



John R. Kasich, Governor
Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
Craig W. Butler, Director

April 24, 2017

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TO ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS, ORGANIZATIONS,
AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

**VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSBURG
WILLIAMSBURG LOW-HEAD DAM REMOVAL
WR390997-0006**

The purpose of this notice is to seek public input and comments on Ohio EPA's preliminary decision that a Supplemental Environmental Study is not required to implement the recommendations discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment of a general plan submitted by the entity mentioned above.

How were environmental issues considered?

The Water Pollution Control Loan Fund program requires the inclusion of environmental factors in the decision-making process. Ohio EPA has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed alternatives in its review and approval process. Environmental information was developed as part of the general plan, as well as through the general plan review process and during site inspections. The Agency's preliminary Environmental Assessment found that the project does not require the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Study.

Why is a Supplemental Environmental Study not required?

Our environmental review concluded that significant environmental impacts will not result from the action. Any adverse impacts have either been eliminated by changes in the general plan or have been reduced by the implementation of the mitigative measures discussed in the attached Assessment.

How do I get more information?

A map depicting the location of the project is included as part of the Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment presents additional information on the project, alternatives that were considered, impacts of the action and the basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing the contact person listed in the back of the Environmental Assessment.

How do I submit comments?

Any comments supporting or disagreeing with this preliminary decision should be submitted to me at the letterhead address. We will take no action on this general plan for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice in order to receive and consider any comments.

What happens next?

In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. The entity will then be eligible to receive loan assistance from this agency.

Please bring any information that you feel should be considered to our attention. We appreciate your interest in the environmental review process.

Sincerely,



Jerry Rouch, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For
Village of Williamsburg
Williamsburg Low-Head Dam Removal
WR390997-0006**

**Applicant: Honorable Mary Anne Lefker, Mayor
Village of Williamsburg
107 West Main Street
Williamsburg, Ohio 45176**

Project Summary

The City of Akron is proposing to sponsor a project to remove the Williamsburg Low-Head Dam (Williamsburg Dam) on the East Fork Little Miami River in the Village of Williamsburg, Clermont County. This action will remove a barrier to movement of aquatic organisms and improve aquatic habitat conditions in the currently impounded section of the river. As a result, the recreational uses of the river will expand and the drowning danger inherent with low-head dams will be eliminated. Removal of the dam is identified as a strategic action in the Middle East Fork Watershed Action Plan to restore the East Fork to attainment of its exceptional warmwater habitat aquatic life use designation and enhance biological integrity of the East Fork Little Miami River in the 900-linear foot impounded section. The Village of Williamsburg, Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD), and engineering and biological science consulting firms will administer this proposed project. The estimated cost of the proposed dam removal project and related in-stream and river bank restoration activities is \$674,911, which will be funded by Ohio EPA's Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP).

Akron has requested \$21,800,000 from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to finance its proposed Howard Storage Basin (CSO Rack 22) project. The WPCLF is a loan program operated by the Ohio EPA that provides below-market interest rate loans for improvements to publicly-owned wastewater treatment works (POTW). The WRRSP is a program within the WPCLF that allows Ohio EPA to advance a portion of the interest it would otherwise receive on loans to parties known as Implementers for the restoration or preservation of high quality aquatic resources such as wetlands, streams, etc. Borrowers who participate in the WRRSP (known as Sponsors) receive an interest rate discount of up to 0.1 percent. In the case of the Williamsburg Dam project, Akron is the Sponsor and Williamsburg is the Implementer, with assistance from the CSWCD. This environmental review covers only the Williamsburg Dam WRRSP project. Akron's wastewater improvements project is covered in a separate environmental review document.

The Williamsburg Dam/East Fork Little Miami River Project Area

Construction of the low-head dam, completed in 1936, was part of a water works project funded by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to create a water source for Williamsburg. The dam was designed as an overflow structure, and consists of a reinforced concrete core wall within the center of an embankment built of wet, compacted layers of soils, with 3:1 slopes. The slopes were rip rapped. The upstream slope was also cement grouted. The core wall was extended to a depth of 30 inches into rock underlying 24 inches of sand and gravel forming the river bottom. The core wall is approximately 5 feet wide by 130 feet in length, and extends into the east bank 22 feet and the west bank 12 feet.

