

Pownal dam gets heave-ho

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POWNAL – As part of an ongoing effort to provide safe passage for fish within the 985-square-mile Casco Bay Watershed, the 200-year-old Randall Mill Dam in Pownal will be removed Friday.

The \$20,000 project is being spearheaded by two conservation groups, the Sebago chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, as well as input from Maine Rivers and the Royal River Conservation Trust.



The dam sits on the 35-acre property of Pownal Selectman Fred Fauver, who embraced the project, an unusual occurrence for a landowner, said Landis Hudson, executive director of Maine Rivers, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Maine's river systems.

“Fred was instrumental in making this happen,” said Hudson. “He reached out to a number of organizations.

Fauver could not be reached for comment by the Tri-Town Weekly's deadline Monday.

The dam is on Chandler Brook, the middle branch of the Royal River tributaries, and by removing the 20-foot-wide stone and concrete impediment, brook trout and other species of water life will have access to three additional miles of stream and to the Royal River's headwaters at Runaround Pond, said Steve Heinz, conservation chairman for the Trout Unlimited chapter.

Randall Mill Dam

A view from the stream of the Randall Mill Dam in Pownal, which is slated to be removed on July 26 to help provide safe passage for fish and other aquatic species within the Casco Bay watershed. The dam is located on the property of Pownal Selectman Fred Fauver.

“As fish get larger, they need to go downstream to where the more fertile waters are,” said Heinz. “When you've got something like the Randall Mill dam in the middle of the stream blocking the passageway, it makes the fish population there much less vital and abundant. The dam itself is non-functional and the only purpose it serves is to degrade the fish habitat.”

Fauver, who sits on the board of the Royal River Conservation Trust, was inspired to remove the structure after attending a meeting last year to hear discussions concerning the removal of two dams in Yarmouth, said Allen Stearns, executive director of the conservation trust.

“That was really the seed,” said Stearns. “Fred understood the impact he could have and put his energy into it.”

Fauver had toyed with the idea of repairing the dam and rebuilding the old saw mill on his property but the concept was not realistic, said Hudson.

Heinz, who plans to be on hand for the removal, said the dam will be removed by a construction company using heavy equipment, a process that is expected to take all day.