Heminway Pond Dam Removal Project
(Steele Brook – Watertown, CT)

THE PREQUEL
Photo Summary of History and Early Phases of Project

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Additional photos courtesy of: Chris Bellucci, Mike Beauchene, Steve Gephard & Chuck Berger

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Back in 2002 ...

The Town of Watertown, CT was considering acquisition of Heminway Pond Dam and impoundment offered by owner, Siemon Company ...

The Town was interested in removing the dam and using the drained impoundment area for public open space and recreation. Plans grew to include extension of the Steele Brook Greenway along the western border.

The Town acquired the dam and impoundment ... and began seeking funds to remove the dam ... and approached (then) CT DEP.
CT DEP’s Water Quality Monitoring & Assessment program had identified an impairment impacting aquatic habitat in Steele Brook, just downstream of the dam.

This impairment, due to iron, manifests itself during warm, low flow periods as an orange-colored flocculation in the stream.

Potential sources of this impairment include: industrial & municipal discharges, landfills, remediation sites and groundwater impacts.
Looking upstream at Steele Brook toward dam from bridge at Echo Lake Road
Summer low flow conditions with iron flocculation (August 2002)
Steele Brook during summer low flow conditions with iron flocculation (August 2002)
CT DEP’s TMDL program concluded the best way to address iron impairment would be to remove Heminway Pond Dam and improve flow in Steele Brook.

CT DEP decided to tackle the issue through its Nonpoint Source Management program and federal CWA 319 grant program. CT DEP contracted with USDA NRCS to work with the Town of Watertown to develop an EPA 9 Element Watershed Based Plan (FY06 $).

CT DEP’s Inland Fisheries program strongly supported dam removal which would also benefit fisheries by restoring stream habitat and connectivity.
In 2009, the Steele Brook Watershed Based Plan was completed which included an appendix entitled: Heminway Pond Dam Removal Feasibility Analysis
To assist the Town of Watertown in moving forward with removal of Heminway Pond Dam, CT DEP/(now) CT DEEP provided additional 319 grant funding to the Town for development of:

Heminway Pond Dam Removal Design (FY08 $)
and assistance with:
Permitting and Preparation (FY12 $)

The Town hired consulting firm, Princeton Hydro, to lead these projects. The Northwest Conservation provided education and outreach assistance.

The Town obtained permits from U.S. ACOE and CT DEEP.
U.S. EPA conducted Sec. 106 National Historic Preservation Act determination.
Meanwhile, the iron impairment persisted ...
Looking upstream at Steele Brook toward dam from bridge at Echo Lake Road (August 2016)
To make the project a reality ...

CT DEEP provided the Town of Watertown with a grant consisting of: 319 funds (FY13 $, FY14 $, FY15 $ & FY16 $) and State Supplemental Project Funds for: Heminway Pond Dam Removal ...

The Town retained Princeton Hydro to oversee the project and hired Dayton Construction Company to conduct the work.

Deconstruction of the dam and creation of the new Steele Brook channel through the former impoundment commenced July 2018.
Heminway Pond Dam was breached in July 2018...
... and the impoundment was slowly drained.
(Looking upstream towards east bank of impoundment)
As the impoundment drained, all upstream flow from Steele Brook was directed to a tributary along the east bank of the former impoundment.
Wooden plank staging was put in place along the western shore of the drained impoundment for access by heavy equipment. (Looking south towards dam and east bank, along section where new channel to be created)
Drained impoundment, just above breached dam, looking towards east bank
Looking upstream and slightly west at drained impoundment
Looking upstream at drained impoundment, toward east bank
Dam deconstruction underway (October 2018)
(It turned out to be a much wetter construction season than normal with many rain events ... )
Excavation of new Steele Brook channel underway in dewatered impoundment along western shoreline
(Looking south towards east bank and former dam)
The story continues ...

Creation of the new Steele Brook channel: “before” and “after” flow release ...

(See two mini-PowerPoint presentations previously produced ... )