A raw water pump house is located 200 feet upstream of the dam on the east bank of the river, and formerly housed two low-head, horizontal, centrifugal pumps and electric control equipment. The pumps conveyed the river water 1,200 feet downstream to the village's water purification plant. The pump house was abandoned and boarded up after being replaced as a source of drinking water for the village, and has become a safety risk and target of vandalism.

The project area is located within the watershed designated as Hydrologic Unit Code number 05090202-1102 (Fivemile Creek Watershed) and is located within the Village of Williamsburg in Clermont County. The Fivemile Creek watershed covers approximately 43 mi² (27,241 acres) in Clermont and Brown counties. The East Fork Little Miami River flows 10 miles above Fivemile Creek to State Route 276 at Williamsburg. Significant tributaries include Pleasant Run, Fivemile Creek, Fourmile Creek and Crane Run. Land use data for the watershed show that land use/cover is primarily agriculture and forested lands. Based on Ohio EPA's assessments, organic enrichment, poor habitat, flow alteration, and high nutrient levels impair segments of the river.

Ohio EPA has classified the mainstem of the East Fork Little Miami River as Exceptional Warmwater Habitat (EWH) and Primary Contact Recreation by the State. All tributaries are designated as Warmwater Habitat (WWH) and classified as Primary Contact Recreation. The major tributaries in this watershed include:

- Fivemile Creek (OEPA Stream Code: 11-138)
- Pleasant run (OEPA Stream Code: 11-137)
- Fourmile (OEPA Stream Code: 11-136)
- Crane Run (OEPA Stream Code: 11-135)

Ohio EPA's most recent assessment of the Fivemile Creek watershed was conducted in 2012 and includes a 10-mile reach of the East Fork mainstem through and upstream from Williamsburg. Within the watershed, four tributaries were also assessed, including Fivemile Creek, Fourmile Creek, Crane Run and Pleasant Run tributaries. The Pleasant Run subcatchment contains the closed CECOS International hazardous waste landfill. Detections of organic compounds were not any more frequent (nor were concentrations any higher) in Pleasant Run compared to any other site sampled in the East Fork basin during the 2012 survey. However, biological organisms in Pleasant Run were stressed by organic enrichment and sluggish flows. Similarly, Fivemile Creek had impaired biological organisms due primarily to marginal habitat and low stream flow, and secondarily to enrichment. Crane Run and Fourmile Creek were in full attainment of the WWH criteria. The East Fork mainstem was impaired due to organic enrichment, presumably from the Williamsburg WWTP.

In 2006, the Midwest Biodiversity Institute conducted biological and habitat assessments downstream (RM 36.2) and upstream (RM 36.7) of the Williamsburg dam. Results showed full attainment of the EWH designation at the downstream site and partial attainment of the EWH designation at the upstream site. Qualitative Habitat

Evaluation Index¹ (QHEI) scores showed the change in habitat quality from excellent downstream to good upstream, the latter being affected by the partially impounded habitat at RM 36.7. Removing the dam would reestablish approximately 900-linear feet of natural stream. Removal of the dam would not only improve the biological quality of the upstream site, but also enhance the connectivity of the upper East Fork Little Miami River mainstem, which could improve the recovery potential of impacted stream segments in the upper watershed. In September 2009, Ohio EPA completed a sediment study behind the Williamsburg dam, testing for organic toxics and heavy metals. The sediment analysis revealed no significant levels of contamination. Very little sediment collects behind the structure, as sediment washes downstream during high flows.

