

**RESPONSES TO PUBLIC COMMENTS
MOXAHALA CREEK WATERSHED**

Moxahala Creek Watershed TMDLs

The Moxahala Creek Watershed Draft TMDL Report was available for public review from February 15 through March 15, 2012. This appendix contains the comments received and responses to those comments.

Eight sets of comments were received on the draft report. The initials in parentheses following each comment denote the specific commenter, as listed in the following table:

Initials	Date Received	Name	Organization
TT	3/8/2012 (via email)	Todd Thompson	Citizen
LS	3/11/2012 (via email)	Larry Stumbo	Citizen
PH	3/11/2012 (via email)	Phillip M. Hopper	Citizen
TB	3/11/2012 (via email)	Troy Baker	Citizen
AP	3/11/2012 (via email)	Annette Porter	Citizen
RR	3/12/2012 (via email)	Richard Rockwell	Citizen
WT	3/13/2012 (via email)	Walter E. Taylor, III	Citizen
SC	3/14/2012 (via email)	Susan Culbertson	Muskingum County Commissioners

All of the comments received relate to the mill dam near White Cottage.

Comment (TT)

I live right beside Jonathan creek immediately upstream from the "old mill dam" at White Cottage.

I am upset and appalled that such a drastic action (removal of dam) is being considered and has been kept so quiet with regards to community notification and input. I am going to share three main areas of concern 1. Historical significance. 2. Flood potential reduction. 3. Water quality knowledge

Historical points;

I know the politically correct crowd wants every man made dam removed, however, this dam was constructed along with the grist mill in 1813 using cut sandstones cut just upstream from White Cottage on Kents Run and drug down by ox-carts. This mill was purchased by my ancestors William and David Gladstone at the end of the Civil War in 1865 after their service to the union army. This grist mill was operated by them until the great flood of 1913 took the undershot mill-wheel away. At this point these brothers were getting along in years and electricity was becoming available and a mill could be placed almost anywhere. This mill and dam is an asset to tell the tale of the settling of the northwest territories.

Flood potential reduction;

The village of White Cottage lays just downstream of the old mill dam. White Cottage has been seriously damaged by flooding as recently as June 2008. Other significant floods happened in 1913, 1937, 1950, 1964, 1965 and 1983. The old mill dam holds back many acre feet of water above it, it doesn't spread out over very many acres, which I know would help further, but it has to help some. Any extra water below the dam could add to the problem as Jonathan creek holds back the flow from Kents Run and adds to the flooding.

Water Quality;

I realize concern over oxygen levels and stagnation at low flow....However in my entire life I have never seen water fail to flow over the top of the dam, not even during the devastating

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drought of 1988. Let me tell you a little about stream health and diversity. Just last summer in the upper pool I remember my 10 year old nephew catching 9 bass in less than two hours. Last summer a gentleman set turtle hooks for a few days, exclusively in the pool above the dam, he hooked 2 or 3 snappers a day. These were big, big mature turtles. This past December 2011 and January 2012 two college students ran a trap line in this 'stagnant upper pool'. They caught numerous muskrats, several raccoons a mink and a beaver. All of these furbearers require at least in part a healthy stream.

In closing let me state that I am strongly opposed to the removal of the 'old mill dam' at White Cottage. It already is a healthy and vibrant creek with many of the above mentioned species plus abundant waterfowl including mallards, wood ducks, great blue heron and a few years ago an Osprey.

I would be pleased to talk to or meet any of your staff on site I can be reached anytime at *[omitted information]*.

Comment (LS)

We recently visited Jonathan Creek and the Old Mill Dam at White Cottage. What a blessing of history! We were there with our 7 year old son who has been talking about how awesome it was to see and hear the stories behind that old mill and dam since our visit. I cannot even imagine the blood, sweat and tears that went into building that mill and dam.

I was also made aware of the recent talk of destroying the dam. I cannot imagine destroying 200 years of history in that small town. I am not a resident there but have grown up in Hocking County and I honestly feel sick at my stomach to even think about them losing such a piece of history. It shouldn't be destroyed it should be a monument of time, a museum, a small taste of the past! Something to be cherished forever as it has withstood many a storm in it's day!

We as a family wish to ask you to reconsider your decision to destroy this. I have heard all kinds of fishing and wildlife stories, none of which the wildlife were sick or dead. We hope a decision is reached that will allow us to visit the past and smile.

Comment (PH)

It is a beautiful dam and full of diverse wildlife. Would be sad and destructive to have it changed.

Comment (TB)

to remove the old mill damn in white cottag would be a tragedy i grew up swimming and and fishing in the water above the damn and below the wild life diversity has been set and developed for yrs to change it for political correctness wold be disasterous to the area its a major part of white cottage history PLEASE LEAVE IT ALONE

Comment (AP)

I just learned that the Ohio EPA is considering removal of the dam to restore the stream to the way it was before the first settlers in the name of political correctness. It would be a tragedy to loose this important piece of history.. The dam is beautiful, the habitat is already diverse above it and it has to help with reducing flooding to all of White Cottage below it.. Please reconsider this action.

Comment (RR)

I don't support removing the old mill dam in white cottage...

Comment (WT)

When I heard of the possibility of the Jonathan Creek Dam at SR 93 and Old Mill Dam near White Cottage could be removed, I became concerned. I will be opening a campgrounds on SR 93 at the Jonathan Creek bridge this spring. I fear by removing the dams, there will a negative result for my business. ODNR has checked this water way at least twice. They reported to me that they caught twelve types of fish and the water life appeared to be doing well. By being at the creek regularly I have seen many types of fish, turtles, water fowl, etc living in this area. There are also many wildlife land animals that use that water way for drinking and food sources. The water currant seems good; which would provide good oxygen levels to the waterlife. This area of water is not stagnant. By removing these dams, I feel not only would the area waterlife which depends on this water way nearly disappear, but my business would be finacially damaged as well. I plan to have fishing and other water recreations. The lowered water levels and increase in the speed of the water will reduce to number of fish. If I can not provide recreational activities for the people camping, then they will go to other campgrounds. This will not only hurt me finacially, but the local economy as well. The more my business grows, the more employment oppotunities I could provide and the other local business's sales would increase. With a desperate economy, any employment and/or revanue would be a blessing. The Engineers Office advised me that the Jonathan Creek dam is structurally sound. By speaking to the local residents I have learned that they do not want to see the dams removed either. Instead of sending money on tearing these two dams down, why not send the funds to areas that truely need it. Saving these dams would actually help the area waterlife and the local economy.

Comment (SC)

We, the Board of County Commissioners of Muskingum County, Ohio, would like to express our concerns about the proposed removal of the “old mill dam” at White Cottage on the Jonathan Creek. The dam is located on the property of the Thompson Family and has existed for 199 years.

Has the environmental impact due to the removal of the dam been considered? Several species of wildlife will be traumatized if the dam is removed. Also has the impact to the families and residents of the county been considered as they have benefited from a great piece of history being in our local area and the call for people and wildlife to interact in a place of peace and quiet?

The property owner has stated that he has not seen the water stop flowing over the dam even during the drought of 1988. The property owner also stated flooding in the White Cottage area is also a concern.

If there is any way to reconsider this project, we would greatly appreciate your efforts to preserve this area and to hopefully protect the environment, history and a priceless family gathering place.

Response

The recommendation in the draft report that dam removal be investigated was made simply as a way to improve water quality. Ample evidence exists that dams can cause water quality problems, such as higher stream temperatures and lower dissolved oxygen. Dams can submerge riffles (shallow, fast-moving portions of streams important to high-quality species of fish and macroinvertebrates), block fish migration, and ultimately change biological community

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structures. Lowhead dams can create a pool of stagnant water during low flows. Lowhead dams can also be a hazard to people who are wading, swimming or boating.

The recommendation is just that: a recommendation that would likely benefit water quality. Ohio EPA cannot implement the recommendation. It would be up to the dam owner and the local community to determine the relative benefit of the dam and initiate any action they may wish to take.

Other Ohio communities have decided to remove dam structures to improve stream function (thus avoiding higher sewage treatment costs), to improve recreation access, to allow fish passage, or to eliminate a public hazard. In Kent, Ohio, the community investigated a similar TMDL recommendation concerning a dam in their historic downtown area (on the National Historic Register). Ultimately, they decided to modify the dam, creating a city park with educational features about the history of the area, eliminating a stagnant pool, and increasing recreation potential for kayakers, fishers, etc. (See <http://www.kentohio.org/reports/dam.asp> for more information.) Ohio EPA and others have provided funding and other assistance for dam removal and/or modification efforts.

To clarify the intent of the recommendation, the text in the final report (Section 6.2) has been modified (underlined text) as follows:

In addition, an upstream dam at White Cottage (formerly for the Gladstone Mill) is likely contributing to some of the aquatic life use impairment observed downstream of the Powell Road dam. Removal of the upstream dam should be investigated but would be dependent on local support. Modifying the dam to remove any barrier to fish passage may also be an option to improve aquatic life and water quality.