

Paul & Sally Wells, Kennebunk, ME.

We write as homeowners in West Kennebunk whose property abuts the Mousam River. Specifically, our land lies just upriver from the third of the three dams on the Mousam that historically have been owned and operated by our local utility, Kennebunk Light & Power. As you are no doubt aware, KLPD has ceased utilizing the dams to produce electricity and our understanding is that they have made the decision to abandon the dams. This raises certain questions.

The fate of the dams has been the subject of much discussion and controversy here in Kennebunk in recent years. The chance to own some riverfront property was one of the big factors in our decision to purchase this particular lot. We greatly enjoy and appreciate the wildlife that the river attracts, and generally enjoy the riverine environment, but the impounded Mousam as it abuts our land is, in effect, an extremely slow-flowing lake, rather than a free-running river. Our laypersons' understanding of such things tells us that a free-flowing stream is a much healthier environment than a dammed-up one.

Native fish are one of the principal types of wildlife whose lives and life cycles are affected by the blockage of the dams. How KLPD intends to address this with the abandonment of the dams is unclear. Will the dams stay in place with no provision for fish passage? Or will there be some form of passage created? We understand that there are a few options for constructing fish passage, though any of them would require considerable expense, both to create and to maintain. More importantly, it would leave the impoundments in place, with all the issues relating to higher water temperatures and reduced oxygenation of the water that come with them.

Or will the dams be removed entirely, as has been done on other Maine rivers in recent years? This last would seem to us to be the best long-term solution, both in terms of expense and the overall health of the river environment. We fully realize that removing the dams would significantly change the river's ecosystem, but it is change that we, as abutters, would welcome.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Paul & Sally Wells

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