

### Summary of small group discussions

Small group discussions were also held during the public meeting to provide another means of communication. Each small group was assigned a trained, non-DNR affiliated facilitator and a DNR staff member was also present to take notes.

Attendees were divided amongst 4 tables and asked to respond to 2 items: 1) name of individual, why they came to the meeting, and any concerns they had; 2) based on what they heard during the evening, including the background information and the concerns of their neighbors, what ideas do they have for how to best address the diverse needs and concerns voiced?

Notes collected from each table follow.

#### **Table 1**

##### **Question #1 – Share who you are, why you came tonight, and what are your concerns with the project.**

*Participant 1:* They live upstream of the reservoir. Wondering why the dam was built in the first place. Their son paddled the river and had a terrible time getting through snags, etc. The river is not a great recreational area for paddling. They are concerned about the quality of the lake.

*Participant 2:* Lives on dam road that was just paved. Is concerned on how the project could affect wildlife such as mink and otters. Does not want them be impacted.

*Participant 3:* He remembers the concerns raised in the 1980s about sediment accumulation and safety. He feels the state is working towards dam removal statewide (and nationwide) so is wondering why the really large dams are not being removed.

*Participant 4:* She enjoys recreating on the reservoir so is concerned about future recreation.

*Participant 5:* She lives on the river downstream of the dam site. Is wondering what the fire department will do in an emergency situation when there is no electricity and they need a water supply. Where will the fire department get water in emergency situations if the reservoir is gone? She is wondering how low the river will be if the dam is removed. She is concerned about the safety of users, especially children that play in the river downstream of the dam amongst all the tree debris. People access the river at Legion Park and there is lots of snags and debris in the river. She and others at the table would like to see the woody debris and garbage cleaned up.

**Question #2 – Based on everything you have heard tonight, including the background information and the concerns of your neighbors, what ideas do you have for how to best address the diverse needs and concerns voiced here tonight?**

*Participant 1:* He asked... Why remove it (the whole dam)? Just open up a section of the dam to let the river run and be done with it.

*Participant 2:* He feels that removal of the dam would restore the river to a more natural state. It looks unnatural as is now. He liked the riffles that create pools for families to fish. He is in favor of removal as long as there are fishing opportunities (riffles and platform rocks) for kids and families.

*Participant 3:* He is concerned about the growth of vegetation along the river and how it would inhibit fishing (casting a line). He is supportive of removing the dam as long as the new condition has a 'use' and a 'public purpose.' He feels something needs to be done.

*Participant 4:* She is wondering why the dam was not maintained to keep it from getting to this point. She likes the riffle features that would provide habitat. She is concerned about accessing the river through the brush.

*Participant 5:* She lives on a rock/sand ledge along the river. She is concerned about low water conditions. She wants the DNR to take the local topography into account and to consider the landowners.

## **Table 2**

### **Question #1 – Share who you are, why you came tonight, and what are your concerns with the project.**

*Participant 1:* She and her husband came because they have a cabin on the river and wanted to hear how a project at the dam site might impact their property.

*Participant 2:* Her daughter has a cabin on the river. She has concerns that not all landowners along the river have been adequately informed about a project at the dam.

*Participant 3:* She has concerns that the history of the dam, and the mill that existed because of the dam, will be lost if the dam is removed. She would like to see this history preserved. She also raised concerns for what the water level of the stream might look like under low flow conditions – i.e. will there be enough water for fish to migrate/use the river stretch without a supply coming from the reservoir. Her final concern was for cost associated with redesigning a pump system/infrastructure to continue water supply to the fish rearing ponds.

*Participant 4:* He wants to know why we are raising muskie at the fish rearing ponds instead of walleye.

*Participant 5:* He's just listening.

*Participant 6:* He owns property along the river and has concerns that the removal of the dam will increase the flood potential on this property.

