop” questions which may be answered through research or looking at aerial photos or maps. “Windshield” questions are those you might answer by driving in the area of the dam to understand the context of the surrounding land and use. We recommend printing a copy and then answering any relevant questions in a separate notebook, or whatever format you prefer.

Take a few pictures:

- The front of the spillway looking upstream
- Looking downstream from the spillway
- The impounded river/lake upstream

Dam questions. Overall describe the dam

1. What material is the dam? (concrete, wood, stone, earth)
2. Size
 - a. Approximate height and width of the spillway (the portion that water flows over)?
 - b. Approximate height and width including abutments or earthen sides?
3. Overall condition of the dam? Any obvious issues?
4. Is there a lake or pond-like impoundment or is it more of a widened river?
5. Are there any associated buildings?
 - a. Mill or hydro-electric station?
 - b. Is there an open raceway or pipe?
6. Is the dam actively in use? What use?
7. Other notes about the dam structure

River Questions

8. River gradient. Steep gradient with riffles and pools? Slow moving?
9. What is the downstream sediment like? Large cobbles? Sand? Silt?
10. What is upstream sediment in the impoundment like? Large cobbles? Sand? Silt?
11. Does it look like sediment is impounded behind the dam?
12. Does it look like a healthy river? Any evidence of fish or wildlife?
13. Other notes:

Adjacent Infrastructure

14. Are there adjacent retaining walls or buildings that would be impacted by a removal or need to be removed?
15. Are there roads near the dam or along the impoundment that might be impacted by removal?
16. Upstream bridges that could be within the impounded reach of the river?
17. Note other issues.

Impoundment questions

18. Original and current use of the impoundment? Drinking water supply, industrial water supply, fire suppression, etc.
19. Any known recreational use associated with the dam or impoundment? Boating/fishing/other.
20. Is there a lot obvious sediment impounded upstream? Any plant growth on the sediment?

Desktop/Windshield Survey Questions

21. Upstream land use. Farms/city streets/industrial area
22. Any additional recreation uses in the area that could be impacted good or bad by a dam removal?
23. Is the dam known to have historic significance?
24. Do we know if people like the dam?

Desktop questions about the project benefits

25. How many upstream river miles will be reconnected?
26. How many miles to the next downstream dam or barrier?
27. Do we know anything about the quality of the river habitat in this area?
28. Species known to be present in the river.
29. Species that would benefit from dam removal.