

Attachment A

Public Comments

From: rickdent@gmail.com
To: [MN_Review_Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River
Date: Monday, May 4, 2020 4:02:27 PM

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I'm highly in favor of replacing the old Willow River dam with a rock rapid\weir construction. This is a once in a lifetime chance to improve fish movement and safety.

Rick Lent

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Loesch](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River dam
Date: Monday, May 4, 2020 4:13:43 PM

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I think the rock arch would be a wonderful and safe addition to the river. More picturesque for sure.

From: [Christopher Smith](#)
To: [Horton, Becky \(DNR\)](#)
Cc: [Herberg, Andrew \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: 2020-05-04-WillowRiverEAW-CommenterC-ChristopherSmith
Date: Monday, May 4, 2020 9:02:43 AM

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Hello Becky,

Below are comments for consideration, thank you.

- 1) Use wildlife-friendly erosion control blanket (i.e., woven natural fiber blanket and **not** blanket with plastic netting).
- 2) Avoid the use of plastic TRMs. These can become exposed and entangle wildlife. Natural fiber or other natural alternatives are recommended.
- 3) To minimize the risk to wood turtles, require riprap voids be filled with small aggregate or sand. See MnDOT's aggregate surfacing specification.
- 4) Require winter tree clearing (Nov. 1 to March 31, inclusive) to minimize impacts to bats and birds.

Thank you,
Chris

--

Christopher E. Smith, M.Sc., CWB®
[FieldEcology.com](#)
[@FieldEcology](#)

From: [Gutzke, Jayson \(ADM\)](#)
To: [MN_Review_Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow dam
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 6:28:43 AM

I have been going up in that area for over 20 years now last year I went up there noticed the damage and was taking a look at the river up stream noticed a lot of changes I also noticed how you changed the lake northeast of the dam called Dago lake I think the changes you all have made has not helped the river it was way down in water and the wild rice was not even growing anymore the dam is a great place to fish I caught 1 of my biggest black crappies there fishing on the top of that dam I do not think a rock stream will help this situation I call for a new dam there where people can fish and enjoy higher water stream levels Thanks for your time reading my thoughts and feelings about this willow dam

Jayson Gutzke
Paint Supervisor

Jayson.Gutzke@state.mn.us
Facilities Management Division
50 Sherburne Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55155
Work: 651-201-2357
Cell: 651-335-4748

From: [Saben De Smet](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 7:35:47 AM

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Becky Horton,

Hello this is Saben De Smet. I am writing to you about the DNR proposed replacement of the willow river dam. I 100% support rebuilding the willow river dam! I am a long time user of the willow river area and the kettle river both paddling fishing and camping. With both friends and family that live on the kettle and the willow reservoir the dam missing has greatly changed their homes shore lines and their usage of the water. As well as the camp ground use on the reservoir and the hole area. I am 100% behind the fish ladder idea as it will keep spawning grounds open to all species. I hope the state will move forward with this as quickly as possible.

Thank you,
Saben

--

Saben De Smet
Superintendent U Construction
desme001@umn.edu
612-282-3376

From: [Fitzie Heimdahl](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 9:20:55 AM

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Hello,

I am writing to you in regards to the Willow River Dam restoration Project. I believe that the first priority of this project should be the health of the river, and it's surrounding ecosystem. It has been shown that dam construction has heavily altered the course of America's rivers, and has detrimental impacted its wildlife and ecosystems. Dam removal is one of the greatest restoration strategies, and one that has a far reaching impact. For example, the Natural Resources Council of Maine reported that since Edwards Dam was removed on July 1, 1999, tens of millions of alewives, blueback herring, striped bass, shad, and other sea-run fish have traveled up the Kennebec River, past the former Edwards Dam, which blocked upstream passage since 1837. Abundant osprey, bald eagles, sturgeon and other wildlife have also returned. One of the additional benefits of a healthy, free-flowing river is that they act as a layer of resilience in the era of climate change.

From: dr3202@aol.com
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River Dam Restoration
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 12:08:50 PM

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Hooray! This is a great project for the DNR to undertake. Will be good for the lake level, fish and the general watershed. You should go ahead with it.....RD Anderson, Eagan, Mn

From: [mrw](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 9:22:30 PM

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The dam failed in July 2016 and the DNR has accomplished exactly nothing but a proposal after 4 long years? I detect a problem.

I understand that local Willow River contractors offered to rebuild the dam (for free) within days! But the DNR declined their generous offer (preferring to waste-time, harm MN citizens and waste MN tax-payer money for no measurable benefit).

Why would there need to be an 'environmental assessment worksheet' to replace something that already existed? That requirement obviously needs to be removed. Has the DNR petitioned the legislature to remove useless/non-beneficial regulations - or does the DNR see useless regulations as a opportunity to expand the DNR bureaucracy at the expense of MN taxpayers?

You are already 4-years behind schedule. Repair the dam. Now. Then pay Minnesota fishermen compensation for the lack of a fishing lake for 4 years, that you deliberately caused for no measurable benefit.

