

Ecological and Water Resources – River Ecology Unit  
1509 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Michael Brethorst  
City Administrator  
City of Melrose  
225 1<sup>st</sup> NE  
Melrose, MN 56352

Greetings Michael,

We encourage and strongly support the City in continuing to explore the option of dam removal and channel restoration at the Melrose Dam site. This would have major benefits to the health and diversity of the Sauk River and the Melrose community.

However, as currently designed, Phase I addresses infrastructure concerns but does not include elements for improving habitat or restoring stream function. If the City continues to pursue LCCMR and/or LSOHC funds, we would recommend that the City should update the councils on the amended scope of the project. Since there currently is not a solid commitment to Phase II, the funding entities need to be made aware that the current project no longer provides fish passage or restoration benefits. Conversely, in the event of a resolution by the City to proceed with restoration of fish passage and stream functions appropriate to the site, use of LCCMR and/or LSOHC funds would be appropriate and would have full support by the involved DNR staff.

It is our sincere hope to continue working with the City of Melrose and to keep the conversation moving forward. We understand that making a decision on such a significant change in the community can take time. From our perspective the public meeting this past December was time well spent; we appreciate having the opportunity to share information with the city council and community regarding dam projects. Thank you for your efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,



Amanda Hillman  
Restoration Coordinator



Neil Haugerud  
River Ecologist

**From:** [Hillman, Amanda \(DNR\)](#)  
**To:** [Berg, Greg - NRCS-CD, Waite Park, MN](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Melrose Phase I  
**Date:** Thursday, January 31, 2019 10:10:47 AM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)

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Good morning Greg,

Below I've compiled a few comments from the group regarding new Phase I concept of the Melrose project. With regards to habitat, we don't see a substantial gain in ecological benefits:

- Current substrates are already reasonably diverse.
- Downstream shoreline is fairly well vegetated.
- This design is working against natural processes by straightening the stream and locking the channel in place.
- Not gaining any more channel diversity (there is no new pattern or changes in pool/riffle numbers)
- Any channel work has short term impacts to materials, biota and riparian vegetation etc. Within a restoration of connectivity these short term impacts are outweighed by the long term ecological gains. The impacts of Phase I are not outweighed by similar long term benefits.
- This phase of the project appears to be moving the channel to accommodate the new bridge and removal of the Kraft wall versus adding habitat value. The base concept here is a large scale bank stabilization project rather than a stream restoration.

If you have any questions, give me a call.

Amanda