

RESTORING THE MOUSAM: A PRICELESS GIFT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS IN KENNEBUNK

It's time to recover a natural treasure right in our own back yard.

The Mousam is home to fish, birds and vital nutrients that flow to the Gulf of Maine. It's a place of beauty to paddle, walk, fish or just sit and watch the river flow the way it did 300 years ago...and can once again, with your support. *Read more...*

Are there really fish waiting to swim up above the where the dams are?

Seeing is believing. We've photographed hundreds of sea-run fish returning every spring to the short stretch of the Mousam below the first dam: American shad, blueback herring, alewives, American eel, sea lamprey, rainbow smelt, tomcod, sturgeon, and sea run trout.

Check out the river between Kesslen Dam on Rt. 1 and Rogers Pond in May and June. On an early morning

tide, you can see eagles and osprey feeding on alewives, commercial elver fishermen checking their traps, and shad breaking the surface of the water.

Imagine what a restored river might look like with a run of thousands of sea-run fish—as well as the herons, eagles, osprey, mink, otter, beaver and other species that depend on the river!

A young Kennebunker helps her dad with alewife restoration.

Alewives below the Kesslen Dam

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity we can't afford to miss.

Licenses for the three hydropower dams on the Mousam River in Kennebunk expire in 2022, providing a unique opportunity to remove these antiquated, expensive and destructive dams.

The Mousam and Kennebunk River Alliance is working to remove these dams in order to:

- Reconnect 13 miles of the River to the ocean;
- Open the river to native sea-run fish (see left);
- Improve water quality; and
- Restore the natural flow of sediment and nutrients between the upper Mousam and the tidal areas around Parsons Beach.

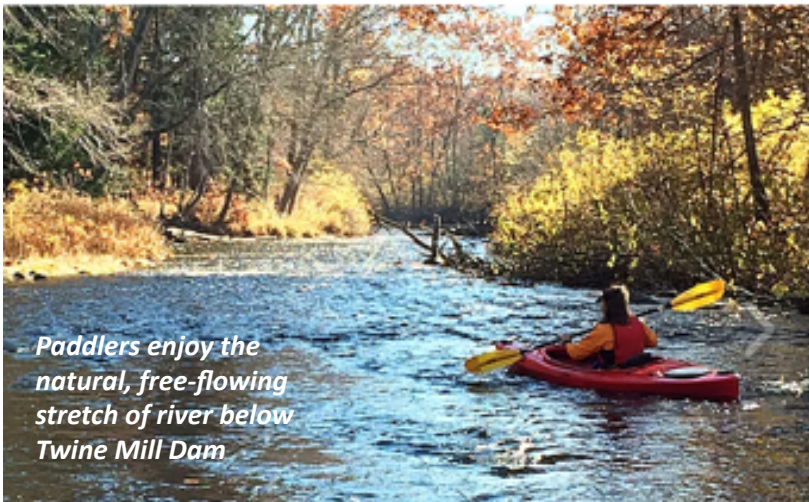
With the dams removed, the river will be re-born.

Vegetation will soon return to the exposed banks, sandy beaches will appear, and there will be new wetlands and upland habitat.

The Mousam will change, but it will remain a beautiful river with opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and swimming.



How would a restored river look? **Pretty much like this: amazing!**



Paddlers enjoy the natural, free-flowing stretch of river below Twine Mill Dam

For millennia, the Mousam River was connected to the Gulf of Maine, exchanging water, sediment, nutrients, and millions of migrating fish. This flow of life sustained native people and the early European settlers.

Then, over the last 300 years, the river's vitality was severely compromised by dams, industrialization, and pollution.

Now, pollution is mostly gone and environmental protections are in place. But the Mousam is still cut off from the Gulf of Maine. Removing the three Kennebunk dams will help restore this most vital connection of all!

Dams, Dams, Dams: What's the issue?

Kennebunk Light and Power District (KLPD) currently owns the three hydropower dams on the Mousam River in Kennebunk. The dams are old, with some of the equipment dating back to the 1920s, small and inefficient, require frequent repair, and produce less than 1% of the power used in the community. **They also have been losing money for ratepayers for many years.**

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is responsible for deciding if a new license for the dams will be issued. The Mousam is a public resource and FERC will assess the economic viability of energy production against the negative impacts on fisheries, water quality, and the environment. KLPD can actually purchase hydropower from the market for *much* less than it costs for the dams to produce it. Power from KLPD's new solar array will also cost far less.

For these and other reasons, KLPD has decided not to renew its license. However, an out-of-state firm, America First Hydro, has applied for a new license to continue to operate the dams for another 40 years, but without plans to provide fish passage, improve recreational amenities, or address water quality problems created by the dams.

There are 15 dams in the Mousam River watershed. People can debate how many we actually need, but we definitely can't afford these three. Removing them will open up the Mousam, benefiting birds, fish, wildlife and people...while saving all of us money.

Who is the Mousam and Kennebunk Rivers Alliance?

In 2008, a group of citizens from Kennebunk and surrounding communities got together to help restore and protect our rivers, which we believe are vital natural resources for our community.

We conduct water quality testing in both rivers, sponsor river clean-ups, and spearheaded an effort to restore alewives to Ward Brook and Alewife Pond.

Please support our efforts to remove the dams and restore the Mousam. Learn more at mousamriver.com or visit us on Facebook.

What about other dam removals?

Dam removal on similar rivers in the Northeast has shown amazing improvements in fisheries and water quality. Several hundred dams have been removed in our region, on rivers large and small. from the Kennebec and Penobscot rivers in Maine to the Exeter River that runs through the middle of Exeter, NH.

