

1. **Habel et al. (2024)**. Dammed context: Community perspectives on ecosystem service changes following Poland's first dam removal. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ldr.5053>

Summary:

“The article explores how local communities perceived the removal of the Wilkówka Dam, a recently (2009-2012) built dam and the first one to be removed (2021-2022) in Poland. The study highlights the social perspectives of the dam removal, with a focus on ecosystem services and community engagement. The dam was removed urgently due to engineering failures occurred during its construction. Despite environmental concerns that justified the removal, many residents opposed the decision, feeling excluded from the process. The study underscores the complexities of dam removal, showing that communities often perceive such projects as resulting in a net loss of benefits. The authors emphasize the need for better communication and participatory decision-making when implementing similar projects.

Highlights & Conclusions

Lack of Community Involvement: 62% of surveyed households believed decisions were made without proper consultation. Removal of the dam was the only option presented to the public, and all the stakeholders involved in the process were solely national-level agencies.

Perceived Value of the Dam: Residents associated the dam with critical services such as water supply, flood regulation, and cultural significance.

Preference for Renovation: Many residents favored repairing or reconstructing the dam rather than removing it.

Loss of services: Despite the threat of a catastrophic technical failure, local community opposed the dam removal, because it was widely perceived as a net loss of benefits.

Perceived impact on the ecosystem: The removal of the dam was not perceived to be a positive intervention for the environment that could be beneficial for habitats and biodiversity.

Suggestion: Inclusive decision-making processes that integrate social, ecological, and technological factors to improve public acceptance of dam removal projects.

This is our own perception of the paper and does not necessarily reflect the authors' points and scope.”