Outlook

Cofferdam application / permit - A dual permit with Army Corp

From David Brigham <dcbrig@gmail.com>

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1 attachment (2 MB)

WRP047911 Village of Northport draft countersign permit and plans (2).pdf;

Dear Northport Village Council, Planning, and Community Citizens,

An open letter.

Analogy on Health: We invest unlimited resources in wellness as our personal health is important. When illness comes along we seek out the best medical doctors and surgeons with hope to rid us of our illness. We rely entirely on their learned skill and medical science. We put our lives in their hands. What we don't do is sit down and vote on whether we want to be healthy or not.
*Those experts (fisheries biologists) that study the health of streams and rivers hold degrees from studies in Fisheries & Wildlife Science, Marine Biology, Environmental Science, Aquatic Science, Zoology and Stream Ecology. They too are doctors. As with medical doctors we would be wise to appreciate their knowledge.
*The creek doctors that have studied Northport Creek, report the creek is "impaired". The primary impairment being the artificial barrier and the impoundment itself. The word impaired doesn't necessarily sound all that alarming until we learn the meaning of the diagnosis. Impairments of Northport Creek caused by the dam include: 1. Warming of cold spring water (essential for coldwater species) 2. Trapping of nutrient enrichment which induces algae and weed growth. 3. Depletion of oxygen. 4. Trapping of natural stream sediment (trout need a gravel bottom and not pond mud) 5. Loss of habitat structure for trout. 6. Blocking free passage for trout to migrate upstream to spawn. As a result of this unnatural condition, a mature fish community in Northport Creek is poor.
*Doctors recommendation: Fisheries biologist (MDNR & GTBand Natural Resources) recommended remedy for restoring good health of the trout stream is to surgically remove the dam and pond (midstream tumor) that is making the creek unhealthy and allow mother nature to do her thing. Any

necessary remediation would be supervised by our local River Ecologist, Brett Fessell, of Grand Traverse Band Natural Resources.

Cofferdam permit:
We/I missed seeing the notice regarding this permit application. Did you see? Was it published? We were told it was on the Village website. Per our request, EGLE sent the attached permit to us. The cofferdam is for the purpose of making temporary costly repairs on a 91 year old deteriorating, obsolete dam.

Environmental stewardship?
This permit reveals not only does the Council feel entitled to spend many more thousands of tax dollars preserving the "deteriorating" dam that was built in 1935 without authorized regulation, but also demonstrates that Council has no regard for restoring a severely impaired Type 1 Trout Stream. (Original dam built 1855 for a log pond. An environmental mess)
In addition to the creek being severely impaired by the impoundment dam, NP Creek is on State of Michigan's Impaired Waters List for E.coli bacteria above body contact limits. (Waterfowl = duck poop = E.Coli) I don't need to tell you that few people deliberately go to the pond site as residents and visitors alike are drawn to our 3 exceptional waterfront parks within the Village on Northport Bay.

Northport government is putting good money with bad (Fiscal responsibility?) while they know government funding is available as incentive for removal of the dam and restoration of the creek. Federal government funding is said to be for the purpose of "reconnecting broken streams." The funding is funneled through the federal Clean Water Act. Follow the science!

Do you care about protecting clean water?
If it's so nice, why don't kids jump in on a hot summer day?

The 25K Dam Inspection and Feasibility Study in 2023 was carried out "because of concerns for on-going cost and maintenance." PE, Dan DeVaun, spelled out the advantages of dam removal and restoration in his report and told specifically where to go for funding while using real numbers.
*For what legitimate good reason does the Village Council justify their choices? There are alternatives to the small, one (1) day a year bobber fishing event! *
How many additional thousands of tax dollars will the cofferdam project cost? We know certain individuals would like to see the pond dredged. A reliable source stated 2 years ago dredging would cost as much as 115K. Dredging is NOT done for stream restoration ($dollars saved) as sediment helps shape the new stream channel and offers soil for planting indigenous vegetation to create a steam canopy. The shade for keeping spring water cold.

If the creek had a voice, what would it say?
You should be the voice for the creek.

Leelanau Forum has conscientiously invested time and resources for more than 10 years with the purpose of providing the citizenry with scientific study and opportunities regarding this important issue. Leelanau Conservancy, Watershed Center GTBay, Conservation Resource Alliance, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians, all are leaders prepared to assist in application for funding "to reconnect broken streams and revitalize fish habitat..."

(Northport Creek stream pathway winds its way through the heart of town. With a little TLC, it could be the jewel of Northport, but it's not.)

This costly cofferdam brainstorm by a few is blatantly contrary to the dam removal initiative that has been ongoing in Michigan and across the country. A wiser choice would be to INVEST tax dollars into our affordable housing concerns while using government $funding$ to restore Northport Creek.

We are confident that many feel removal of the deteriorating dam and returning the creek to nature is in Northport's best interest. An objective supported unanimously by Trout Unlimited. I encourage you to speak up now and influence the Council to shift the paradigm and make this issue about restoring the creek for posterity and not about selfish wants of temporary people. We are the stewards and no one else.

Essentially what the Council is doing, is spending taxpayer dollars to keep the creek and creek water impaired.

A free-flowing trout stream is wonderful !

Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Brigham - Leelanau Forum

Children would make the right choice... 🙂

Impoundment after uncontrolled drawdown

Here is the cofferdam ap permit