



Framework for Lowhead Dam Removal Decision-Making

-derived from a publication by the ODNR-Division of Water-
<http://www.ohiodnr.com/water/dasaftey/default.htm>

The following are general questions that any potential section 319(h) applicant should consider prior to and while preparing an application for section 319(h) grant funding for a dam removal project. Additional information that may be applicable to dam removal projects is available in the Ohio EPA Technical Guidance Sheet: **Permitting Checklist for Stream Restoration Projects**:

General Considerations & Information

1. Where is the dam located, including the city or township and county?
2. What is the stream or river name in which the dam is located?
3. What type of dam is it—what materials is it made of?
4. How tall (high) is the dam—how long (wide) is the dam?
5. When was the dam constructed?
6. Why was the dam constructed? (flood control, old mill works etc)
7. Who currently owns the dam? Include their name, address and telephone number if it is available. Have the owners of the dam provided permission to remove the structure?
8. What group is coordinating the efforts to remove the dam?
9. Who are the major stakeholders involved in the discussions? Who are the primary local, regional, state and/or federal political stakeholders? Have they been informed of your plans so that they may provide informed answers to any constituent questions they may receive?

Structural and Safety Considerations

1. Does the dam fall under the Ohio Dam Safety Program? If so, does the dam currently meet dam safety standards?
2. Is the dam a current safety hazard to the public, such as boaters, canoeists, kayakers or anglers? Have there been any drownings at this dam site in recent years?
3. Is the dam vulnerable to breaching or any other type of structural failure due to aging or inadequate maintenance?

Environmental Considerations

1. Are there likely to be problems associated with contaminated sediments behind the dam if the dam is removed?

- a. What data has been collected on the sediments in the dam pool upstream from the structure to be removed?
 - b. What (if any) analysis has been completed on contaminated sediments?
 - c. What analysis should/could be done to assess accumulated sediments?
2. Should the dam be removed in phases to allow exposed sediment to stabilize or can the dam be removed in one phase?
3. Will removing the dam cause sediment to move downstream and create off-site problems?
4. How will previously inundated areas behind the dam be restored and/or stabilized following removal of the dam?
5. Will there be hydrologic impacts to the stream channel following removal such as stream bank or stream bed erosion?
6. What time of the year would be most appropriate for removing the dam?
Consider items like safety, weather and biological issues such as fish & mussel spawning, high-flow periods etc.
7. How will removing the dam help to achieve the desired watershed restoration goals?
8. Will removing the dam require alternative flood control measures to be formulated or implemented?
9. Can any identified adverse effects be addressed by modifying the dam without fully removing it.
10. What are the probable environmental benefits that will be accomplished by removing the dam? How would leaving the dam where it is hinder achieving watershed restoration goals?

Legal & Administrative Considerations:

1. What existing environmental permits are likely to be needed prior to removing the dam? Who would complete the work associated with obtaining the necessary permits and how much would this work cost?
2. Is the dam more than 50 years old? If so, how will compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act be assured?
3. Who is the local Ohio EPA district office representative, Ohio Department of Natural Resources representative and/or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contact?

Social & Economic Considerations:

1. Do residents in the area use the area around and behind the dam for recreation such as boating, fishing and others?
2. How will dam removal affect aesthetic values in the area for individual property owners within the general area? Will removing the dam have a perceived (or real) effect on area property values?
3. Is the dam named after someone famous in the local area? Is it a namesake to a local village? Will removing the dam offend someone within the community?
4. Are there historical values to the dam or the impoundment behind the dam?

5. What are the long and short-term costs of maintaining the dam in its present location? Who is financially responsible for maintaining the dam and insuring that it meets current Dam Safety requirements?
 6. What questions are likely to be raised by the public when they become aware of plans to remove the dam?
 7. What plans should be made to involve the public in the decision-making process? Are there local officials who may play important roles in easing public concerns to removing the dam?
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This guidance document is provided to assist applicants for Section 319 grants with planning consideration for dam removal projects. The information is provided as general reference only—project managers are encouraged to contact any agencies which may have regulatory jurisdiction over such a project. Additional assistance may be available by contacting:

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
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614-644-2020

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