The Williamsburg low-head dam, located at river mile 36.5 upstream of the village, impounds water approximately 900-linear feet on the East Fork River. This impoundment causes siltation, stagnant water and poor in-stream habitat. Low dissolved oxygen (D.O.) levels are likely caused by the impoundment, and removing the dam and restoring the free-flowing river will increase in-stream aeration, specifically at riffles. This will likely raise local D.O. concentrations at low flow. Primary causes of impairment include low D.O., historic channelization, agriculture, flow alteration and organic enrichment. This assessment unit is dominated by agricultural land use, with some non-irrigated crop production.

Project Planning

As noted in the previous section, Ohio EPA has completed numerous studies and reports of the East Fork Little Miami River during the past four decades, including surveys of fish and macroinvertebrates using the QHEI, an analysis of the sediments behind the Williamsburg dam, and water chemistry studies. Utilizing the information in these earlier reports, CSWCD prepared a project plan that establishes the current condition of the river at Williamsburg and identifies the steps needed to bring about full attainment of EWH water quality in and around the dam. Specific information from that planning effort is provided below.

Discussion of Feasible Alternatives

In the project plan developed by CSWCD, five feasible alternatives were compared. These alternatives are summarized below and, aside from Alternative 1, generally share the objective of restoring the structural (e.g., depth and velocity) and functional (e.g., sediment transport and nutrient cycling) elements of the East Fork Little Miami River ecosystem that favor well-balanced aquatic communities. Alternatives 2 – 5 also include demolition of the abandoned pump house.

¹ The qualitative habitat evaluation index (QHEI) gives a qualitative assessment of physical characteristics of a sampled stream. QHEI represents a measure of instream geography. By combining evaluations of QHEI and other evaluations, researchers can gain a well-rounded perspective of both the physical and biological conditions of a particular stream site. This comprehensive assessment is critical for evaluating disturbance and land use practices.

Alternative 1 – No Action

This alternative retains current conditions within the East Fork Little Miami River as they are. As noted in the project plan, the no-action alternative was eliminated from further consideration as it would not result in the needed habitat improvements. Not removing the Williamsburg Dam would continue the habitat degradation and water quality impairments associated with the dam and impoundment. Furthermore, it would not result in compliance with ambient water quality standards, produce a well-balanced exceptional warmwater aquatic community, or implement the strategic actions of the Middle East Fork Watershed Action.

The dam also poses potential risk to the public, as many people are not aware of the potential drowning hazards associated with these structures.

Alternative 2 – Modification to the Existing Dam with No In-Stream Restoration

Alternative 2 includes a modification to the existing structure to allow for fish passage with no in-stream restoration work. This method would construct notches in the dam to connect the upstream and downstream river segments. While this approach would improve migration for fish and other species, the intact structure would maintain an impoundment, impeding the natural flow regime of the river and creating problems with sedimentation and habitat degradation. This alternative would leave the majority of the dam intact and, with continued degradation of the Williamsburg Dam, would eventually lead to failure, potentially jeopardizing human life, damaging infrastructure downstream, and substantially degrading aquatic communities downstream of the dam. The preliminary estimated cost for this approach is \$127,000.

Alternative 3 – Partial Dam Removal with No In-Stream Restoration

Alternative 3 includes partial removal of the dam structure with no in-stream restoration. A partial removal would open the segment of river to fish passage by removing a section of the dam and leaving a good percentage of the structure intact. While a partial removal could improve fish passage, the remaining portion of the structure would impede a natural flow regime and maintain a semi-impounded river creating some problems with sedimentation and habitat degradation. This alternative would leave sections of the dam intact and, with continued degradation of the Williamsburg Dam, would eventually lead to failure, potentially jeopardizing human life, damaging infrastructure downstream, and substantially degrading aquatic communities downstream of the dam. The preliminary estimated cost for this approach is \$166,000.

Alternative 4 – Partial Dam Removal with In-Stream Restoration

Alternative 4 includes partial removal of the structure with in-stream restoration. The remaining portion of the dam would not extend into the stream channel, and the majority dam removal would result in the immediate restoration of habitat in this section of river. Removal of the majority of the dam would enhance the migration of fish and other aquatic organisms, improving the overall biodiversity in the Fivemile Creek watershed. The estimated cost for this approach is \$345,000.

