



Secord Dam Restoration Update & Timeline

**Learn what you can do to help Secord prepare to return to legal lake level.
There is a sense of urgency for property owners to deal with nuisance trees.**

The **Secord Lake Association (SLA)** 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 a future we desire. While we cannot beat Mother Nature, we believe we can work with her to RETAKE areas of our lake.

The Secord Lake Association continues to execute the Retake Our Lake campaign to address nuisance trees and weeds to prepare Secord to safely return to legal lake level when the dam construction is complete. You can learn more about the plan at www.SecordLakeAssociation.org/restoring-secord

With 69 miles of shoreline and 1100 acres of water, the entirety of Secord Lake requires a coordinated effort. This will take a volunteer effort to RETAKE OUR LAKE.

We are writing to property owners with a call to action to clean up nuisance trees and debris by the end of 2023 . . . this update will outline the reasons why and explain what you can do to help.

As of August 10th, the FLTF indicates Secord Dam is targeted to be completed in late 2024; with a construction or permit uncertainty into first quarter (Jan – Feb – March) of 2025.

FLTF Engineers indicate Secord Lake will fill in 4 – 11 days within the March to May timeframe assuming normal rain fall. We anticipate a full lake level in summer 2025.

FLTF is working with EGLE to secure a permit to leverage the auxiliary spillway to allow work on both primary spillways / gates. This will help improve construction schedule and if approved may increase lake level perhaps a foot in March – April 2024. The FLTF is aware of boat lifts and piers - water will not be raised ahead of winter ice.

As a contingency to Retake Our Lake, there is a sense of urgency to complete work prior to a potential modest rise in water levels in summer 2024. **We need your help to spread the word to your neighbors and friends.**

While we do not know today **IF** the water level will rise, **we believe we need to plan now as if it will.** A modest increase of 1 foot will make an impact on lakebed accessibility. **If some of our Retake The Lake projects are not complete in 2023, and water rises modestly in the March to June 2024 timeframe, we may not be able to access some of the identified areas.**

FLTF Engineers indicate depending on the slope of the lakebed, a modest 1-foot rise in water at the dam would move the water level about 4 feet closer to shore in some lower or gradually sloped shoreline areas. The FLTF advises the increase will be most notable closest to the dam and will be diluted as one moves upstream. The FLTF indicates the increase won't likely expand recreation use too much.

Property owners can manage their lake frontage area now. Retake Our Lake is a coordinated program to prepare Secord to safely receive water to full legal lake level. **It's amazing to witness the initiative property owners along our lake are showing. THANK YOU!**

Nuisance Trees

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.

The following is information regarding what you can do now as a property owner to maintain the 50 feet or so of lakebed in front of your property.

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 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.



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 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.
- Thicker trees may need to be cut as close to the lakebed as possible. A large pruning shears or saw works.
- 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.
- With the nuisance trees removed, ongoing maintenance with either a mower or string trimmer is easier.
- 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.
- 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.
- There is a list of contractors that will provide this service for a fee. www.SecondLakeAssociation.org

WEED / TREE CLEANUP RESOURCES (contractors for hire by property owners if needed)

Shoreline Brush Hog Service (Scott Szczepanski) 989-492-0155

Michigan Brush Hogging Service (Jason Coney) 989-429-5698

Shane Boutin 989-424-0420

Lewis Lawn Care 989-708-5045

Lake Side Services (Greg Krzciok) 989-435-9619

Kripple Cutters (Dustin Wenkel) 989-942-4863

Green Cross Landscaping (Jim O'Connell) 989-698-6357

Quality Lawn Care & Landscaping, LLC 989-687-4114

If you have additional questions, please email us at SecordLakeAssociation@gmail.com A member of the Retake Our Lake team will contact you. You can learn read current and past updates on the progress to restore Secord Dam at our website www.SecordLakeAssociation.org click on the Resources tab.

Secord Lake Association
PO Box 176 | Gladwin, MI 48624



www.SecordLakeAssociation.org

email: SecordLakeAssociation@gmail.com

The Secord Lake Association . . .

We are Secord Lake property owners, business owners, township, county officials and friends of Secord seeking to create a safe recreational community for generations to come.

Our Members Make a DIFFERENCE!

When funds to continue engineering work on Secord Dam were at risk of running out, we lobbied in Gladwin and Midland Counties to continue.

We created and managed the **RestoreTheLakes** campaign, to include all 4 Lake communities and both counties to seek help at the state and federal level.

This campaign helped secure the \$200 Million State of Michigan Grant to the Four Lakes Task Force (FLTF) for dam construction to restore the 4 Lakes.

We helped secure a federal grant for \$750,000 for dam safety equipment for Secord and Smallwood dams.

We continue to support the FLTF mission to secure additional funding to restore the dams.

We are coordinating the Retake Our Lake efforts to help prepare Secord Lake to safely return.

We hold fund raisers focused on Secord Lake improvements. We recently allocated \$17,000 toward Secord restoration efforts. In the past several years we have allocated almost \$60,000 toward Secord restoration.



SLA Members & County Officials with Speaker Wentworth and Rep Glenn – June 2021



SLA Members & County Officials with US Congressman John Moolenaar – June 2021



SLA speak for funding in Midland County



SLA Members & County Official with US Congressman John Moolenaar– July 2023

We would love for YOU to join US! Our MEMBERS Make A DIFFERENCE! Memberships start at \$25 / year or 5 years for \$100.

To learn more please check out:

www.secordlakeassociation.org/membership

www.SecordLakeAssociation.org

We have monthly Saturday morning meetings during the Season (April – Oct).

Join us for fun events with family and friends of Secord Lake!



Have questions - - email us at SecordLakeAssociation@gmail.com or drop a note:
Secord Lake Association
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