

Town of Acton

Town Manager

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Town of Acton Begins Removal of River Street Dam



The Town of Acton has begun removal of the River Street Dam. (Photo Courtesy Town of Acton)

ACTON – The Town of Acton and Town Manager John Mangiaratti announce that the removal of the River Street Dam has begun, reaching a significant milestone in the

effort to improve safety in South Acton while preserving its industrial history.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's Office of Dam Safety determined in 2018 that the dam was structurally unsafe and would eventually need to be repaired or removed.

The Town secured about \$1.4 million in state funding toward the \$2.5 million project. Contractors began clearing and preparing the site, at 53 River St. on Fort Pond Brook, on Aug. 11. The last building was demolished in mid-August. Temporary cofferdams were set up, diverting the channel and allowing the dam to be removed safely. Removal began on Tuesday, Aug. 29.

The Town acquired the property, a 7.26-acre former industrial site, in 2017 following approval by voters at a Special Town Meeting.

Once the dam is removed, the brook will be reestablished and contractors will begin wetland replication and flood plain restoration.

Once additional funding is secured, the Town will then create a park that will serve as a focal point of the South Acton community, and commemorate the neighborhood's rich industrial history.

The South Acton Woolen Mill was constructed in 1845 as a sash and blind factory, and later became associated with the textile industry. During the Civil War the mill made blankets to be shipped to soldiers.

The Mill later produced wool shoddy, a type of recycled or reclaimed textile material; the plant later became known as the Shoddy Mill. It burned down in 1951.

The new park will retain the stone features of its industrial past, trails, trees, and continue to provide community access to the brook.

"The Town is grateful to the state for its support of this project, which will improve the South Acton neighborhood, and help protect the brook and its species," Town Manager Mangiaratti said. "Thank you to Conservation Agent Mike Gendron and the project team for its efforts in reaching this important milestone."

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