Alternative 5 – Full Dam Removal with In-Stream Restoration

Alternative 5 for restoring this segment of the East Fork back to full attainment of its exceptional warmwater habitat status includes full removal of the Williamsburg low-head dam and riparian and in-stream restoration, including elements of Natural Channel Design. The dam removal would result in the immediate restoration of habitat and enhance the migration of fish and other aquatic organisms, improving the overall biodiversity in the Fivemile Creek watershed. The estimated cost for this approach is \$674,911.

Selected Alternative

The selected alternative for the Williamsburg Dam project is alternative 5, full removal of the dam and restoration of the river using Natural Channel Design, as well as demolition and removal of the pump house. This approach will result in the best possible outcome for restoring habitat integrity and biodiversity in this impaired section of East Fork Little Miami River. This approach is also consistent with the goals outlined in the East Fork Lake and Tributaries Watershed Action Plan.

Under Ohio EPA's program requirements for nonpoint source projects such as this, the costs of the selected alternative must be reasonable. Based on the information summarized in the previous section and included in the WRRSP implementation plan, Ohio EPA has concluded that the proposed action can be completed at a reasonable cost and will result in the expected water quality benefits. More specific information on the selected alternative follows.

Currently, the dam impounds approximately 900-linear feet of river, causing habitat and sedimentation impairments. Its removal will allow aquatic organisms to move freely within this section of the river, decrease the amount of sediment built-up in the impounded area, and increase the quality of aquatic habitat. As noted in the CSWCD's project plan, removal of the dam will be followed by in-stream restoration, incorporating elements of Natural Channel Design, which includes stabilizing and restoring the banks of the East Fork Little Miami River with native vegetation where necessary. Available evidence from previous Ohio EPA studies suggests that the existing river bed upstream contains natural channel substrates that will flow downstream once a more normal bedload pattern is reestablished. The project will improve in-stream and riparian habitat

and increase QHEI scores. QHEI scores upstream of the dam are expected to improve from 75 to above 85 at RM 36.7, to reflect the exceptional habitat observed downstream of the dam.

As a result of completing this proposed dam removal and restoration project, CSWCD expects that the ecological processes that contribute to exceptional warmwater habitat elsewhere in the East Fork Little Miami River will be restored. More specifically, the project will: remove a significant fish passage barrier that affects fish and mussels that require fish as hosts for reproduction, restore habitat types in the project reach that are presently absent (e.g., riffles, glides, runs), and thereby restore hydraulic habitat complexity, increase substrate heterogeneity, alleviate water quality issues associated with the impoundment, and shift habitat conditions away from those that favor invasive exotic species such as the common carp. Secondary goals of this project include improving connectivity of forested riparian corridor, eliminating a public safety hazard, improving river aesthetics, improving recreational use of the river, and enhancing public awareness/watershed stewardship.

Project Implementation

The current estimated construction cost of this project is \$674,911, which will be provided as WRRSP funds from Akron’s WPCLF sponsorship loan. The following information shows how these funds will be used:

Project Costs

Protection/Restoration Plan Preparation	\$100,612
Engineering Construction Services	\$22,000
Dam Deconstruction	\$160,000
Stream Restoration and Bank Stabilization	\$362,299
Permits, Legal Services, Required Surveys	\$25,000
Project Signage WPCLF/WRRSP	\$5,000
Total:	\$674,911

Assuming a WPCLF loan award to Akron for its sponsoring project in May, 2017, a maximum of \$674,911 in WRRSP funds will be available for this project after final design and other required reviews are completed by the engineers and consultants. Construction is currently expected to start in October, 2017 and be completed within nine months, by June, 2018. The WRRSP funding is in the form of a principal forgiveness loan, meaning CSWCD and the residents of Williamsburg will not be responsible for repaying the amount shown above. Any project cost increases above \$674,911 will be financed by the Village of Williamsburg or other sources, as the WRRSP is limited to funding the originally approved amount included in the 2016 WPCLF Program Management Plan.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Project

The following features will not be affected by the project because they are not present in the project area or, if present, will not be impacted due to the nature of the project: coastal zones, wild and scenic rivers, wetlands, wildlife areas, sole source aquifers, and major land forms (for example, hilltop removal or filling of valleys).

