

July 2020

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An aerial photograph of a large dam and reservoir, with a city visible in the background. The image is faded and serves as a background for the table of contents.

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Background & Overview

The following report presents the research findings from a survey conducted by Oraclepoll Research Ltd for the Conservation Council of New Brunswick and the Atlantic Salmon Federation. It involved collecting telephone research among residents 18 years of age and older from the District of St Croix on issues related to the Milltown Dam and Generating Station.

Methodology & Logistics

Study Sample & Survey Method

A total of N=300 interviews were completed among residents 18 years of age and older between the days of July 2nd to July 6th, 2020. This survey was conducted by telephone with live operators using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) and random digit dialing number selection (RDD). A dual-frame sample database was used that contained cellular and landline phone number contacts.

All calls were made by bi-lingual (English & French) Oraclepoll research staff that are set up and are working from their residences to ensure safety during the 2020 Covid19 pandemic. Our supervisors and research team members continue to adhere to strict supervisory and monitoring standards including the ability to spot monitor calls and questionnaire completion.

Quotas were set to ensure that the data reflected the age and gender compositions of the Riding. No financial incentives were used, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and that the information they provided was for research purposes only. Oraclepoll adheres to strict privacy codes and no personal identifiers (in this case telephone numbers) will be shared with any outside party or will be reported.

Logistics

The data collection period was from July 2nd to July 6th, 2020. Initial calls were made between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Subsequent call-backs of no-answers and busy numbers were made up to 5 times over the call period (from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. with at least one weekend call) until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the fifth attempt, the number was discarded and a new one was used.

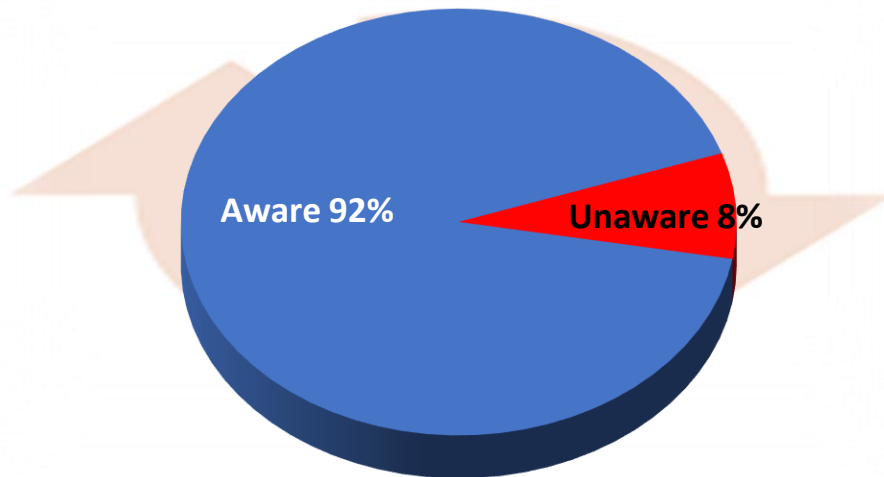
Confidence

The error rate (margin of error) for the total N=300 sample is $\pm 5.6\%$, 19/20 times.

Awareness

All N=300 respondents were first asked if they were aware of the plan by NB Power to decommission and remove the Milltown Dam and generating station.

Q1 "Are you aware of the plan by NB Power to decommission and remove the Milltown Dam and Generating Station?"



More than nine in ten or 92% are aware of the plan by NB Power to decommission and remove the Milltown Dam and Generating Station, compared to only 8% unaware.

Awareness was high across all demographic cohorts, but a higher number of those unaware were 18-29 (14%), earning under \$50,000 (22%) and \$50,000-\$74,999 (11%) and male (11%) in relation to female (5%).

