United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Massachusetts

FACT SHEET

Dam at a Glance

Purpose	floodwater retarding, wildlife habitat, recreation
River name	Assabet River
County	Worcester
Year built	1970
Drainage area	4,447 acres
Height	20 ft.
Length	1440 ft.
Normal pool area	380 acres
Flood storage pool area	515 acres
Elev. top of dam	318.5 ft.
Elev. auxiliary spillway crest	313 ft.
Ownership	DCR

Current Situation

Significant upstream urban development has generated the need for rehabilitation of nine dams built between 1962 and 1987 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord (SuAsCo) rivers watershed.

Although the dams are still structurally sound and do not pose an imminent threat to public safety, increased land development generates higher amounts of runoff than the dams were originally designed to handle. Rehabilitation would modify the dams to accommodate runoff from land use changes using "full build-out" of existing zoning.

What's next?

NRCS and DCR are evaluating rehabilitation needs on these dams as a result of land use changes, in addition to checking them annually and after significant storms.

Rehabilitation is needed on some of the SuAsCo dams and DCR has requested federal funding through the NRCS Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

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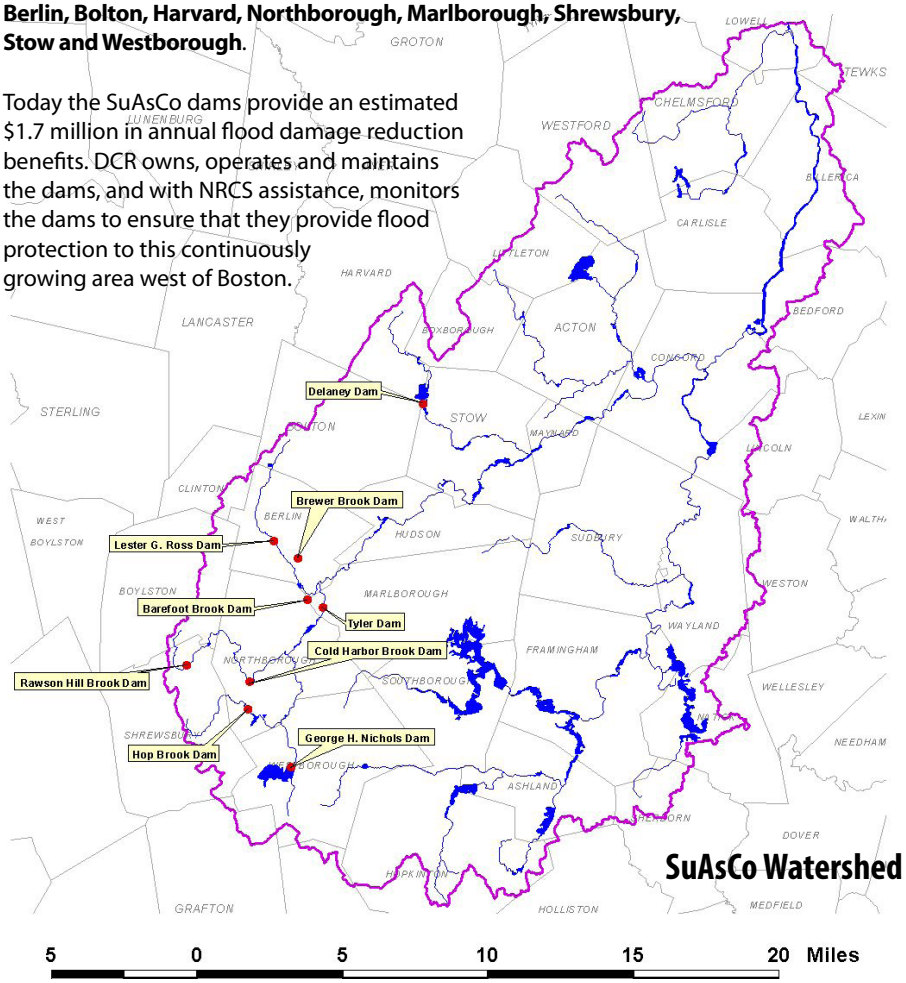
Upgrade proposed for the George H. Nichols Multipurpose Floodwater Retarding Dam, Westborough

The George H. Nichols Multipurpose Floodwater Retarding Dam in Westborough is one of nine dams in the SuAsCo Watershed that serve as "silent protectors" for the local community.

Where are these dams and why are they important?

The SuAsCo dams act as a system to control a drainage area of nearly 50 square miles and provide available flood storage of more than four billion gallons. The 377-square mile SuAsCo watershed encompasses all or part of 36 Massachusetts towns. The dams are located in the towns of **Berlin, Bolton, Harvard, Northborough, Marlborough, Shrewsbury, Stow and Westborough**.

Today the SuAsCo dams provide an estimated $1.7 million in annual flood damage reduction benefits. DCR owns, operates and maintains the dams, and with NRCS assistance, monitors the dams to ensure that they provide flood protection to this continuously growing area west of Boston.