BANGOR DAILY NEWS

Ellsworth contractor to remove Old Town dam, help restore Penobscot River fisheries

By Nick McCrea, BDN Staff
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OLD TOWN, Maine — Ellsworth-based R.F. Jordan & Sons Construction Inc. has been selected to take the lead in the removal of the Great Works dam and related efforts to restore fisheries to the Penobscot River.

The removal of the 19-foot-tall Old Town dam is scheduled to begin in June and be completed in November.

The Penobscot River Restoration Trust announced the $3.5 million contract on Tuesday. The restoration work is funded by a grant through the U.S. Department of Commerce, according to a trust press release.

The trust said the removal of the Great Works and other dam-related projects on the Penobscot River will open nearly 1,000 miles of waterway to 11 species of fish that have been blocked by the dams for nearly 200 years.

In 2010, the trust purchased the Great Works, Veazie and Howland dams from PPL Corp. with plans to dismantle the Great Works dam this summer and the Veazie dam sometime in 2013 or 2014. The Howland dam will be decommissioned and bypassed by a fish lift. A dam in Milford also is scheduled to get a fish lift.

Black Bear Hydro LLC purchased six dams from PPL in 2009. The company received approval in September of 2011 to upgrade the Stillwater and Orono dams to help make up for the loss of energy production potential that will stem from the demolition of the Great Works and Veazie dams.

The trust said hydropower generation will stay at today's level or may increase after the dam removals and upgrades are complete.

"We are pleased to join the Great Works dam removal team. It's an exciting job for us, and we are looking forward to working on a project with such a wide range of support that benefits our region in many different ways," said R.F. Jordan & Sons Construction owner Patrick Jordan.

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