

Blue Heart: What's Next?

Visit the official website <https://blueheart.patagonia.com> to learn more about:

- The dam truth
- The Blue Heart
- How to save the Blue Heart

Visit <https://www.internationalrivers.org> to learn more about:

- The environmental, economic, and social impacts of dams
- Healthy rivers and the link between rivers and biodiversity
- Rivers and dams on a global level

Contact Eagle River Watershed Council to more about local issues and how you can help:

- <http://www.erwc.org/>

Visit <https://www.americanrivers.org> to learn more about:

- US rivers, dams, threats, and solutions

Watch the documentary [Run Wild Run Free](#)

- It discusses the environmental history of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, protected rivers, dams, and the relationship between rivers and communities

Did You Know? Questions and Answers:

Q. What is a wild river?

A: As defined in Section 2(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act: wild river areas are “those rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted.”

Q. How many are being built today?

A: The rate at which large dams are completed has declined from around 1,000 a year from the 1950s to the mid-1970s to around 260 a year during the early 1990s. More than 3,700 hydropower projects are planned or under construction on the world’s rivers as of 2014. If built, they could block free-flowing rivers by more than 20%.

Q. Why is there so much opposition to large dams?

A: Large dams have provoked opposition for numerous social, environmental, economic and safety reasons. The main reason for opposition worldwide are the huge numbers of people evicted from their lands and homes to make way for reservoirs. The livelihoods of many millions of people also suffer because of the downstream effects of dams: the loss of fisheries, contaminated water, decreased amounts of water, and a reduction in the fertility of farmlands and forests due to the loss of natural fertilizers and irrigation in seasonal floods.

Q: *But aren't dams a source of clean energy?*

Dams are not “clean” sources of electricity because of their serious social and environmental impacts. In addition, studies reveal that dam reservoirs are significant sources of greenhouse gases. In some cases, especially in the tropics, reservoirs can produce more greenhouse gases than even the dirtiest fossil fuel power plants. The Balbina Dam in the Brazilian Amazon is estimated to produce 20–40 times the amount of carbon dioxide produced by coal fired power plants.

Q. *What is a large dam? How many large dams are there?*

A: A large dam is defined by the dam industry as one higher than 15 metres (taller than a four-story building). There are more than 57,000 large dams worldwide. There are more than 300 major dams - giants which meet one of a number of criteria on height (at least 150 metres), dam volume and reservoir volume.

Q. *Which countries have the most large dams?*

A: China has over 23,000 large dams. The US is the second most dammed country with some 9,200 large dams, followed by India, Japan, and Brazil.

Q. *How many total dams are there in the United States?*

A: There are more than 90,000 dams in the United States.

Q: *How many miles of rivers are there in the United States?*

A: The United States has over 3,660,000 miles of rivers.

Q: *How many miles of rivers in the United States lay behind dams?*

A: 600,000-750,000 miles of rivers lay behind dams, which amounts to 17-20% of our river mileage.

Q: *Is there a permanent way to protect rivers in the United States from hydroelectric dams and other types of dams and river diversions?*

A: Yes, The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created by Congress in 1968 (Public Law 90-542; 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) “to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.”

Q: *How many miles of US rivers have been protected since the enactment of The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act?*

A: As of August 2018, The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System has only 12,598 river miles in it—less than one-quarter of one percent of our rivers are protected through this designation.

Sources:

<https://www.rivers.gov/waterfacts.php>, <https://www.rivers.gov/documents/rivers-table.pdf>,
http://nid.usace.army.mil/cm_apex/www_flow_file_mgr.get_file?p_security_group_id=4453101961142092&p_fname=NIDoverview27Oct2016.pdf,
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