

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Grindstone River Dam Removal Project

The Minnesota DNR (DNR) prepared the Grindstone River Dam Removal draft environmental impact statement (EIS) to evaluate the proposed project in accordance with the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act, Minnesota Statutes 2008, Section 116D.04. Comments were received on the draft EIS during the public review and comment period, which ended on July 26, 2023. Following the public comment period of the draft EIS, the DNR has prepared a final EIS summary and response to comments document. A public review and comment period on the EIS adequacy will be open from September 26 until 4:30 p.m., October 9, 2023. **No changes to the draft EIS were suggested during the public comment period, thus the draft EIS is the final EIS, in accordance with Minnesota Rules 4410.2700, subpart 2.**

Abstract:

The proposed Grindstone River Dam removal would remove the dam on the Grindstone River within the city of Hinckley, in Pine County, Minnesota. The project is proposed to address public safety concerns as the dam reaches the end of its life cycle and to restore natural stream habitat and function. The proposed project would eliminate a public water (the Grindstone Reservoir) that was created by the dam and therefore requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under state Rules. The EIS evaluates and summarizes potential environmental impacts and mitigations for the proposed project which primarily includes removal of the dam along with floodplain grading and construction of a series of riffles. Two alternatives were also included: a no action alternative and a modified design that integrates a meander excavation. Seven topics were assessed for impact: wetlands; hydrological and hydraulics; sediment and contaminants; plant communities, wildlife, fish, and sensitive ecological resources; geology (karst); groundwater (private wells); and public waters and riparian rights. The EIS also includes a cumulative potential effects analysis for impacts of the proposed project plus other area projects; a comparison of alternatives; and a summary of proposed and recommended mitigation and monitoring measures.

Public comment Period:

The DNR will accept written comments until 4:30 p.m., October 9, 2023.

Comments received will inform the EIS adequacy decision. Comments submitted should address whether the potentially significant issues outlined in scoping were addressed, whether all substantive comments were responded to, and whether the document was prepared in accordance with state environmental review rules.

Written comments on the final EIS may be submitted using the following methods and should include "Grindstone EIS" in the subject line:

- by email to Environmentalrev.dnr@state.mn.us;
- by mail to Becky Horton, EIS Project Manager, Environmental Review Unit, DNR Ecological and Water Resources Division, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4025.

People who submit comments will receive a copy of the decision document, which includes responses to comments. Because all comments and related information are part of the public record for this environmental review, commenters' names and email or postal addresses will also be published and publicly available as they appear in the materials they submit.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Responsible Government Unit (RGU):

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) RGU Contact:

Becky Horton, EIS Project Manager
Environmental Policy and Review Unit
Ecological and Water Resources Division
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN
Phone: 651-259-5122
Email: becky.horton@state.mn.us

Project Proposer:

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Project Proposer Contact:

Leslie George, Area Fisheries Supervisor
Fish and Wildlife Division
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
306 Power Avenue North, Box 398
Hinckley, MN 55037
Phone: 320-384-7721
Email: Leslie.george@state.mn.us

APPROVED FOR ISSUANCE:

Date

Becky Horton
EIS Project Manager
Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources