



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

CO-BENEFITS OF DAM REMOVAL: ECONOMICS, RESILIENCE & RESTORATION



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

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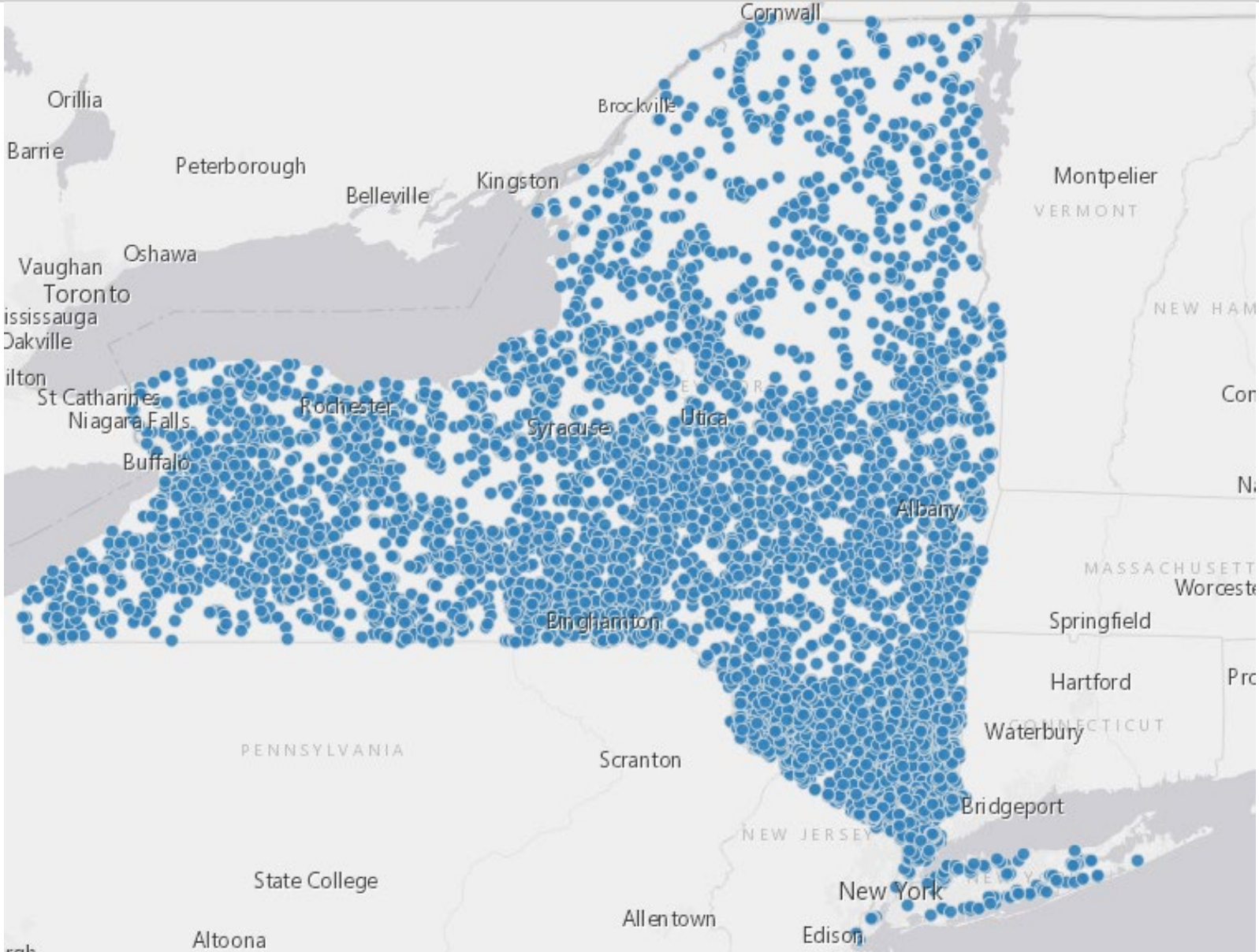
NEW YORK STATE
WATER RESOURCES
INSTITUTE