Because of the site chosen for this proposed project, its generally well-defined scope, and the mitigation concepts proposed by the project's engineering team, Ohio EPA expects that the proposed project will not directly result in significant adverse effects on the natural or human environment. Where there is any potential for direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on any resources in these two categories, a discussion can be found in the following summary of Ohio EPA's environmental reviews. Overall, this proposed project is not expected to result in any significant, adverse environmental impacts for the reasons cited below.

Surface Water Resources

By removing the low-head dam at Williamsburg and completing the other restoration work described above, Ohio EPA expects that the proposed project will restore a free-flowing river and allow natural sediment processing mechanisms to become reestablished and so achieve exceptional warmwater aquatic life use criteria. As a result, habitat is expected to improve through increases in the riffle substrate quality, decreases in substrate embeddedness, and enhancements to in-stream habitat heterogeneity. A target QHEI score of 85 is expected to be realized within twelve months following removal of the dam and restoration of a more natural flow regime. In general, typical storm water controls are expected to be sufficient to protect surface water quality during the nine months that dam removal and related de-construction activities are underway. On this basis, Ohio EPA does not expect any significant, adverse impacts on surface water features within the project area during or after the relatively short duration of this proposed project.

Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Critical Habitat, including Floodplains

Aquatic Habitat

As discussed in the previous section, the East Fork Little Miami River is the one aquatic habitat that will benefit the most from the proposed dam removal activities. Given the limited scope and duration of the proposed project, along with the mitigative measures proposed by the project's engineering team, Ohio EPA has concluded that the short-term impacts of the proposed de-construction project on aquatic habitats in the East Fork Little Miami River will be controllable. In return for these relatively short-term effects on water quality, the long-term benefit consists of restoring this section of the East Fork Little Miami River to a free-flowing condition and removing the impoundment which contributes sediment. Finally, should any temporary filling and/or dredging of the East Fork Little Miami River at or below the dam site be needed to complete this project

in accordance with the findings of prior sediment studies, Ohio EPA expects that all conditions of the pertinent Clean Water Act Section 404 and 401 permits will be adhered to, and so assure that aquatic habitat is properly protected. On this basis, we have concluded that the proposed dam removal project will not have any significant, adverse long-term impacts on this resource.

Terrestrial Habitat

The land in the immediate area of the Williamsburg Dam and its impoundment is previously disturbed and reflects past stabilization activities related to the dam, its pump house, and the controlled, steep slope on the west side of the river. A field containing fill material from a previous road construction project is adjacent to the east and northeast of the dam. A buffer consisting primarily of mature trees, but also containing saplings and invasive brush is present between the dam and the area of road fill material, and will require selective clearing for access to the project area. The trees here provide bank stabilization and food and cover for aquatic organisms in the East Fork Little Miami River. Select tree removal ahead of the temporary access road construction and dam removal work is an unavoidable aspect of this project, as discussed below. However, by allowing the root structures to remain and narrowing the temporary access road's construction as much as possible, slope stability along the riverbank can be maintained and terrestrial habitat impacts minimized. In addition, the project's consultants have indicated that steps will be taken to restore native vegetation to the river bank upon removal of the dam and related structures. This replacement activity should help compensate for any necessary tree removal.

A temporary access road through the property east of the dam will need to be constructed for work site access by track hoes and other heavy equipment. At the completion of the dam removal and restoration activities, the access road will be restored to its previous condition. Furthermore, the area of the proposed access road is believed to contain fill material from a previous road construction project.

Based on the above, Ohio EPA has concluded that these activities, with effective erosion and sedimentation controls, will not result in significant, adverse impacts on the terrestrial habitat of the project area.

