

Site 10: Thomas Mill Dam

Site Information

The Thomas Mill Dam is located approximately 5.6 miles above the confluence of Wissahickon Creek with the Schuylkill River, and on the creek’s mainstem, just above Thomas Mill covered bridge.



Problems, Opportunities & Constraints

Impediment to resident fish passage, siltation, and habitat alteration are the major problems at the Thomas Mill Dam project site. This site offers an opportunity to improve resident fish passage and to reduce the existing sedimentation. However, Thomas Mill Dam’s length and apparent historical value could be a constraint for the recommended opportunities.

Major Problems	Opportunities	Constraints
Siltation Habitat alteration Impediment to resident fish passage	Improve resident fish passage	Dam is a historical feature Preservation of existing covered bridge

Alternatives

Alternative	Overview
1: No action	Under without project conditions, the Thomas Mill Dam will remain a barrier to fish passage, preventing species from migrating further upstream and poor habitat conditions will persist in the backwater behind the dam. This structure will likely need extensive renovation or replacement within 50 years.
2: Dam removal	Alternative #2 consists of the removal of the existing dam and accumulated sediment upstream, thereby improving fish passage and promoting the most significant improvements to aquatic habitat.
3: Naturalized passageway along existing breach	Alternative #3 includes preserving the existing dam and constructing a naturalized passageway in the existing breach along the western margin of the channel. Existing boulders in this area would be incorporated into the structure. This alternative would allow for fish passage and sensitivity to historic/cultural resources, but poor habitat conditions would likely persist in those areas still inundated by backwater conditions.
4: Bypass channel through mill race	Alternative #4 would provide fish passage through the historical mill race and control structure along the eastern side of the dam, thereby preserving most of the structure. Upstream aquatic habitat would not be improved. Like Alternative #3, this alternative would allow for fish passage and sensitivity to historic/cultural resources, but poor habitat conditions would likely persist in those areas still inundated by backwater conditions.