Little Salmon River Dams Information Meeting

August 24, 2026

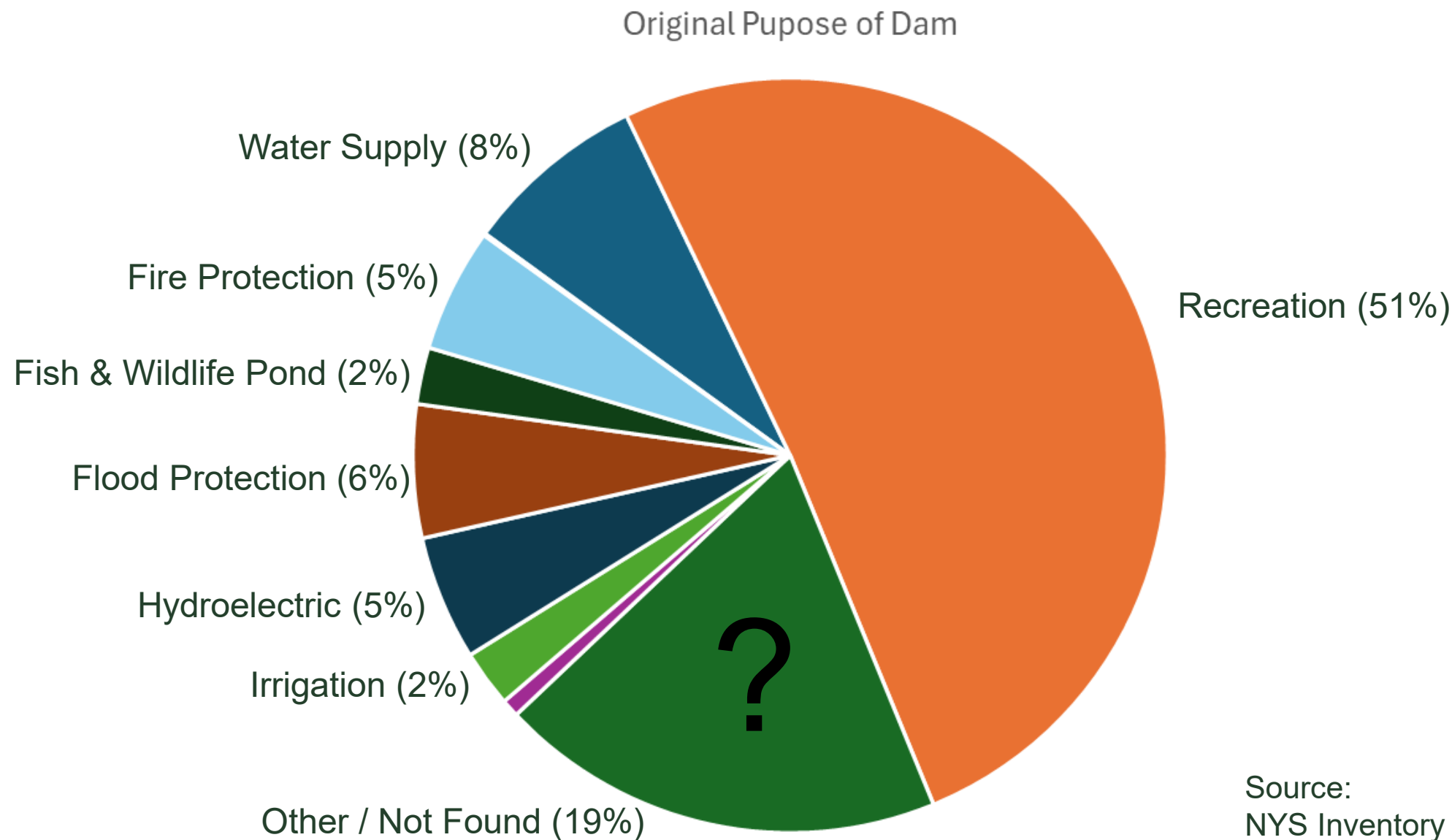
Photo: Emily Fell

THE DAM STATE



Source:
NYS Inventory of Dams

THE DAM STATE



Source:
NYS Inventory of Dams









CO-BENEFIT OF DAM REMOVAL

ELIMINATE FINANCIAL & LIABILITY BURDEN

Photo: Katie Schmidt

ELIMINATE OWNER'S FINANCIAL BURDEN & LIABILITY



Photo: Katie Schmidt

ELIMINATE OWNER'S FINANCIAL BURDEN & LIABILITY

Environmental Conservation Law § 15-0507

Dam owners must operate and maintain their dam in safe conditions at all times

Environmental Conservation Law § 71-1127

Owners who fail to comply ...may be subject to civil penalties

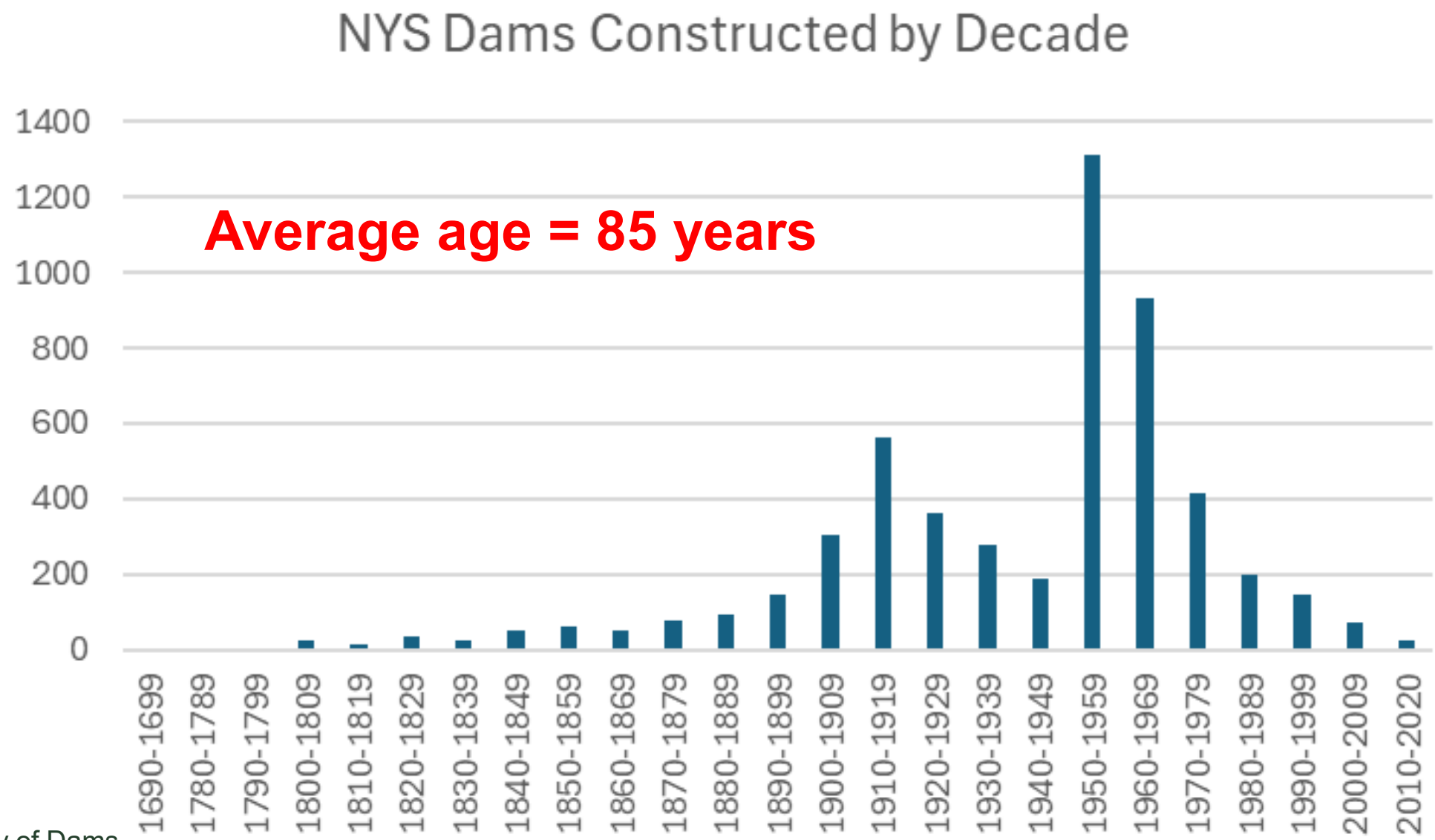
Photo: Katie Schmidt

ELIMINATE OWNER'S FINANCIAL BURDEN & LIABILITY

Stockwell v. Town of New Berlin (2010)

