

[http://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/residents-flock-to-see-monterey-dam-torn-out/article\\_69427c5d-3b29-5f09-8d42-acc5a5a91fb7.html](http://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/residents-flock-to-see-monterey-dam-torn-out/article_69427c5d-3b29-5f09-8d42-acc5a5a91fb7.html)

TOP STORY

## Residents flock to see Monterey Dam torn out

By Neil Johnson [njohnson@gazettextra.com](mailto:njohnson@gazettextra.com) Jul 18, 2018 Updated 4 hrs ago



Janesville resident Quin Studer, right, stands with his 9-year-old son, Weston, as they watch the Monterey Dam demolition Wednesday.

Buy Now

Angela Major

### MORE INFORMATION



City: Residents should use caution amid low river levels near Monterey Dam

### JANESVILLE

As the Monterey lagoon drains away through the partially demolished Monterey Dam, residents flock to the dam to witness its demise.

On Wednesday afternoon, dozens of onlookers came and went. Some were there to watch the dam's demolition, which picked up again Wednesday with work going on under the Center Avenue bridge.

Others were there to fish a slack pool in Rock River next to roiling rapids rushing over sections of the partially demolished dam. A few hundred feet away, a worker in a backhoe with a jackhammer tip moved through the river and chiseled away at the 170-year old spillway.

Visitors on Wednesday voiced hope, uncertainty and opposition to the city's removal of the dam.

One man, who would identify himself only as "Jeff" watched a crowd of about 25 people mill around. He said he never figured so much attention would come to a dam he said has been mostly ignored.

"I've been coming out here years for fishing. I come every day in the summer. Every day. I've never seen most of these people before," he said. "Some people are crying. I seen them crying. I've never even seen them out here until last week."

Janesville resident Philip Schuman stopped while on a bike ride to check out the action at the dam.

Schuman said his wife didn't want to see the dam removed, but he said he's been more open to the idea.

He looked over at an area of Monterey lagoon that has become a soup of slack water and mud flats since the dam tear out started.

"Right now, it looks like a big mess. I'll give you that. I can see how people might be upset," Schuman said. "But I can see the big picture. It's going to be better, an improvement, I think."

Schuman said he has seen city plans that show the dam's removal would dry out the Monterey lagoon and allow the city to eventually create a pond and establish a "riparian savanna" on drained land that in the last few days has become mudflats. South of the dam, an area along the river's north shore would be built up with spoils from the dam to become a picnic area with a fishing platform, according to city plans.

"I think it'll be nice, although it's going to take a long time and a lot of money," Schuman said.

While riding his bike, Schuman said, he has often seen turtles with bottle-shaped noses and flat shells sunning themselves along the concrete wall at the edge of the lagoon. That's near areas that are now mudflats.

Schuman hasn't seen the turtles in days. He's unsure if they've been scared off by gawkers or if they took off for other reasons.

"Maybe they just swam off to another part of the river," he said.

Janesville resident K. Andreah Briarmoon, who has been a vocal opponent of the dam's removal, was at the demolition Wednesday.

Briarmoon called the city's process, including the council's vote to OK the dam's removal, "embarrassing." She said anyone watching the demolition was witnessing "millions of dollars of damage."

Briarmoon said she believes the city would be better suited to decide on such issues if it was run under an aldermanic ward system of government. She said she thinks at-large council members have no incentive to listen to neighbors who opposed the dam's tear out.

She said an "out of touch" city council "pulled off a fiasco" by signing off on the dam's removal.

Quin Studer, who lives along the river several blocks west of the Monterey Dam, said he's not heard much talk in his neighborhood about the dam's tear out.

Studer said his family likes to fish along the river. He's glad the dam's being removed because he believes it will improve water quality and the fishery. Already, Studer said, the dam's partial removal has calmed the section of river near his house.

"It's flowing faster, but it looks calmer, less turbulent," Studer said. "We're excited to see this. It will be nice to see the river return to its original, natural environment."

---

**Neil Johnson**  
Reporter - Business