



TNC Free Rivers Accelerator and Massachusetts Acceleration Programs with Case Study

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The Nature Conservancy is working with state and local partners through the Free Rivers Accelerator to remove aging or unsafe dams. This initiative supports dam safety objectives by addressing high-liability structures while restoring natural flow and resilience. Key strategies include: (1) building a vetted project pipeline through engineering assessments and partnerships with dam owners; and (2) improving efficiency via permitting streamlining, sustainable funding, and inter-agency coordination. A Massachusetts case study will demonstrate how state dam safety programs and watershed partnerships are accelerating safe, science-based removals under new restoration-friendly regulatory frameworks.