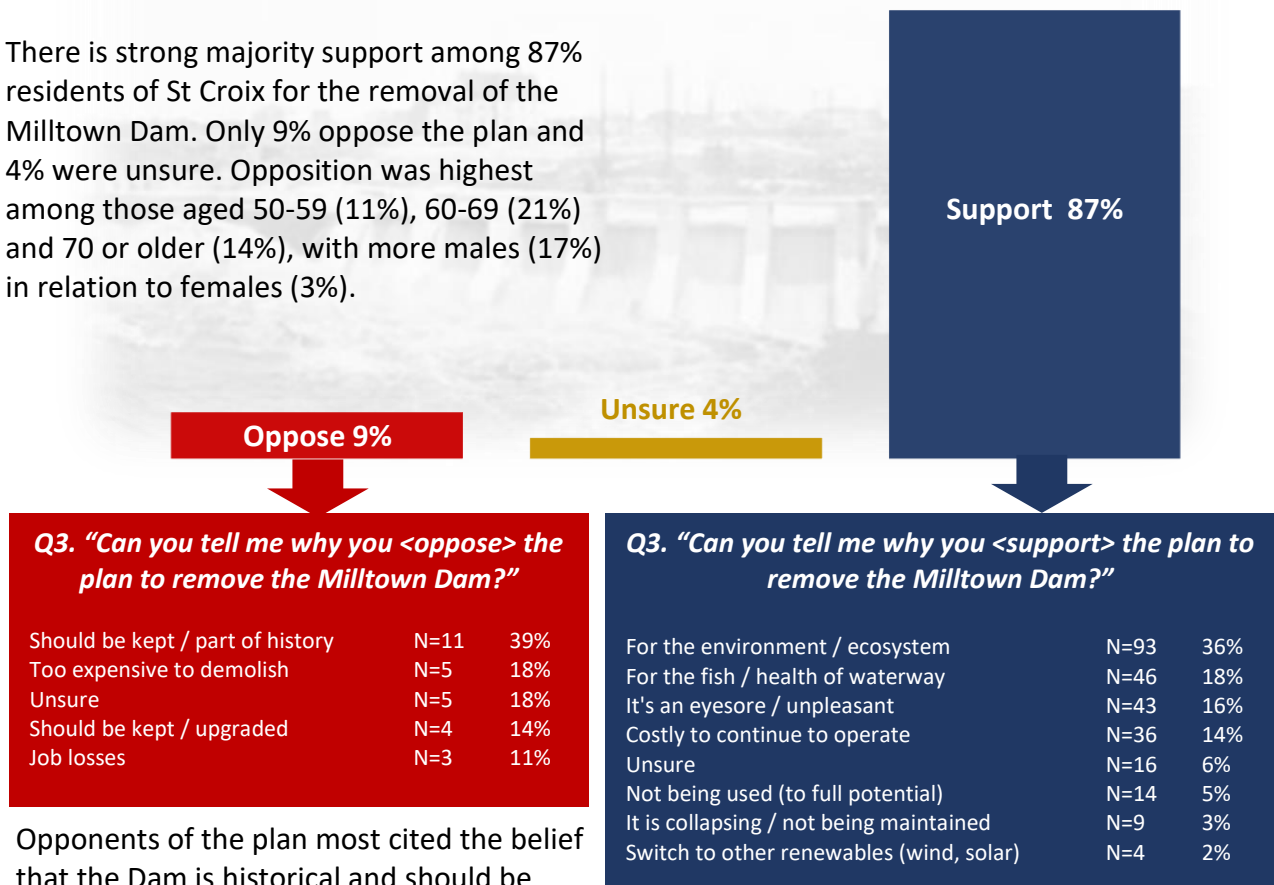
Support & Opposition to Remove

Respondents (N=300) were then read a short descriptive paragraph about the Milltown Dam and Generating Station, its history and current situation. They were then asked if they support or oppose of a plan to remove the Milltown Dam. Those that support (N=261) and oppose (N=28) were then asked an open-ended unaided follow-up about the reason for their answer (Q3).

“The Milltown Dam and Generating Station has blocked the St. Croix River at Salmon Falls between Milltown and Calais since 1881, limiting fish migration or passage in the River. As one of the oldest generating stations in Canada, providing less than 1% of the provinces power needs, New Brunswick Power has determined that extending the life of the station is not financially feasible.”

Q2. “Do you support or oppose the plan to remove the Milltown Dam?”

