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NOAA Open River Initiative Helps Open 100-Year Old Dam on the Rogue River *Removal Allows Passage for Threatened and Endangered Salmon*

After a century of diverting water, blocking fish passage, and limiting recreation, Oregon's Gold Hill Dam will soon be gone. Biologists, engineers and members of the community gathered on the banks of the Rogue River in Gold Hill, Ore., today to celebrate the halfway mark of the dam's removal.

"As stewards of the Rogue River, which flows through the heart of our city, we fully support removal of the dam," said Gus Wolf, mayor of Gold Hill. "Dam removal and restoration of the site will provide benefits not only to the citizens of Gold Hill, but to citizens of the Rogue Valley, the state of Oregon and the Northwest."

The dam, which stretches 900 feet across the river just outside Medford, was constructed in the early 1900s to divert water to generate power and to provide water for the city of Gold Hill. Since the power facility is no longer in use and the city receives water through other means, the dam is no longer needed and will be removed by the end of next month. Over the years, it has become a growing safety and maintenance concern for the community.

"Removing the Gold Hill Dam will produce free-flowing water and healthy habitat for fish, wildlife and people alike," said Bob Lohn, northwest regional administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "We're pleased to see so many members of the community pitch in to help with this project."

The NOAA Restoration Center provided \$545,000 through its Open Rivers Initiative to support removing the dam, the largest Open Rivers project to date. Gold Hill is one of three major dams on the main stem of the Rogue River. Removing this dam and the Savage Rapids Dam, scheduled for removal next year, will open 16 miles of river, allowing threatened and endangered salmon to reach high-quality upstream spawning and rearing habitat. NOAA has provided funding to the community for a feasibility study of the removal of the third dam, the Gold Ray Dam.

NOAA's Open Rivers Initiative is a national effort to restore historic river habitat for migratory fish and other species that travel between ocean-coastal and upstream freshwater areas. Projects include removing derelict dams, culverts and other river barriers. Through the Open Rivers Initiative, NOAA outlines specific steps developed by expert scientists, engineers, biologists and members of the local public, working together.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts, and protects.

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On the Web:

Community Restoration Program: <http://habitat.noaa.gov/crp>