

## Vezins Dam Removal, Sélune River, France

<b>Key issue</b>	Complex project with sediment and water quality management issues
<b>Project Name</b>	Vezins Dam
<b>Country</b>	France
<b>River</b>	Sélune River
<b>Dam purpose</b>	Hydroelectric
<b>Year built</b>	1927
<b>Project lead</b>	European Rivers Network
<b>Project goals</b>	Hydrological and biological river restoration, improve water quality, and reconnect habitat for migratory fish
<b>Dam material</b>	Concrete
<b>Dam measurements</b>	36 meters high, 278 meters wide Reservoir: 19 km long, 151 ha
<b>Year removed</b>	2019
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The Roche-qui-Boit and Vezins Dams on the Sélune River in Normandy, France, have a long history of studies and management plans leading ultimately to the decision to remove these two large dams. Removal of the 37-meter tall Vezins dam began in the spring of 2019.</p> <p>The goal of the Sélune River restoration is to restore the hydrological and biological function of the river, including improving water quality and sediment movement, as well as restoring Atlantic salmon and other important migratory to the river.</p> <p>The Vezins Dam and the downstream Roche-qui-Boit dam, built in 1927 and 1914, respectively, were built to provide hydropower. Today these dams are owned and operated by the state-owned utility, Électricité de France. Both dams block fish migration, degrade water quality, and trap sediment, together altering 25 km of river habitat. As early as 1924 French government agencies required fish passage at these sites. It was until 1986 and again in 1996 that a series of orders by government agencies as well as studies and management plans for the Sélune River required that the dams comply with species movement standards.</p> <p>It would be another decade of debate including recognizing the impact from eutrophication and sediment in the impoundments before a decision would be reached. The Vezins Dam alone stored 2 million m<sup>3</sup> of sediment, and nutrients in the impoundment lead to development of toxic cyanobacteria.</p> <p>In 2017 the decision was finally made to remove the dams and removal of the Vezins Dam began in April 2019.</p>
<b>Additional information</b>	<p>For more details on this project, the largest dam removal in Europe, please visit the European Rivers Network website which includes timelines, studies, and videos: <a href="https://www.ern.org/en/selune-libre/">https://www.ern.org/en/selune-libre/</a></p> <p>Dam Removal Europe: <a href="https://damremoval.eu/portfolio/vezins-and-la-roche-qui-boit-dams/">https://damremoval.eu/portfolio/vezins-and-la-roche-qui-boit-dams/</a></p>