Martin R. Wellens

From: [Harlan Johnson](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Minnesota Falls Dam Removal
Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 2:04:07 PM

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Minnesota Falls Dam Removal EAW

Environmental Review Program Staff

Environmental Review Program

Environmental Quality Board (EQB)

520 Lafayette Road | St. Paul, MN| 551

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am contacting you about my questions and concerns involving the Minnesota Falls Dam Removal. I have thoroughly read the environmental assessment worksheet for the removal of the MN dam and I have the following questions and concerns. In the description part of the EAW the dam is stated as a high hazard dam. Who is this a hazard to? Is this a high hazard to the surrounding environment including people and nature? What demolition methods other than blasting are being considered for the dam removal? With the greater water flow created by the dam removal, will the increased water flow cause downstream erosion problems? How would the increased flow affect water quality and turbidity of the water? How would this then effect biota? How and who will be monitoring the dam removal and how frequently? In the land use section of the EAW the lower water levels in the upper portion of the stream pose a concern for recreation purposes. How will these lower water levels affect usage of parks along the stream? In the cover types part of the EAW it is stated that permanent flooded areas will become seasonal flooded wetlands. How will this affect the current wildlife and vegetation? In the wildlife/fish/ecology section with the removal of the dam species that are only segmented below the dam will be able to move upstream now. How will this affect fish populations? Is there a possible chance for invasive species spreading to the new areas of water now with the dam being removed? If invasive species do spread because of the dam removal. Is there plan in place? In the Erosion and sedimentation section is there a backup plan if the erosion plan in place fails? What would then be the course of action? In the impacted infrastructure and public services section. How are wastewater pipe outlets going to be affected? Are they going to be protected or lowered? With the lower water levels how will boat launches/ public entryways be affected? These are some of the concerns and questions that I have with the project. In regard to these concerns I look forward to hearing your responses.

Sincerely,

Harlan Johnson

[Email:hjohn2717@gmail.com](mailto:hjohn2717@gmail.com)

Phone: 62-916-2845

MNSU Mankato Student

From: [C.J.Vincent](#)
To: [MN_Review_Environmental\(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020 8:26:47 AM

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I can't imagine how it is to own a house on a lake and the lake be gone. Willow River is a beautiful area and the loss of the lake I am sure has impacted homeowners and local businesses negatively from the start.

My family camped at General Andrews State Forest campground for many years! It was our annual camping trip with the kids and now we found a seasonal spot out of state because the lake at the campground is gone! I understand that campground wasn't used a lot, but that revenue to the state is also gone!

We are voting YES to rebuilding a dam structure!

We want to come back and camp and fish in the Willow River area and stay at our favorite campground again! We built memories that we will never forget, perhaps by building the dam other families will have that opportunity as well!

And don't forget, when we camp we bring our money to the state and to the local businesses!

Thanks for hearing our voices and we hope your decision is a positive one!

Sincerely,

The Vincent Family

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [Owen Gustafson](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow river dam
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020 10:26:31 AM

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I support the replacement of the Willow river dam with a rock rapids dam.

From: [Bernadette Johnsen](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River Dam
Date: Saturday, May 9, 2020 7:08:43 PM

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Yes, please do this, right now it is an eyesore for us.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Chrissy Gamst](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River
Date: Sunday, May 10, 2020 10:18:52 AM

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I like the idea of the reflecting ponds. It is visually beautiful, serves its purpose and much safer than a dam. There has been more lives lost than necessary. Thank you for consulting with the community. Enjoy the day.

Chrissy Gamst

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Jennifer Bonrud](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River
Date: Monday, May 11, 2020 8:03:10 AM

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As a home owner on Stanton Lake, I would like to see the rock rapids dam constructed. I bought my home in August of 2018. I paid lakeshore property price for the home as I was told the dam was going to be replaced that October. It was delayed because the funds went to Jay Cooke State Park and I was informed that the dam would be replaced in August of 2019. Now that the project seems to be slated for fall of 2020, I am looking forward to this taking place. I want to have the lake I was told was going to be brought back and I want to make sure the value to my property is restored. I also like going to the Willow River Campground and would like to be able to use the boat launch when the water levels return as well.

Thanks,
Jen Bonrud

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From: [Seidl, Stephen K](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River Dam
Date: Monday, May 18, 2020 1:25:30 PM

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Why can't we build a new dam ?
Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

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From: [shelley Underhill](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River Dam
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 11:29:08 AM

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We are excited about getting our lake back! Sooner the better!!

Art & Shelley Underhill

Sent from my iPhone

June 3, 2020

Becky Horton
EAW Project Manager
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road North, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

Re: Willow River Dam Restoration Environmental Assessment Worksheet

Dear Becky Horton:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the Willow River Dam Restoration project (Project) located in the city of Willow River, Pine County, Minnesota. The Project consists of replacement of the damaged Willow River Dam with a rock rapids dam. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff has reviewed the EAW and have no comments at this time.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this project. Please provide the notice of decision on the need for an Environmental Impact Statement. Please be aware that this letter does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the Project for the purpose of pending or future permit action(s) by the MPCA. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions. If you have any questions concerning our review of this EAW, please contact me by email at Karen.kromar@state.mn.us or by telephone at 651-757-2508.

Sincerely,

Karen Kromar

Karen Kromar
Project Manager
Environmental Review Unit
Resource Management and Assistance Division

KK:bt

cc: Dan Card, MPCA, St. Paul
Scott Niemela, MPCA, Brainerd

From: [Mary Ann Novak](#)
To: [MN Review, Environmental \(DNR\)](#)
Subject: Willow River Dam Willow River MN
Date: Friday, June 5, 2020 10:52:15 PM

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Save the existing dam and build new flood over flow spill ways on each slide.

Provide new control gates.

Gary Novak

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10