“Defendant are not relieved of liability if their dam failed due to **negligent maintenance or operation**, and this **failure resulted in water being released at a faster rate than would have naturally.**”

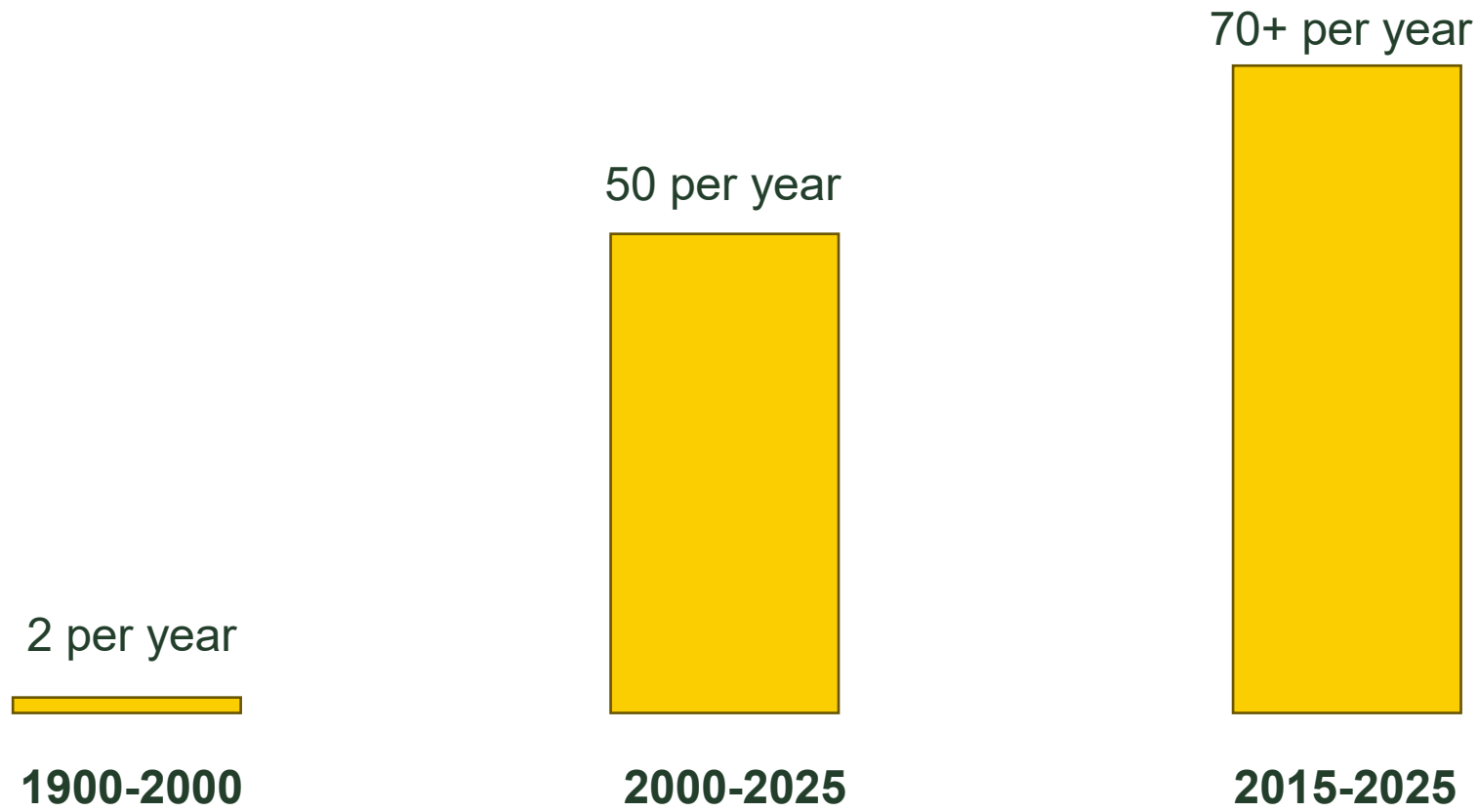
ELIMINATE OWNER'S FINANCIAL BURDEN & LIABILITY



