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RINDGE DAM REMOVAL

Project Overview

Photo: Bernard Yin

Rindge Dam Impacts the Ecology of Malibu Creek

- Built on the ancestral lands of the Chumash and Tongva Tribal Nations, Rindge Dam was constructed in Malibu Creek three miles from the coast in 1926 for local water supply.
- The reservoir behind the dam filled with sediment by the mid-1940s and became obsolete.
- Rindge Dam was decommissioned in 1967, and California State Parks subsequently purchased the dam and property.
- Rindge Dam has impounded 780,000 cubic yards of sediment, blocking natural transport of sand for beach nourishment to counteract erosion and climate change impacts.

Rindge Dam structure, impounded sediment area and key reference points.

Federal, state, and local partners studied dam removal alternatives.

- Congress commissioned a feasibility study in 1992 to evaluate options for removing Rindge Dam and restoring the Malibu Creek ecosystem.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and California State Parks led this effort, which proposes a Locally Preferred Plan that was built on local stakeholder input and technical studies.
- The result was a science-based Final Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR), which was completed in 2020.
- The next step is the design phase, which will lead to the implementation phase.

Group photo of USACE leadership and staff during a tour of the Rindge Dam project area in 2020.

Removing Rindge Dam will revitalize the Malibu Creek Watershed.

- Malibu Creek watershed lies within an ecological corridor that connects Santa Monica Bay with Malibu Lagoon and upland areas.
- Rindge Dam has altered the geomorphology and riparian character of the watershed and is a total barrier for migration of the federally endangered Southern California steelhead.
- Smaller barriers in upstream tributaries, such as culverts and bridges, also have impacted habitat connectivity.
- Removing the dam, reconnecting segmented habitat corridors, and restoring the natural hydrology of Malibu Creek will revitalize this ecosystem for fish, water, people.

The Locally Preferred Plan removes Rindge Dam and uses impounded sediment.

During the IFR study, multiple scenarios for dam removal were studied. The scenario selected by California State Parks, called the Locally Preferred Plan, will:

- Remove Rindge Dam's arch and concrete spillway;
- Remove or remediate eight smaller upstream fish passage barriers; and
- Remove 780,000 cubic yards of sediment.
- Approximately one-third of the sediment will nourish the Malibu shoreline and nearby areas. The remainder will be transported to a nearby landfill.

What's next?

The 2021-22 California State Budget allocates $12.5 million for California State Parks to advance planning, design, and technical studies leading to removal of the dam and removal or remediation of upstream barriers in the Santa Monica Mountains. Over the next four years, California State Parks will lead the design phase of this project.

2020
USCAE signed off on Integrated Feasibility Study

2021
Design Phase 1
Project structure, public outreach

2022
Design Phase 2
Technical studies, dam removal engineering, logistics, environmental permits

2025
Pre-construction
Site activities, contracting

2025+
Dam deconstruction

Learn More

Final Integrated Feasibility Report:
spl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Projects-Studies/Malbu-Creek-Study/.

California Trout's Rindge Dam webpage:
caltrout.org/campaigns/rindge-dam.

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