Critical Habitat

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicates that the project is within the range of the Indiana bat (endangered) and northern long-eared bat (threatened). Trees within the project area range from small shrubs to large, mature trees in a mixed commercial, agricultural and residential setting. Tree removal is limited to only those trees necessary for completion of the project (e.g., trees within the access road location or within the path of heavy equipment, etc.). Other mature trees are located outside of the work area and within the river corridor and would provide habitat for displaced bats, if present. Tree removal is only permitted to occur October 1 - March 31 or in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These tree clearing restrictions will

further reduce potential impacts to Indiana bats or northern long-eared bats. On this basis, we have concluded that the proposed project will not have any significant, adverse impact on these species or their critical habitat.

The project is within the range of the rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*); and the sheepnose (*Plethobasus cyphus*), both state endangered and federally endangered mussels, the washboard (*Megaloniais nervosa*); the ebonyshell (*Fusconaia ebena*); the butterfly (*Ellipsaria lineolate*); the elephant-ear (*Elliptio crassidens crassidens*); the Ohio pigtoe (*Pleurobema cordatum*); the little spectaclecase (*Villosa lienosa*); the monkey face (*Quadrula metanevra*); and the wartyback (*Quadrula nodulata*), all state endangered mussels, and the fawnsfoot (*Truncilla donaciformis*), a state threatened mussel. A mussel survey will be required to be conducted six months prior to in-stream construction activities. Readers should also note that the relocation of any native freshwater mussels that become stranded as a result of lowering the water level during the dam's removal will need to be conducted in accordance with the current Ohio Mussel Survey Protocol.

The project is within the range of the northern madtom (*Noturus stigmosus*); the shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*); the shortnose gar (*Lepisosteus platostomus*); and the goldeye (*Hiodon alosoides*), all state endangered fish, the mountain madtom (*Noturus eleutherus*); the paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*); the bigeye shiner (*Notropis boops*); the river darter (*Percina shumardi*); and the channel darter (*Percina copelandi*), all state threatened fish; and the river redhorse (*Moxostoma carinatum*), a state species of concern. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) recommends no in-water work in perennial streams from April 15 to June 30 to reduce impacts to indigenous aquatic species and their habitat.

The project is within the range of the Kirtland's snake (*Clonophis kirtlandii*), a state threatened species. This secretive species prefers wet fields and meadows. Due to the location, the type of habitat present at the project site, and within the vicinity of the project area, and the type of work proposed, this project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), a state endangered bird. This is a common migrant and winter species. Nesters are much rarer, although they occasionally breed in large marshes and grassland. Harriers often nest in loose colonies. The female builds a nest out of sticks on the ground, often on top of a mound. Harriers hunt over grasslands. As this type of habitat is not expected to be impacted, this project is not likely to impact this species. If this type of habitat will be impacted, construction should be avoided in this habitat during the species' nesting period of May 15 to August 1.

Based on this information, the project will have no significant short-term or long-term adverse effect on terrestrial habitat or endangered species.

Floodplains

A defined floodplain for the East Fork Little Miami River at Williamsburg has been previously established. While the removal of the dam will have some effect on the interaction of the river with its floodplain, flood control is now managed by the more recently constructed Harsha Dam. Furthermore, Williamsburg has coordinated with its floodplain coordinator regarding this project. On this basis, Ohio EPA has concluded that the proposed project will have no significant, adverse effect on floodplains in the immediate project area or on flood levels.

Air Quality

During the relatively short-term estimated dam removal period, operation of heavy equipment will result in minor increases in air pollution in the immediate project area. This minor increase is an unavoidable result of the proposed project, but routine use of dust control measures (such as water and calcium chloride) and proper engine maintenance should help limit the amount of air pollutants that will be generated. Upon completion of the proposed project, air quality should return to the pre-construction condition. Accordingly, no significant, adverse direct or indirect, short- or long-term, impacts on air quality are expected. Clermont County air meets standards for five of the six regulated air pollutants (carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, lead, and particulates) and is in marginal nonattainment for the 8-Hour ozone standard.

