



Secord Lake Association Restoration Plan – Revised April 2025

The Secord Lake Association (SLA), in partnership with the County and Townships, is focused on preparing Secord Lake to return to the legal lake level. There continues to be planning and work on nuisance weed / tree control, shoreline clean-up of debris, and to cut some of the tall tree trunks sticking out of the water.

The Secord Lake Association is a volunteer club. As property owners and friends of Secord, we seek to create a safe, enjoyable lake environment for generations to come. Seeing Secord refilled with nuisance trees, the loss of full use of the public areas on the lake and floating debris is not the future we desire. While we cannot beat Mother Nature, we believe we can work with her to RETAKE areas of our lake.

With 69 miles of shoreline and 1100 acres of water, the entirety of Secord Lake will need a coordinated effort. **This will take a volunteer effort to RETAKE OUR LAKE. NOTE: You do not need to be a member of the SLA to volunteer or help.**

Property owners can manage their lake frontage area now. Some of these ideas were shared the past couple of summers. It's amazing to witness the initiative property owners along our lake have shown. THANK YOU! Removing the nuisance trees by pulling them out by the root in swimming / boating areas is suggested. In some areas, cutting the tree as close to the lake bottom as possible may be appropriate.

While the Summer 2020 direction was not to access the lakebed due to it being unstable with possible sink holes, the lakebed appears to be stable now to allow for access. Property owners should use caution to enter the lakebed to manage the nuisance trees and weeds. There are still soft or mushy spots that can be hazards for people, pets, and equipment.

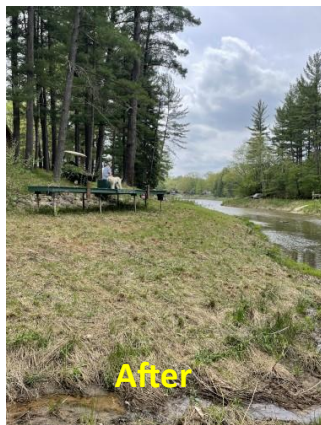
What about the non-aquatic weeds and trees growing in the exposed lakebed?

After the drawdown, as property owners we were encouraged to plant grass or let weeds grow to help manage shoreline erosion. The need for grass and weeds with their roots systems to help manage erosion is still a best practice. We do not recommend the removal of the grass / weeds as their root systems provide benefits. These grasses and weeds will die when they are covered with water.

A new development is the emergence of willow and cottonwood trees. These trees are fast growing, are a nuisance now, and will be an ongoing nuisance when the water returns.



Before



After

This is an example of a Secord Lake front property. One can see the 4 to 6-foot trees in the before photo. The after photo shows the removal of the nuisance trees with the grass / weeds in place to continue to manage erosion.

These nuisance trees can grow 4 to 6 feet per year. There are nuisance trees in some areas of Secord that are 8-10 feet tall at this point. Left alone, over time will make them both taller and thicker. They can impede boat traffic and water sports when the lake returns.

While one could simply cut the trees off close to the ground, the issue is the “spike” or “stake” left behind. These are wood and the spikes can remain causing a hazard to unsuspecting waders and swimmers when the water returns.

We encourage these trees be pulled up by their roots near swimming areas in front of properties.

NOTE: The trees will die when the water returns, if the trunks are not cut and removed, they will impede boating, swimming, and wading.



People have asked how to dispose of the trees once they are removed. They can be burned in your campfire or bundled up with twine for removal as yard waste by the trash collector when that service is offered. Should appropriate property be available, with the owner’s permission, they can be piled up to create habitat for small animals as they decay. It is best not to leave the trees on the lakebed as the wood will float to the surface when the water returns.

Property owners can remove the trees and will want to maintain some weeds or grass, so their root system helps with erosion management. Once trees are removed, some property owners can mow the area with a mower at a high setting and others simply use a string trimmer to manage the weeds while keeping the trees from emerging again.

Property owners can remove wood or other items from the lakebed that can float. When the water returns, floating debris will create a hazard for boating and water sports.

