AMERICAN FLY FISHING TRADE ASSOCIATION

AFFTA Statement on Dams

"Dams and river diversions have proven to be primary destroyers of aquatic habitat, contributing substantially to the destruction of fisheries, the extinction of species, and the overall loss of the ecosystem services on which the human economy depends. Their social and economic costs have also risen markedly over the past two decades" (Postel, BioScience, Aug 98, p. 636).

AFFTA believes many of our fisheries could benefit by moving from traditional dams to more environmentally and socio-economically friendly power and water sources. Not only would this improve habitat and fisheries throughout ecosystems worldwide, less harm would come to communities and cultures up and downstream.

U.S Statistics

- 90,000 – Estimated # of dams in U.S.
  - 2,540 - # that produce power
  - 72 - # removed in 2016

Benefits of Wild Rivers/Dam Removal

- Revive wild & sustainable fisheries and associated jobs
- Naturally filter and store clean water
- Restore coastal beaches & wetlands
- Reduce the impacts of floods
- Preserve some of the most important ecosystems on the planet
- Enable native plants and animals to thrive
- Preserve the cultures and communities dependent upon the river
- Provide amazing adventures, recreation and wildlife viewing
- Are home to some of the best fishing, boating, hiking and scenery anywhere

As of 2015 more than half of the Earth's major rivers have been obstructed with roughly 57,000 large dams. The consequences have been significant. These dams have wiped out species; flooded huge areas of wetlands, forests and farmlands; displaced tens of millions of people; and considerably reduced the resiliency of rivers and associated watersheds to disturbance.

Dams also have adverse effects on coastal and marine environments hundreds of miles downstream. Damns not only block water, they block and alter the transportation of riverine silt and nutrients. The result is degraded delta and estuarine habitats in many river mouths. Increased erosion and channelization, and increased salinity result in reduced and degraded nurseries for many species ranging from baitfish to top predators.

The world's large dams have completely altered the seasonal flow and rhythm of rivers and left the planet's freshwaters in far worse shape than any other major ecosystem type. Even small, low-head dams can impact streams and rivers. In response, dam-affected communities in many parts of the world are working to resolve the legacies of poorly planned dams. Elsewhere (and especially in North America), communities are starting to take down dams that have outlived their usefulness, as part of a broader river restoration movement.

AFFTA believes that as we support and transition to more efficient, modern energy sources like wind and solar, we will also need to push for removal of outdated and inefficient dams. Get involved by supporting removal of such a dam that is near to you or near to your heart. Some examples are dams on the Snake River, Rogue River and Penobscot River. There are many ways to get involved that range from things as simple as who you vote for to low-flow toilets and fixtures to the type of yard you plant around your house.

Do your part and support those whose beliefs align with yours. If you're not an AFFTA member please JOIN now. We will take the fight to both the local and national stage on your behalf.