### **Question #2 – Based on everything you have heard tonight, including the background information and the concerns of your neighbors, what ideas do you have for how to best address the diverse needs and concerns voiced here tonight?**

*Participant 2:* Make communication a priority. She sees a need for additional public outreach beyond web-based updates and the newspaper, as not all citizens are computer users or get the paper. She discussed facilities in the community where notices might be posted, such as the library, community center, schools, and the museum; however, she believes the best approach is to send a letter to every landowner along the river alerting them to a project at the dam.

*Participant 3:* To address concerns about history: Work with the DNR and the Historical Society on ways to capture the unique history of the dam and mill through kiosks, a picnic area near the river, and other informational signage for museum patrons to enjoy and that will create tourist opportunities within the community. Keep the community connected to its history. To address concerns about water levels: Conduct hydraulic study that would determine water levels within the stream under low flow conditions.

*Participant 4:* Would like more information on how rock arch rapids and rock riffles will impact the dynamics of the stream.

*Participant 5:* Would like more information on flood analysis. If the downstream water level doesn't come up and create additional flood potential along his property, he is in favor of the dam removal.

### **Table 3**

**Question #1 – Share who you are, why you came tonight, and what are your concerns with the project.**

**Question #2 – Based on everything you have heard tonight, including the background information and the concerns of your neighbors, what ideas do you have for how to best address the diverse needs and concerns voiced here tonight?**

*Participant 1:* Mostly here to listen, would like to see coordination between work on the Munger Trail and the dam work, if possible.

*Participant 2:* Has lived in town for about 82 years and noted that most of the people at the meeting had been born in Hinckley. Owns land on both sides of the river and have noticed changes on the river over time. The dam and reservoir are part of Hinckley's history and are important. Express concern over what it will look like when the dam is removed, don't want willows to take over the area and make it unusable. Want the DNR to do their best work, there are a lot of things the DNR has to figure out before moving forward. Wondered if the water will actually be deep enough for Lake Sturgeon to move upstream. Have concerns over the sediment located upstream, don't want sand and mud flats everywhere. Definitely desire more follow-up after a decision is made, another public meeting would be good.

### **Table 4**

**Question #1 – Share who you are, why you came tonight, and what are your concerns with the project.**

*Participant 1:* Whatever is selected will be an improvement. Recreational users will need to change methods/activities. Roadway access.

*Participant 2:* Fish ladder preferred, even if lower water. Old sawmill pier may be exposed. Recreation now includes boats on the reservoir. Would the road lead to any water? City access to sewer line near Munger Trail (city infrastructure on state land), is it public land?

*Participant 3:* Road seems more traffic now / after recent improvements. Would road provide access to something useable? Near to clear the embankment, lots of trees. Add a walking path? City lift station / sanitary sewer impacts?

*Participant 4:* Has concerns besides fish – what about wildlife, waterfowl, and other recreation?

*Participant 5:* Presentation leaned towards removal, no argument of other alternatives. Numerous questions yet to be answered. Cost overrun likely. What happens to exposed sediment? How long to be aesthetically pleasing?

*Participant 6:* Disappointed with cost estimates – not inclusive, ignored costs to pump water to rearing ponds. The Department is ‘selling a bill of goods’. Buckthorn will overrun area and limit access. Line pipe to the rearing ponds, no need to replace. Would possibly donate rock. Road restoration part of project?

**Question #2 – Based on everything you have heard tonight, including the background information and the concerns of your neighbors, what ideas do you have for how to best address the diverse needs and concerns voiced here tonight?**

*Participant 1:* More evaluation is needed. Ask for public input again.

*Participant 2:* Prefers the fish ladder option. Lower water would be OK. Line the pipe to the ponds, these rearing ponds are a good percentage of muskie stocking.

*Participant 3:* Department needs to consider cost for water supply to fish rearing ponds in comparisons of cost estimates. Constant communication with City and residents is needed, especially those along the river. Would like to see another meeting once costs are refined. The City wants to be involved in further discussions, including ways to increase recreation.

*Participant 4:* How deep will the pools be downstream of the riffles?

*Participant 6:* Echoes the thoughts of Participant 2. Fill the drowning machine with rock – will both be good for fish and eliminate the hydraulic roller. Enhancement of recreation important.