Dust, Noise, Odors and Traffic,

Overall, this proposed project and its location within a commercial/residential corridor suggest that impacts on ambient noise levels and traffic patterns will be limited in magnitude and extent during the estimated nine-month dam removal period. On this basis, Ohio EPA expects that noise and traffic levels will return to a pre-construction condition upon project completion and thus have no lasting impacts on area residents. Odors and dust will be controlled with silencers, emissions controls and dust suppressants.

Energy Use

In the short-term, non-renewable energy will be needed to run the heavy equipment required to remove the dam and related structures and sediment from the project area. While this projected, relatively short-term energy use is unavoidable, it is a necessary aspect of this project if the goal of restoring the water quality of this section of the river is to be accomplished. On this basis, Ohio EPA expects that actual energy use required by this project will be consistent with the de-construction of other low-head dams, and will not be a significant long-term draw on local sources. In the long-term, this proposed project will have no negative effects on local energy use and supplies because it includes no energy-consuming equipment.

Archaeological and Historic Resources

Based on Ohio EPA's research, and in consultation with local historians and Ohio's state historical preservation office (SHPO), it was determined that the dam and its pump house are not known or believed to have been constructed utilizing any unusual engineering methods, features or materials, and they are not known to be associated with any significant events, organizations or individuals, including the Works Progress Administration. The dam and, for several decades, pump house have not been maintained since their original construction and are not covered by ODNR's dam safety regulations. On this basis, and due to the lack of any connection between the current dam and pump house and their prior flood control and water supply functions, no historic structures eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are located in the area of potential effects. Furthermore, no structures within the project area are present on the NRHP database.

In coordination with SHPO, an archaeological survey of the temporary access road's proposed location will be required prior to any ground disturbing activities will be allowed. While this area is believed to contain extensive fill material from a previous road construction project, the survey will help to determine if any archaeological/historic resources are present and may be adversely affected by this portion of the project.

In the event of archaeological finds during construction, contractors and subcontractors are required under Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 to notify OHPO of any archaeological discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with that entity (and with Ohio EPA) in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate.

On this basis, Ohio EPA has concluded that the project will have no adverse effect on archaeological or historic resources in the project area.

Local Economy

Given the proposed funding package and large amount of "free money" available for this proposed project, Ohio EPA anticipates that the removal of the Williamsburg Dam will have no adverse effect on the local economy.

Public Participation

The following agencies have reviewed, and were provided an opportunity to comment on, the proposal to finance the Williamsburg Low-Head Dam Removal project with WRRSP and other funds:

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio State Historic Preservation Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

During the environmental reviews of this proposed project, Ohio EPA, Williamsburg, CSWCD, and the project's engineering team coordinated fully with these federal and state review agencies. Any concerns were addressed by Ohio EPA and project's engineering team as indicated in the environmental impacts section of this document. If needed, any additional reports required by the agencies will be filed and reviewed before WRRSP funds are released for construction activities.

Williamsburg has held several public meetings at which the proposed project was discussed, and several articles have been published in the local newspaper regarding the project's progress. A public notice announcing the future availability of this Environmental Assessment will be posted on the village and Ohio EPA – Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance websites. The public notice for the Environmental Assessment will be open for a 30-day public comment period. Thus, there have been adequate opportunities for information dissemination and public participation.

Reasons for a Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon our review of the restoration plan and other information collected about this project, Ohio EPA has concluded that no significant short-term or long-term adverse direct environmental impacts will result from the project as related to the environmental features discussed in this document. This is because either the features: (1) do not exist in the project area, (2) exist but will not be adversely affected, or (3) the impacts of construction will be temporary and/or mitigated in accordance with provisions to be included in the contract documents. For these reasons, this project, alone or in combination with other projects, is not expected to result in any significant indirect or cumulative short-term or long-term adverse environmental impacts. Overall, this proposed project is expected to re-create a natural, free-flowing condition in the East Fork Little Miami River where a 900-linear feet stagnant impoundment now exists.

For further information, please contact:

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Figure 1: Project area, in yellow.



Figure 2: General project area, in red.