

From: Nohner, Joe (DNR)

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2020 10:49 AM

To: doraziojohn@gmail.com

Cc: Bauman, John (DNR)

Subject: Dam Repair on Rouge River

Hi John,

I'm following up on our call today to summarize the main points, provide a little more information, and introduce you to our Fisheries Biologist in the Area.

Based on what we discussed, I understand that your homeowner's association owns a dam here that has a spillway in need of repair. We discussed the Fisheries Habitat Grant as a potential funding source – this is the only source available from the DNR to fund this sort of activity. Based on our discussion, I think the project as described wouldn't be a strong competitor relative to the typical suite of projects that we receive for the following reasons:

- In order for the project to be eligible, it would need to be on a public water body. The purpose of this requirement is that the benefits of the project should be derived by the public (fishing, boating, etc.). At a minimum for eligibility you would need to demonstrate that the public can access the impoundment, and to be a strong competitor you should also demonstrate that in actuality the water body is used by the public or provides strong public benefits.
- Threat to public safety and health: Dams are typically assigned hazard ratings by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, with high hazard dams (those likely to cause serious harm if they fail) that are in poor condition being high priorities for us. For a strong application, we would need to see that the dam presents serious concerns to health and human safety.
- Benefits to the ecosystem – It is desirable for a project to show benefits to the ecosystem; we rarely fund dam repairs unless there is an overwhelming need for the dam and almost always prefer a dam removal option. Dam removals provide benefits for fish and aquatic species migration, decrease water quality concerns in most cases, and allow the river ecosystem to operate more naturally. With a dam repair, those benefits don't typically exist. You would have the option of creating fish passageways, though, and that is a compromise solution that may be viable.

In summary, my opinion is that the project you described is unlikely to be funded, but of course we can only make that determination officially if we review an application. If you decide to proceed, I recommend reviewing the Fisheries Habitat Grant handbook. Either way, I recommend reaching out to our Fisheries Biologist in the Area, John Bauman, who can provide recommendations on the water body, local fisheries, and perhaps modifications like fish passage that would make a dam more fish-friendly if you must reinstall one.

I'd be happy to discuss further if you have any questions, and thank you for your inquiry.

Joe

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