



January 5, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Second public forum planned on Mayo Mill Dam project

DOVER-FOXCROFT - The Town of Dover-Foxcroft and the steering committee for re-evaluating the next steps for the Mayo Mill Dam are inviting community members and interested parties to learn more about this initiative at a public forum scheduled for Thursday, January 25 at Central Hall Commons on Main Street in Dover-Foxcroft.

Doors will open at 5:30 with refreshments and socializing prior to a formal presentation at 6:00 p.m. by the Town steering committee. A question-and-answer discussion will follow, and public input on the project recommendation will be sought. The forum is expected to wrap up by 8 p.m. In the event of inclement weather, the public forum will be re-scheduled for Thursday, February 1.

Fifteen years ago, following the closure of Moosehead Mfg. Co., the Town of Dover-Foxcroft acquired the Mayo Mill Dam on the Piscataquis River, with hopes of restoring hydropower production to provide electricity to adjacent properties. The town worked with several firms to assess the costs and potential for generating electricity again, but no viable option emerged. The hydropower facility has been non-operational since 2008.

Now as the owner of the dam and associated structures, the town has to evaluate a new path forward to manage the aging dam structure while also meeting state and federal compliance regulations. In late 2022, Dover-Foxcroft partnered with Atlantic Salmon Federation, The Nature Conservancy in Maine, and Inter-Fluve, Inc. to complete a community-led feasibility study at no cost to the town. Funding for the study is provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries through the federal Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act.

Over the past year, the Town-convened steering committee has been meeting monthly with the partnership team and has gathered information to consider the present condition of the dam and powerhouse, to evaluate a series of options for them, and to make its recommendations to the Select Board based on that evaluation. For each alternative option, the committee has assessed a number of factors including flood control, dam structure, public access, fish passage, historic preservation, upfront and operation costs, constructability and life cycle costs.

After much consideration, the committee has unanimously arrived at a preliminary recommendation for the Select Board to consider the removal of the dam and add extensive landscaping to create a new and exciting gathering place for the downtown area. This public forum is to gain input on this preliminary recommendation prior to a final recommendation.

“We want our community members to be very familiar with this recommendation,” said Town Manager Jack Clukey. “The feasibility study alternatives and ultimate decision will reflect the values, visions and concerns of our community, so we’re inviting the community to come be a part of it.”

The January 25 event will feature a presentation with an overview on the status of the Mayo Mill Dam and associated powerhouse and fishway, compliance and regulation needs, and the Town’s steering committee decision-making process. A panel made up of the partnership team and steering committee members will then answer questions and capture feedback from the audience.

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Project Team members:

The Town of Dover-Foxcroft is the largest town with a population of 4,422, and the seat of, Piscataquis County.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation is an international non-governmental organization dedicated to conserving and restoring wild Atlantic salmon and their ecosystems.

The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends, and working across Maine to restore rivers and streams.

Inter-Fluve is an employee-owned small business that has been on the forefront of river and stream engineering, management, and restoration practice.