



Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Abandoned Dams Program Update

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Office of Dam Safety (MassDCR ODS) has jurisdiction over 1300 dams in Massachusetts. Dozens of those dams have been abandoned by their owners, requiring MassDCR ODS to use valuable resources to inspect, prepare reports for, and maintain these dams. In 2019, MassDCR ODS launched a pilot program to address six abandoned dams that were classified as significant to high hazard and in poor to unsafe condition. AECOM was retained to conduct a detailed investigation of each of the six dams, which are spread across Massachusetts, and to evaluate options for rehabilitating or removing each of the dams, with the ultimate goal of turning the property over to the local municipality and eliminating a public hazard. The goal of the pilot program is to not only address these six dams, but also to develop a standard approach and toolkit that MassDCR ODS can apply to other abandoned dams in the Commonwealth which pose a safety risk to the community and a burden to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. At the 2023 ASDSO conference, AECOM and MassDCR presented the progress made since 2019 regarding the program and the range of challenges encountered. This abstract proposes an update presentation regarding solutions identified at two of the six dams that are currently under construction – one of which was selected for dam removal and one of which was identified for dam repair. The presentation will also identify both the variety of challenges faced by different communities and settings as well as common themes that have been encountered and solutions implemented by the AECOM/MassDCR Team. Lessons learned that will inform MassDCR ODS's approach to the remaining four dams in the program as well as the other abandoned dams in the state will also be presented.