Source:
NYS Inventory of Dams

ELIMINATE OWNER'S FINANCIAL BURDEN & LIABILITY

DAM SAFETY INCIDENTS



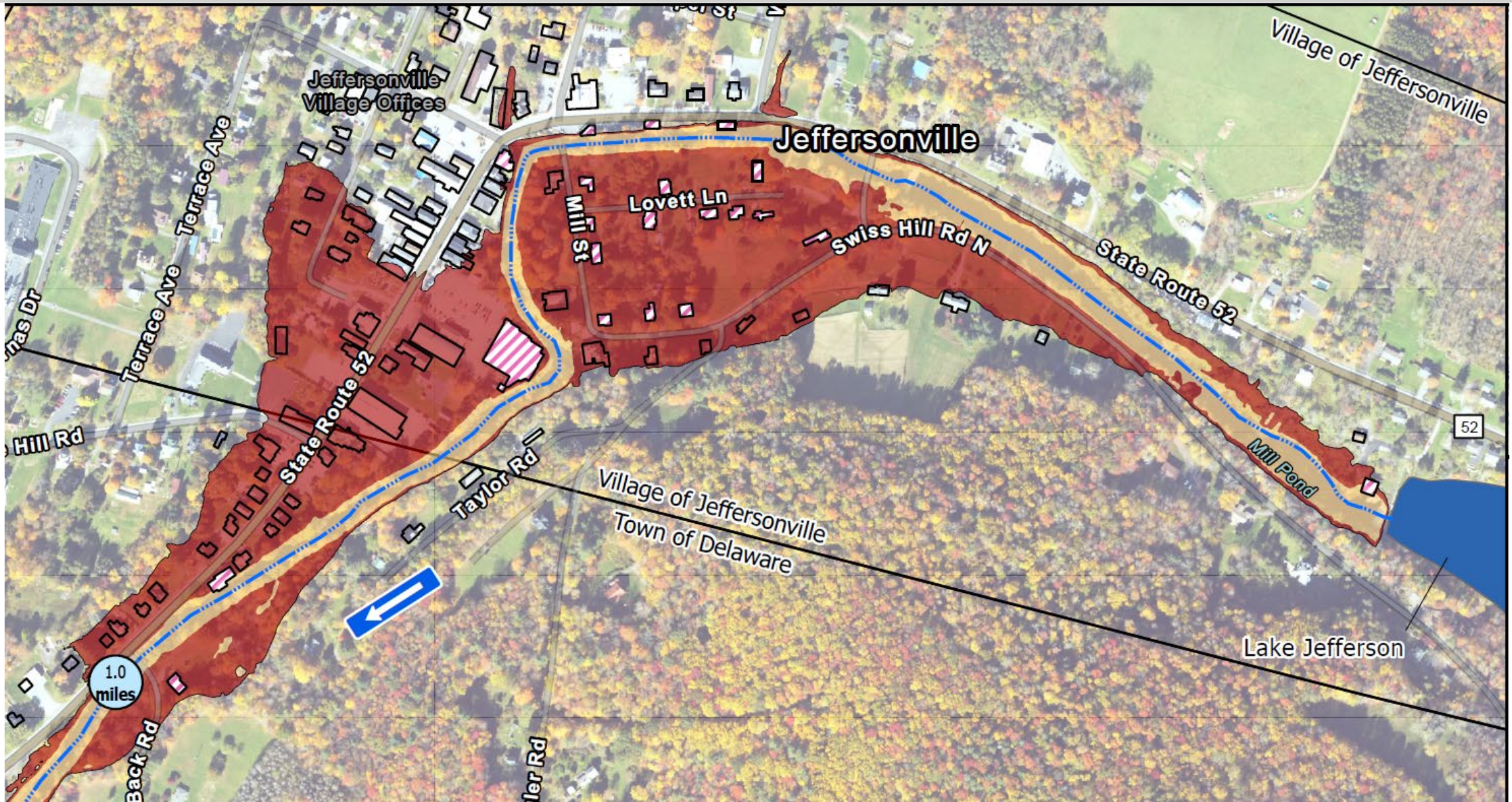


CO-BENEFIT OF DAM REMOVAL

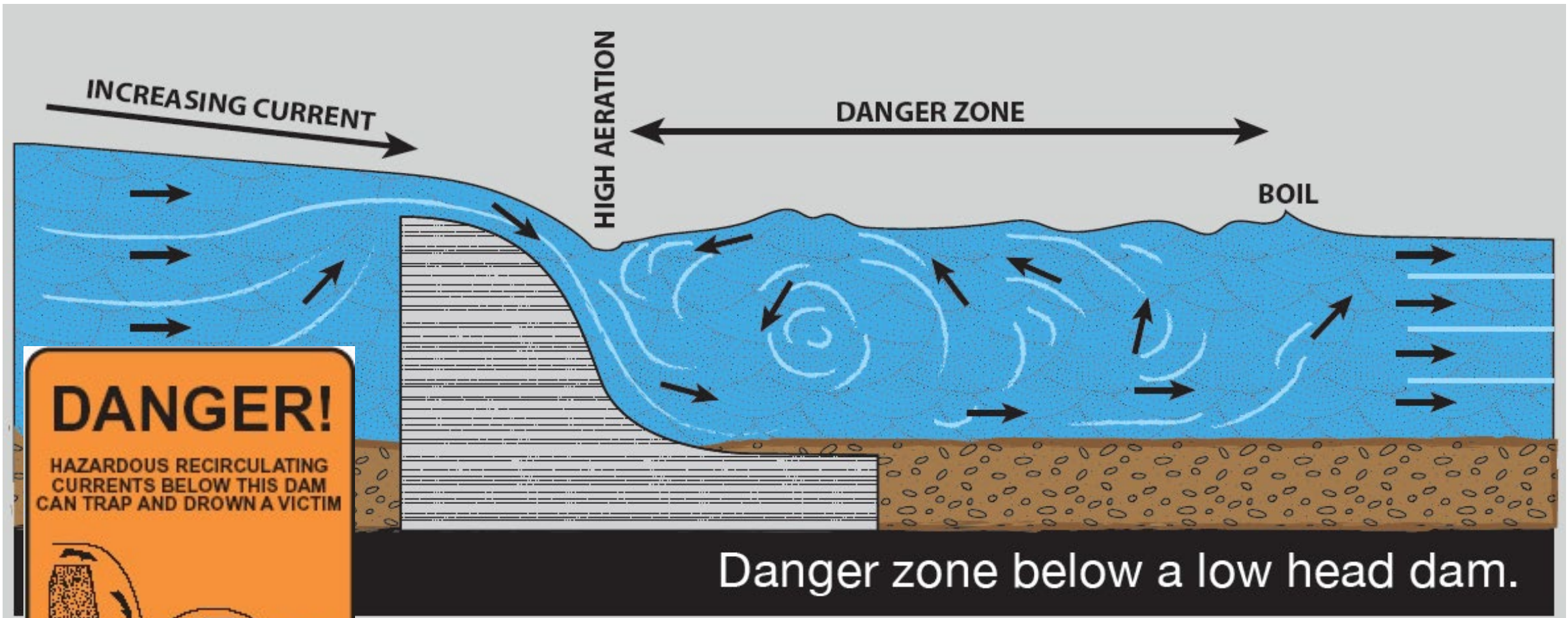
IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY

Photo: Katie Schmidt

IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY: FAILURE RISK



LOW HEAD DAMS: DROWNING MACHINES



50 deaths per year

* <https://www.asce.org/publications-and-news/civil-engineering-source/civil-engineering-magazine/article/2021/01/engineers-work-to-reduce-drowning-deaths-at-low-head-dams>

