

EPISODE  
CLOSED CAPTION  
SCRIPT



**RIVER REBORN**  
DAM REMOVAL AND RIVER RESTORATION

Emma - How do communities faced with dam removal consider all the emotions of various stakeholders in combination with science and facts? And how can they ultimately come up with a plan that serves both the public and this river's ecosystem? Hmmm this sounds like a real challenge.

Waskwane - What happens when you have so many stakeholders?

Devyn - Yeah, they all want something different.

Dave Downer - is this on camera, huh? Maybe you better shut it off for a second

Man 1 - and it will just blow your mind as to how committee could

Norb Tutlis - Totally ignoring the surveys that said we the people want

Ed Flees - Fisherman are going to lose because kayaks are going to push

Bruce Carpenter - a little piece of paradise slipped through our fingers we had no control

Dave Downer- It's wrong in so many ways

Frank Dituri - Most people think that's removing three dams and modifying a fourth is a big physical project. But really it's a people project.

Todd Kalish - It was the fourth time in history since those dams were built that the community had a discussion on what should we do with the dams. So, the community wasn't really ready to address an issue of this magnitude using the same process that we've always used to address these issues. It was absolutely critical for us to address actively engage everybody and anybody that wanted to participate in this process. So instead of a top down process, where there's a decisionmaker at the top and sometimes inputs taken from the bottom, we flipped it so everybody who wanted to be involved, they could take an active role in the outcome, but forming and shaping the outcome.

*\*Breaks to committee meeting\**

As you can probably imagine, there was a camp, a silo of folks who were adamantly opposed to doing anything regarding the dams. They wanted to keep them, they wanted to continue to operate hydropower.

Norb Tutlis - The river provides us hydroelectricity. The smart person says, use them use them to their fullest use them until you can't use them anymore. We're turning our back on the most logical natural thing that we have. We're going to be beating ourselves for not having taken the time to study should we have saved them because it's going to be cost prohibitive to restore. And we're going to have left ourselves with a limited source of energy.

James Gurr - Keep in mind the system of dams here were really low maintenance as by design originally. A single person took care of them all. They're self-maintaining. You know whether or not it was really cost effective to produce it is a function of numbers.

Todd Kalish - We knew that there was a lot of passion. We knew that there were a lot of opinions out there. We not only encouraged, we actively sought out diverse opinions.

Dave Downer - the Brown Bridge Advisory Committee was a committee formed by the city to advise the city manager on issues concerning the Brown Bridge quiet area. It was very obvious to me that anybody from the public who had anything to say that was opposed to the dam removal project, were not treated the same way as people who were in favor of it. And so, the whole thing was biased toward dam removal right from the very beginning. It just made me feel helpless, it made me feel helpless.

Todd Kalish - We would send them certified letters, we would go to their homes and almost bug them and give them flyers saying please come and give your thoughts and give your opinions. One of them was property owner issues and property owner rights. Because that was a big question that a lot of folks had, if the dams are removed what happens to my property rights? What happens to my property value?

Bruce Carpenter - I've lived here for 26 years knowing that it was a nature preserve when I bought it. The commission decided that they wanted to remove the dams and we tried save it because it's part of a nature preserve. It's been dedicated to the people. There were hundreds upon hundreds of questions that were never answered until like the last day and then there was never any time for the people along the river, the homeowners, property owners, to rebut any of their conclusions to these questions. And that's the way it ended they're going to remove them we didn't have anything to say about it. And our little piece of paradise slipped through our fingers, we had no control. Instead of the river's edge being 45 to 50 feet away from the front of my house now its 650 feet away from the front of my house. I have no frontage. There's no compensation. It's disheartening for sure when there's nothing you can do about it and you're watching everything die around you. It tore a piece of me right out.

Rick Westerhoff - We'll there's always two sides to every story

Todd Kalish - Grand Traverse county and Traverse City really made a leap of faith. And the county and the city still maintain their autonomy for the decision-making process. But they also allowed the community to form this Boardman River Dam Committee that embraced anybody and everybody who wanted to participate in any meetings. We actually had from 2005 to 2009 when the decision was made, we had over 200 public meetings. We had over 1000 people actively participate. We used that input to form the foundation for the engineering and feasibility study to look at the pros and cons of removing, modifying, or keeping the dams. If you were interested in the project, you volunteered. And you were on that team, you helped form the project you helped form and develop how we were going to assess the pros and cons of dam removal, retention or modification.

Frank Dituri - It was never one person it was never five people; it was never forty people. It was literally hundreds of people involved in this.

Todd Kalish - In my mind we could not provide a good comprehensive succinct recommendation to the county and city without having all of those diverse opinions involved

Rick Westerhoff - I like people that are passionate, I like people that stand up for what they believe and a lot of times that's what you see. But a lot of times you have to get past that emotion, and there's nothing wrong with emotion, but you have to get past that and look at the science.

Frank Dituri - Over 5 years those 80 some-odd options were whittled down to three and finally down to one. The final recommendation was to remove the upper 3 dams and modify the lower dam.

Todd Kalish - And I think that the environmental aspects of the Boardman had a voice through all of the environmental experts who participated in the project. And it had a voice above and beyond all of the environmental aspects. It had a voice that incorporated human uses so the social uses the recreational aspects the tourism aspect and in order to sustain not only the environmental aspects of the Boardman river into the future but also serve as an environmental foundation to sustain and enhance the economic prosperity of the region.