



CITY OF HUNTINGTON

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PRESS RELEASE

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FUNDING SECURED FOR LOW-HEAD DAM REMOVAL

City awarded grant from DNR to remove low-head dam on the Little River

HUNTINGTON, IN – The City of Huntington has been awarded 2016 Indiana Lake and River Enhancement grant funds from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Fish & Wildlife to remove a failed low-head dam on the Little River just east of Jefferson Street. The 80-20 matching grant will provide up to \$80,000 in state funds from boat registration fees, with the City contributing the remaining 20% of the total project cost.

The City will now begin the process of obtaining required permits from various state and federal agencies. Upon the approval of those permits, the City will work with DNR to finalize a scope of work for the project and select a qualified contractor. The project is scheduled to begin in late August/early September.

The dam, originally a wooden timber-crib structure, was built around 1861 to power a flour mill that was once located on Jefferson Street along the river. The wood dam was covered in concrete sometime after 1911 and ultimately failed in early 2016. After the dam failed, the City consulted with engineers, hydrologists and staff from the DNR and US Army Corps of Engineers. After evaluating all of the available options and the benefits associated with each, it was determined that removal of the failed structure entirely was the best course of action.

Back wash caused by low-head dams are known for the danger they pose to recreational river users; with the dam's failure, perilous currents have given way to new dangers. Over the past six months since the dam failed, high flows have continued to deteriorate remains of the dam and sharp rebar, wood and concrete now create a hazard to recreational users of the river. Additionally, concrete, metal, and wood pieces of the dam continue to be washed downstream over time creating hazards elsewhere.

Once removed, fish and other aquatic life will be able to freely move past the location allowing increased biological diversity up and downstream. The same access will prove beneficial to those wishing to experience the river by way of kayak or canoe and the City's growing trail network along the river will also increase recreational opportunities on the banks. Most noticeably, the upstream water level has decreased by a few feet, providing some anticipated relief from minor flooding. With future flood flows, sediment will redistribute and the river will find its new natural pathway as it heals from being restricted for the past 150 plus years by the man-made impediment. Over time, sediment rich areas now exposed to oxygen and sunlight will begin to vegetate and provide the same lush green habitat that exists elsewhere along the river.