There is strong majority support among 87% residents of St Croix for the removal of the Milltown Dam. Only 9% oppose the plan and 4% were unsure. Opposition was highest among those aged 50-59 (11%), 60-69 (21%) and 70 or older (14%), with more males (17%) in relation to females (3%).



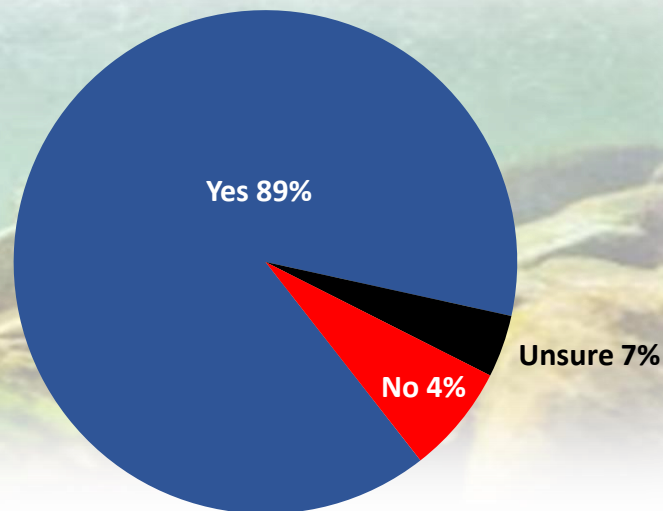
Opponents of the plan most cited the belief that the Dam is historical and should be preserved. There were also residents that stated the cost of demolition, that it should be upgraded and job losses.

Those supporting the removal referenced the environmental benefits in general and for fish and the waterway. Other mentions related to its appearance, declining state, and the high cost to maintain.

Fish Populations

All N=300 respondents were then asked if they would be more likely to support the removal plan and restoration of Salmon Falls if it would help migratory fish populations in the river.

Q4. "Would you be more likely to support the restoration of Salmon Falls and the river by removing the Dam, if it would help recover migratory fish populations in the river?"



Almost nine in ten or 89% said yes or support Dam removal and restoration of Salmon Falls if it resulted the recovery of migratory fish populations in the river. Only 4% answered no and 7% were unsure.

Results by Question

Q1. Are you aware of the plan by NB Power to decommission and remove the Milltown Dam and Generating Station?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Aware	277	92.3
	Unaware	23	7.7
	Total	300	100.0

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Q2. Do you support or oppose the plan to remove the Milltown Dam?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Support	261	87.0
	Oppose	28	9.3
	Unsure	11	3.7
	Total	300	100.0

IF UNSURE SKIP TO Q4

Q3. Can you tell me why you <OPPOSE> the plan to remove the Milltown Dam?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Should be kept / upgraded for energy production	4	14.3
	Should be kept / it is part of history	11	39.3
	Too expensive to demolish	5	17.9
	Job losses	3	10.7
	Unsure	5	17.9
	Total	28	100.0

Q3. Can you tell me why you <SUPPORT> the plan to remove the Milltown Dam?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
	For the environment / ecosystem	93	35.6
	For the fish / health of waterway	46	17.6
	It's an eyesore / unpleasant	43	16.5
	Costly to continue to operate	36	13.8
	Switch to other renewables (wind, solar)	4	1.5
	Not being used (to full potential)	14	5.4
	It is collapsing / not being maintained	9	3.4
	Unsure	16	6.1
	Total	261	100.0

Q4. Would you be more likely to you support the restoration of Salmon Falls and the river by removing the Dam, if it would help recover migratory fish populations in the river?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	267	89.0
	No	13	4.3
	Unsure	20	6.7
	Total	300	100.0

Age			
		Frequency	Percent
	18-29	59	19.7
	30-39	48	16.0
	40-49	66	22.0
	50-59	55	18.3
	60-69	51	17.0
	70 and over	21	7.0
	Total	300	100.0

Income			
		Frequency	Percent
	Under 50,000	51	17.0
	50,000 -74,999	46	15.3
	75,000 -99,999	80	26.7
	100,000 and over	41	13.7
	Refused	82	27.3
	Total	300	100.0

Gender			
		Frequency	Percent
	Male	143	47.7
	Female	157	52.3
	Total	300	100.0