



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
21 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0021

PATRICK C. KELIHER
COMMISSIONER

Nathaniel Tupper
Yarmouth Town Manager
200 Main Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096

RE: Royal River fishways

Dear Mr. Tupper,

We are writing regarding the fishways installed decades ago in the town-owned Bridge Street and Elm Street dams in the Royal River. It has come to our attention that there may be a public expectation that DMR is responsible for and would like to continue to operate these fishways in their current state. As you are aware, DMR is not the owner of these fishways but has limited rights to manage them under leases dated July 22, 1974 (Bridge Street Dam) and June 15, 1979 (Elm Street Dam). Both fishways were installed by DMR and for some period of time managed by DMR to support improved aquatic connectivity to benefit sea-run and other fish species. However, at the current time the fishways do not function properly. Even if baffles were replaced and repairs were made, the physical structures fail to meet current design standards for upstream passage of targeted species. We believe that costs to repair and time taken to maintain these structures would be of limited benefit to sea-run species. Given this situation, DMR would like to clarify that we do not recommend or intend on repairing or fixing the existing fishways in their current state.

As noted in our letter of November 06, 2018, DMR remains supportive of moving conversations forward related to connectivity in the Royal River and we would look forward to discussions with interested parties. The lack of upstream access and poorly designed fish passage at these sites has hindered the development of diverse fisheries, which historically included Atlantic salmon, river herring species and American shad, and could support improved recreational fisheries for the local community.

It is our hope that this clarification regarding the status of the existing fishways offers an opportunity to create community support to develop sustainable and long-term alternatives for improving river connectivity while meeting broad community needs. Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Sean Ledwin
Director
Sea-Run Fisheries and Habitat Division