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Readington Township in Hunterdon County comprises 48 square miles of land and streams in Hunterdon County. There are over 9,000 acres of mountain, forest, meadows, and streams that are currently preserved. In 2018 the township established a new goal to preserve an additional 3,000 acres of land by 2050, so 40% of Readington's land area would be fully preserved. In 2021, a Waterwatch Committee has been formed and a new goal identified to achieve DEP Category 1 water quality standards and protection in all Readington watersheds.

Our streams, the Pleasant Run, Holland Brook, Lazy Brook, Chambers Brook, the Rockaway, Lamington, and the South Branch of the Raritan are all key sources of drinking water for the Raritan basin and millions of NJ residents. These streams and their potential improvement in water quality, temperature and fish species will serve all the Raritan basin communities in the future. The planned removal (Tier 1) of the two major dams on the main stem of the Raritan, the Island Farm Wier and the Headgates, will be significant accomplishments and can be greatly enhanced by the removal of the Rockafellows Mill Dam (Tier 2), in Readington and Raritan townships. The combination of three major dam removals will provide the greatest overall benefit to the entire Raritan basin and provide specific benefits including:

- Improved water habitat for native fish species in multiple small stream tributaries
- Improved water habitat, sustainability, and temperature on the South Branch
- Expanded fish passage thru the entire South Branch of the Raritan watershed and basin.
- Better water quality in the Pleasant Run, Holland Brook, and Chambers Brook
- Better water quality in the South Branch watersheds in Branchburg and Hillsborough
- New fish species access to the South Branch above Rockafellows Mill dam site
- Improvement of new 2020 C1 Neshanic River and Prescott Brook watersheds
- Improvement of new 2020 C1 South Branch of the Raritan segment

In summary, the largest possible positive impact to communities within the entire watershed and the greatest number of stream miles would be improved by these three dam removal projects. The benefits will flow to the communities that were directly impacted by this superfund site, all residents using the Raritan River for drinking water and the entire Raritan watershed will benefit.

This recommendation is supported by the Readington Twp. Open Space Advisory Board, (OSAB) which will offer stewardship, guidance, and support for such an initiative. The OSAB can also partner with the Township Committee, the Environmental Commission, the Readington Waterwatch Committee and Hunterdon County to provide additional community support.

Regards
Juergen Huelsebusch

Readington Township, Chair, Open Space Advisory Board
Readington Township Committee
Hunterdon County, Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee