

Craggy Dam Removal Project - April Summary

A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity for the French Broad River

A collaborative effort is underway to determine whether removing the 120+ year-old Craggy Dam in Woodfin, NC could deliver long-term public benefits while protecting the interests of the dam owner, Buncombe County Metropolitan Sewerage District (MSD), and the local community.

What's New

On March 18, 2026, the MSD Board took a significant step by voting to:

- **Move forward with investigating dam removal**
- **Pursue dual, independent valuation** — one by MSD and one by American Rivers
- **Direct MSD staff to support American Rivers' independent valuation effort**
- And, staff will **pause capital investments in the dam** while the potential sale and removal pathway is explored

Where Things Stand

The project is in an early, fact-finding phase. No decision has been made about removal. There is strong alignment on a key principle – MSD and American Rivers are 100% committed to an outcome that centers the best interests of MSD ratepayers.

What's Next

- **Complete valuation studies (Ongoing)** – MSD and partner organizations will learn what the dam is worth and whether a sale is viable.
- **Review results publicly (Fall 2026)** – Share findings and clarify tradeoffs
- **Determine next phase** – Decide whether to move into negotiations for purchase of Craggy Dam.

Craggy in the News

- [*Debate over Buncombe's Craggy Dam: Value, Cost, Benefit and Future in Doubt.*](#) **Carolina Public Press**, March 17, 2026.
- [*Environmental Groups Push for Removal of Craggy Dam as Debate Begins.*](#) **WLOS ABC 13**, March 11, 2026.

- [*Aging Craggy Dam Prompts Debate Over Repairs or Removal.*](#) **828 News NOW**, March 11, 2026.
- [*With Dam Removal on the Table, Tensions Flare Between Conservationists and Buncombe Wastewater Officials.*](#) **Asheville Watchdog**, March 10, 2026.
- [*Opinion: Removing Craggy Dam a Chance to Restore French Broad River.*](#) **Asheville Citizen-Times**, March 7, 2026.

Who We Are

The Craggy Coalition is a collective of nonprofit organizations and local partners including American Rivers, American Whitewater, MountainTrue, Riverlink, Sierra Club's WNC Chapter, and the Southern Environmental Law Center.

Why It Matters

The removal of Craggy Dam presents a rare opportunity to balance fiscal responsibility, public safety, environmental stewardship, and community resilience. If removal proves feasible and appropriately funded, potential benefits include the following:

- **Flood Risk:** The dam does not control flooding; removal would lower upstream flood levels and reduce risk.
- **Public Safety:** Removing the dam would eliminate a low-head dam drowning hazard.
- **River Health:** Reconnecting over 1,400 miles of waterways would restore habitat and natural river flow.
- **Community & Economy:** A free-flowing river could expand recreation, tourism, and riverfront opportunities.

Stay Engaged

- Want to get in touch? Contact the Craggy Coalition at craggy@americanrivers.org
- Keep learning more at www.craggycoalition.org