LOW HEAD DAMS: DROWNING MACHINES

DAILY SENTINEL

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24°

Kayaker drowns on icy Black River in Lewis County

Jan 18, 2024 0



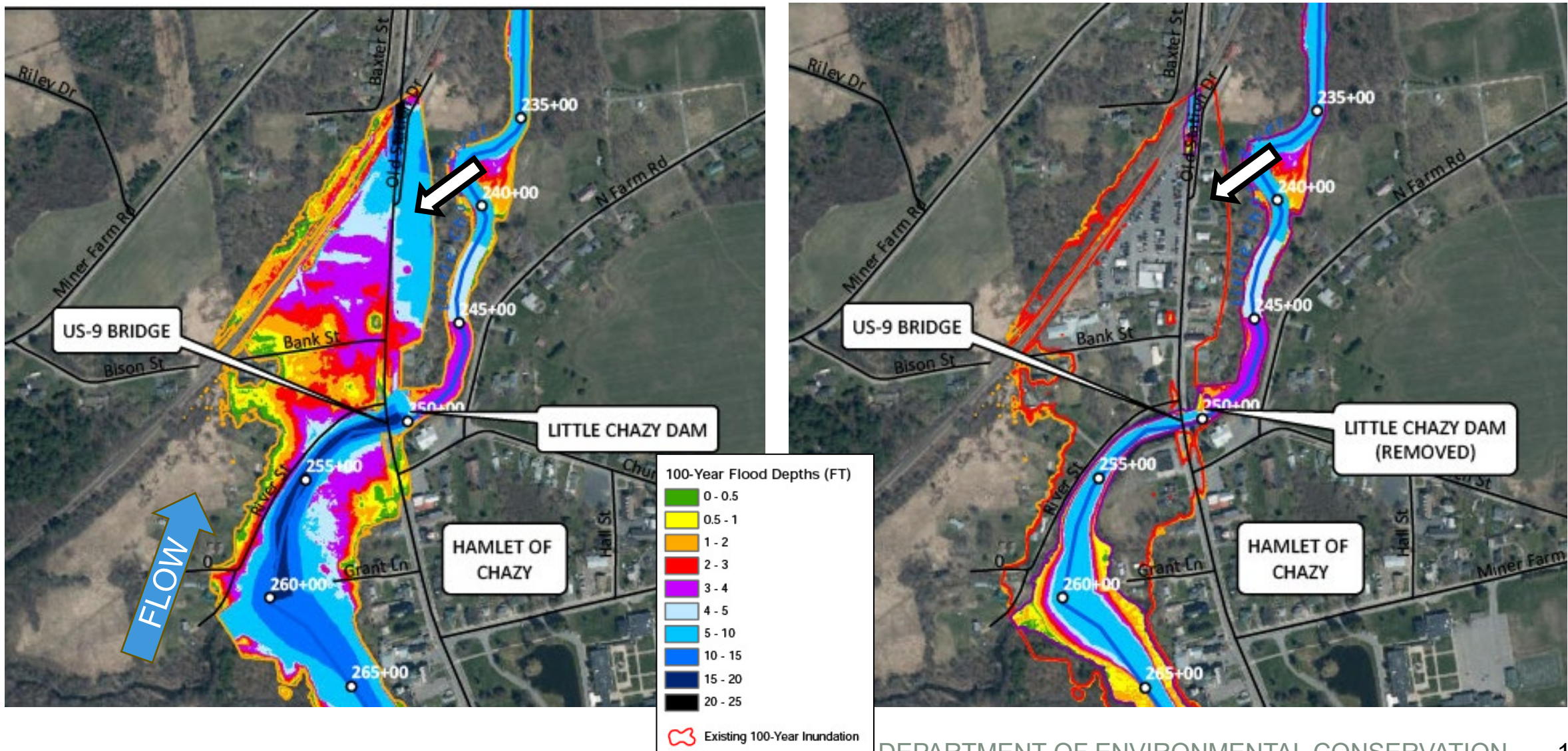


CO-BENEFIT OF DAM REMOVAL

**REDUCE FLOODING
AND BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

Photo: SLR

REDUCE FLOODING, INCREASE RESILIENCE



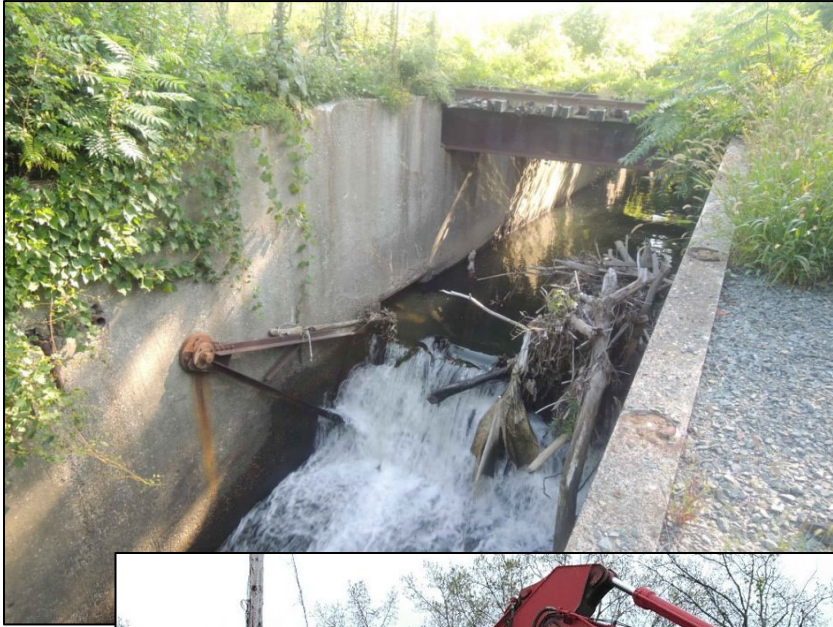


CO-BENEFIT OF DAM REMOVAL

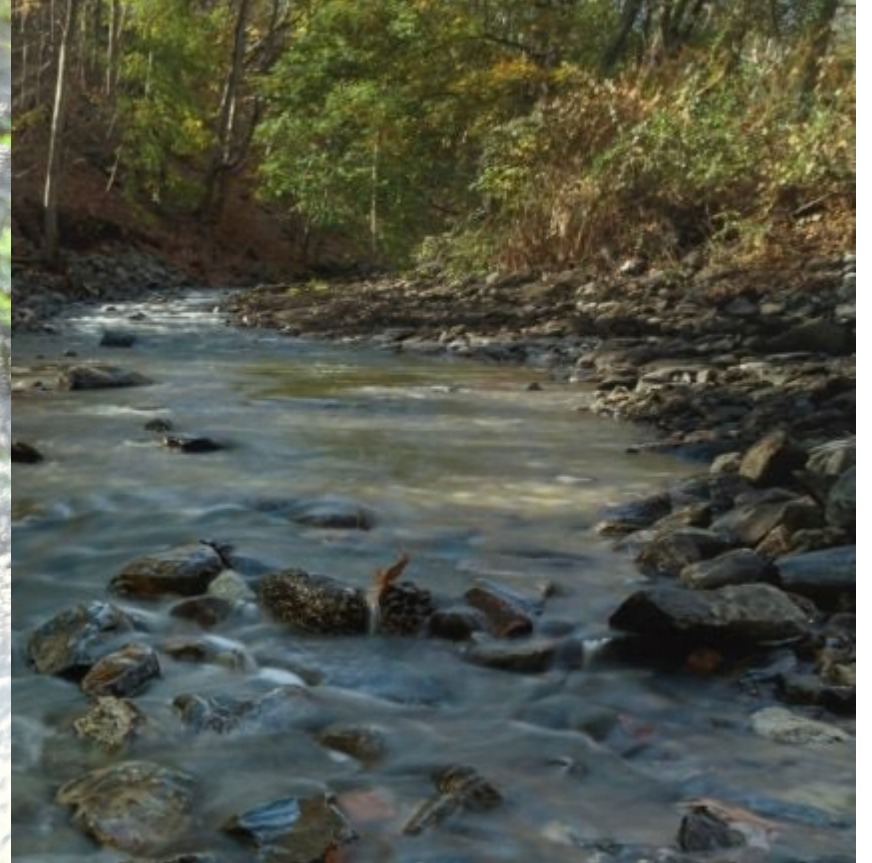
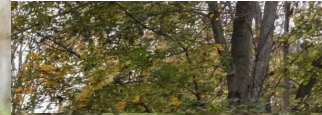
RECONNECT AND RESTORE RIVER ECOSYSTEMS

Photo: Riverkeeper

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION



ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION



ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION



Photos: Jeremey Dietrich

THE CO-BENEFITS OF DAM REMOVAL



No longer serves a beneficial purpose



Remove maintenance and liability burden



Improve public safety



Reduce flood risk



Restore river ecosystems



ENABLING DAM REMOVAL IN NYS

Photo: Tim Koch



COMING SOON



**DOCUMENTS ARE UNDER
CONSTRUCTION**

Thank you for your patience

IMPROVE INTERNAL COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

DEC Dam Removal Working Group

- Water
- Fish & Wildlife
- Permits
- Materials Management
- Environmental Remediation
- Marine Resources
- General Counsel



Sediment Assessment Field Training. October 2025.
Photo: Tim Koch 26

STATE FUNDING FOR DAM REMOVAL



- **DEC Resilient Watersheds Grant**
- **DEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP)**
- **DOS Resilience & Flood Risk Reduction**
- **FEMA/DEC High Hazard Dam Rehabilitation Grant**

THANK YOU!

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Photo: Tim Koch



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