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## A dangerous low-water dam removed from Stillwater River

Goal is to return Englewood Reserve to its natural state

### LOCAL NEWS

By Doug Page

Sept 17, 2009



ENGLEWOOD — Some 80 years after it was built to promote river recreation, the low-water dam on the Stillwater River at the Englewood Reserve is gone.

Workers armed with heavy equipment removed the remaining vestiges of the dam last week as part of a \$1.5 million project to restore the river to its original state. Rather than create a pool in the river for fishing and boating, the dam became a silt trap and a killer.

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Since 2003, three people have drowned in the roiling waters downstream of the dam. The last were Craig and Patricia Wenner on Christmas Day 2006 when they attempted to save their puppy who had fallen into the swift waters. Craig Wenner had worked for MetroParks for 24 years and was the original project manager for the restoration.

A 2-foot-deep notch was cut in the 150-foot-long concrete dam last summer, along with bank restoration and work on nearby Englewood Lake, also choked with silt. The dam was to be removed this summer after the silt upstream of the dam settled.

Joe Zimmerman, project manager for Five Rivers MetroParks, said a dry spell was needed before removal of the dam could be completed.



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The company will be placing desk-sized riprap stones along the river banks between the former dam site and the huge earthen Englewood Dam.

In addition, the company will be checking on rock caissons upstream of the former dam site. Those structures halt bank erosion, curtail silting and provide riffles for canoeists and deep holes for fishermen, Dever said.

Over the decades, silt choked the river upstream of the dam and reduced the lake depth to less than 1 foot in places. Downstream of the dam, the small-mouth bass fishery is excellent. Upstream for more than a mile, fishing is poor to lousy.

Zimmerman said workers would monitor river and lake conditions to see if any adjustments are needed.

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