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September 20, 2022

Public Comment on Draft Watershed Project Plan-Environmental Assessment

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is seeking public comment on the draft Watershed Project Plan-Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA) for the Grand River Revitalization Project in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In 2017, NRCS awarded \$4.1 Million in funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) 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 funded specifically through Public Law 83-566 program under RCPP is a federal undertaking and the Plan-EA has been prepared in accordance with Section 102-(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Public Law 91-190, as amended (42-USC-4321 et seq.)

The purpose of the proposed Project, which aligns with PL 83-566, Watershed Protection (NWPM 500.3B(ii)), is to: 1) restore aquatic habitat diversity and suitability for native Great Lakes basin fish and mussel species, especially threatened, endangered, and special concern native species; 2) reduce or eliminate public safety hazards generated by the existing low-head dams; and 3) install diversified hydraulic features that would improve aquatic habitat and scenic resources in the Grand River. Secondary benefits anticipated are improvement of recreational opportunities in the Grand River.

The Preferred Alternative includes the demolition of four low-head dams and the creation of riffles, runs, glides, and pools in the Grand River where it flows through downtown Grand Rapids. Large substrates including boulders, cobbles, and gravel would be added to recreate the rapids that would distribute the river's gradient and enhance fish and mussel habitat.

NRCS is seeking public comment on this draft Plan-EA. The public comment period officially begins on October 3, 2022 and will last for a period of 30 days. The complete draft Plan-EA is available for viewing by going to the public notice page on the NRCS Michigan website and scrolling down near the bottom: [Public Notices | NRCS Michigan \(usda.gov\)](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/public-notices)

Paper copies of the document will be available for viewing beginning September 30, 2022 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

The scope of this comment period specifically addresses the affected environments as a result of the Project. An opportunity for comments related to other aspects of the project will be available as the project progresses.

If you would like to respond after reviewing the information, NRCS will receive public comments:

- Submitted via chat at the virtual meeting to be held on **October 3, 2022, from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm**
- Through an online comment form, available at: <https://bit.ly/NRCS-GRdams>
<https://fs21.formsite.com/rharrisgrcityus/9cegg9q6bt/index.html>
- Submitted in writing and mailed to the following address:

Natural Resources Conservation Service
ATTN: Dan Zay, NEPA Specialist
3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250
East Lansing, MI 48823-6321

To register for the virtual meeting, please visit the NRCS Michigan website at: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mi/newsroom/pnotice/>. Or go directly to the registration link at <https://fs21.formsite.com/rharrisgrcityus/leb1emqvyv/index.html>. A link to join the meeting will be emailed to you the day of the meeting after your registration request is submitted.

If you need special accommodations to participate in this event, please contact Brian Buehler at (517) 324-5244 or at brian.buehler@usda.gov at least 7 days prior to the event.

Natural Resources Conservation Service – Michigan
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