
Hudson Valley Stream Conservancy

Sprout Brook Dam Removal

Courtland, New York



The removal of an obsolete dam improves diadromous fish migration and habitat in a tributary to the Lower Hudson River.

SERVICES

Dam removal
Fish passage
Stream restoration
Hydrologic & Hydraulic Assessment
Permitting
Sediment Sampling
Sediment Analysis
Sediment Management

Recognizing that the most effective way to restore fish migration is to remove a dam that has outlived its usefulness, the Hudson Valley Stream Conservancy (HVSC) sought to remove the obsolete five-foot-high Sprout Brook Dam. Located within a popular park, it is the first in a series of small dams along the Sprout Brook, a lower Hudson River tributary. HVSC turned to Biohabitats for help in removing the dam and restoring Sprout Brook to improve diadromous fish migration and habitat.

After meeting with representatives from the dam's owner, the Town of Cortland, Biohabitats conducted a detailed site investigation. This included geomorphic observations of the upstream and downstream channels, dam/weir measurements, identification of surface utilities and infrastructure that could be impacted by the project, impounded sediment probing, collection of sediment samples for testing, and the identification of any rare, threatened, or endangered species and potential historic and archeological concerns. Biohabitats then estimated the quantity of impounded sediment, conducted a hydrologic assessment and hydraulic modeling, and developed a plan to manage the impounded sediment—all of which has the potential for mobility post dam removal.

Biohabitats is preparing engineering design plans, permit applications, and an engineering design memorandum which includes a sediment management plan. The design emphasizes minimizing impacts to the river system and the surrounding park.