United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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October 22, 2021

Public Comment on Draft Cultural Resource Mitigation Plan

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is seeking public comment on the draft cultural resource mitigation plan for the removal of four low-head dams, as part of the Grand River Revitalization in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In 2017, NRCS awarded $4.1 Million in Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding to the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC) for the Lower Grand River Watershed Habitat Restoration project (Project). GVMC has partnered with the City of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Whitewater on this project (Project Partners).

The project is a federal undertaking and is subject to the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA). Therefore, the Project was reviewed to assess its effects on cultural and historic properties. In March 2021, NRCS and the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office in consultation, agreed that the four low-head dams in the project area were eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Since the Project proposes to remove the eligible dams, this is considered an adverse effect. NRCS worked with the Project Partners and consulting parties to develop mitigation measures that address the adverse historical, cultural, archaeological, or architectural effects of the dams' removal.

NRCS is now seeking public comment on this draft mitigation plan. The public comment period officially begins on November 10, 2021 and will last for 30 days.

Documents that contain the draft Low-head Dam Mitigation Plan and background information on the Project will be available on the NRCS Michigan website.

NRCS will receive public comments:

- Verbally at virtual meetings to be held on November 10, 2021, 7 pm – 8 pm and November 29, 2021, 12 pm – 1 pm
- In writing through an online comment form available with the online documents on the NRCS Michigan website.
- In writing and mailed to the following address: Natural Resources Conservation Service, ATTN: GRWW c/o Cultural Resource Staff, 3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250, East Lansing, MI 48823-6321

Please visit the NRCS Michigan website: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mi/newsroom/pnotice/ to access links for the virtual meetings, draft mitigation plan, background information and the online comment form.

A paper copy of the documents on the above website will be available beginning November 10, 2021 at the following Grand Rapids Public Library locations:

Main Library, 111 Library St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Seymour Branch, 2350 Eastern SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507
West Leonard Branch, 1017 Leonard NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Yankee Clipper Branch, 2025 Leonard NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505

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