Sindi Dam Removal — Estonia Reopens the Pärnu River Basin to Migratory Fish, at a Cost to Riverside Wells

PES & Nature-Based Solutions · Good practice · Estonia

Quality score: 33/100

Evidence strength: Cautionary / limited

Summary

Estonia bought (€1.3m) and demolished the 4.5 m Sindi dam, the first barrier on the Pärnu River, in 2018 under a €15m, 85% EU-funded programme; tagged vimba and lamprey now reach far upstream, but ~18 riverside households lost well water.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Carbon — sequestration / storage, evidenced	0/3
Biodiversity — conservation / improvement, evidenced	2/3
Water & soil — retention, infiltration, erosion control	1/3
Fire resilience — risk reduction, evidenced	0/3
Governance, certification & transferability	2/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

C-NAPSE web research — accessed 2026-11-18

Estonian Environment Agency (Keskkonnaagentuur), Ministry of Environment — accessed 2026-11-18

Dam Removal Europe — Sindi dam case — accessed 2026-11-18

ERR (2024) — Sindi dam removal increases fish numbers in the Pärnu River — accessed 2026-11-18

ERR (2019) — Dam removal left many wells empty — accessed 2026-11-18

Transrivers — Dam on Pärnu River removed (2018) — accessed 2026-11-18

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