Tips, Tricks and Things Not to Do

- The cottonwood and willow tree roots are easier to pull the smaller the tree. For larger trees, using a garden spade or shovel to loosen around the root makes it easier. Think of this as a big dandelion.
- **Help your neighbors** - - - removing the trees is hard, manual work. Getting a couple of people to do the work makes it go quicker. If you have elderly neighbors, please lend them a hand.
- It is manual work - - - pace yourself, take breaks and drink a lot of water while you work.
- If you are using equipment, saws, trimmers, cutters, or mowers, please use caution.
- Once the nuisance trees are removed, the ongoing maintenance with either a mower or string trimmer is easier.
- There is a list of contractors that will provide this service for a fee. [Restoring Secord - Weed & Tree Control | Secord Lake Assoc. \(secordlakeassociation.org\)](https://www.secordlakeassociation.org)
- It is **NOT** recommended individuals use herbicides near or on the lake bottoms. Remember grass and weed growth is desired as their roots aid with erosion. It’s not a good idea to introduce herbicides to the lake system.
- It is **NOT** recommended for individuals to conduct controlled burning or create fires on the lakebed.
- You **CAN** cut stumps, trees, and shrubs without causing rutting or disturbance of sediment to lower injury potential or damage to boat props. Cut logs must be removed from bottomlands. STUMP ATTACHED TO THE LAKEBOTTOM CANNOT BE REMOVED WITHOUT A PERMIT FROM EGLE.

We have received a couple of questions from property owners that may be relevant to others. We did some research and thought we’d pass these along to the lake community. ((SEE NEXT PAGE))

Q: Our property needs the sand replaced on the lakebed. Do I need a permit to add or replace the sand?

A: If the Sand is to be added on the shoreline, above the historic water level on the shoreline at full lake level, no permit is required.

If the Sand is to be added to swimming area on the lakebed, a permit is required. If a property owner follows the guidelines provided in the link below, the EGLE permit should qualify as a minor permit with a cost of \$100. If the lakebed area for sand placement exceeds the guidelines outlined in the DEQ Swim Fills Beach Sanding Handout link below, this may be a major permit with an estimated cost of \$500. Please consult EGLE for specific permit fees.

This permit qualifies for the Secord Lake Association Member Grant Program ([PLACE HOLDER FOR DOC](#))

Here is a guide provided by the State: <https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/egle/Documents/Programs/WRD/Inland-Lakes-and-Streams/Swim-Fills-Beach-Sanding-Handout.pdf?rev=0d385cdf76dd4c569c34ef13fd30ddb0>

Q: Cat Tails - - this plant grows in wet, mushy areas that traditionally are under water. There seems to be various opinions regarding the water depth these plants can survive in. For instance, in front of our place we have a pasture growing now in an area that will be under 4-1/2 to 6 feet of water at legal lake level. What can we do as property owners to safely, effectively, and lawfully manage or remove these plants?

A: Our partner, PLM reports a lot of the cattails will die off when the water level increases. PLM has seen cattails grow in 3' of water, but that was undisturbed water that gets very little boat traffic. Boat traffic does and will help reduce their growth. While the water is down, property owners can weed whip cat tails to help manage their growth / spread. Spraying of the lakebed by property owners is not allowed without a permit from EGLE with application by a licensed professional.

Q: Purple Loosestrife - - this invasive plant needs to be controlled. What can we do as property owners to remove these plants safely, effectively, and lawfully?

A: This is an invasive species as defined by the State of Michigan. https://www.michigan.gov/invasives/-/media/Project/Websites/invasives/Documents/ID/Plants/Aquatic/Purple_Loosestrife.pdf?rev=53a758815cd94fa89bcbda6616c76aa4&hash=8CBBF9A97E9753E13DD0D90189BD547E

PLM recommends hand pulling the plants and bagging them in a garbage bag for disposal if possible. If they cannot pull the plant up, just getting the flower off **before they seed is very helpful**. Cut the flower off and put it in a garbage bag for disposal. Spraying of the lakebed by property owners is not allowed without a permit from EGLE with application by a licensed professional.

In Closing - - The Secord Lake Association is a volunteer group of Secord Lake property owners committed to Secord Lake. As property owners we call Secord Lake home and look forward to its return. As we pivot our focus to get Secord Lake READY to return, we will continue to reach out to the Secord Lake community. We believe that TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE. The path to **RETAKE OUR LAKE** will take coordination and volunteers. You can learn more at: [Secord Lake | Secord Lake Association | Restoring Secord](#) < END >