



FLTF AWARDS CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR SECORD AND SMALLWOOD TO FISHER CONTRACTING

FLTF awarded the contract for constructing Secord and Smallwood dams to Midland-based Fisher Contracting. Fisher was the lowest of two bidders. Eight other companies were approved through FLTF’s pre-qualification process but chose not to bid.

In addition to cost and schedule, bidders were asked to provide information about health and safety performance, relevant project experience, insurance, financial capacity, and contractor integrity. The requirements were prepared in collaboration with Spicer Group, consulting engineers for the Four Lakes Level Project, based on requirements set forth in Part 307.

Fisher’s bid for Secord Dam was \$37.2 million and \$31.7 million for Smallwood Dam. These bids represent only construction costs and do not include “pull-ahead” work, or all-in project costs. Now that Fisher has been selected, FLTF is working on final agreements, and the time and schedule estimates for the entire project. FLTF expects to have total renewed estimates for all four dams in the Four Lakes system at the end of the year. An informational webinar is scheduled for January 18 to provide an update by the FLTF. [FLTF Awards Construction Contract for Secord and Smallwood to Fisher Contracting - FOUR LAKES TASK FORCE \(four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com\)](https://www.four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com)

How does the award of this construction bid fit into the overall project?

3 By 3 - - - Recall, **to obtain required construction permits, 3 things need to be in place.**

- 1) 100% Engineering with detailed construction and regulatory plans, **and**
- 2) Funding for construction, **and**
- 3) A flow of funding in place for long-term operations, repairs, and maintenance.

The required special assessment for operations, repairs and maintenance appears on the December 2022 tax bill for properties in the special assessment district. This special assessment allows the restoration efforts for all 4 lakes to move forward. The Secord project has received final Permitting from the regulatory agencies.

With the Permit approved, the public bidding process is completed, and the bid for Secord / Smallwood is awarded.

To obtain the regulatory agreement to fill Secord, at a high-level 3 things need to be completed:

- 1) The length of the Secord Dam earthen embankment needs to be strengthened, **and**
- 2) An appropriate auxiliary spillway needs to be constructed, **and**
- 3) The gates need to be upgraded.

The FLTF obtained agreement from EGLE for “pull ahead” projects at Secord. The installation of the rock and steel sheet piling is underway. Once completed, the rock and sheet piling will strengthen the embankment. These steel pieces are 65 feet in length and are being installed by construction engineers into the glacial till below the surface.

How does the Secord bid compare to the estimate?

The FLTF announcement indicates “These bids represent only construction costs and do not include “pull-ahead” work, or all-in project costs”. The Secord Lake Association is not positioned to explain the variance and looks forward to the FLTF update meeting to learn more.

We can report that inflation continues to raise its’ ugly head. A quick Google search illustrates the pricing for construction related materials and labor over the past 12 months eclipses double digit increases. One can also assume the bid has future inflationary pressures built into it as this represents a 12 – 18-month construction project.

The other dynamic that may impact the overall bid is the Federal Governments \$1.2 Trillion Infrastructure Bill. This bill funds infrastructure projects that are in direct competition with projects like our dam. This may help explain a number of companies went through the qualification process that started in Spring 2022 with only 2 providing bids. The others may have filled their schedules with other projects funded by the Infrastructure Bill like roads, bridges, airports, locks, other dams, harbors, etc.

We are fortunate to have our project awarded to a qualified construction company as work moves forward.

How does the bid award impact the timeline?

Now that Fisher has been selected, FLTF is working on final agreements, and the time and schedule estimates for the entire project. FLTF expect to have total renewed estimates for all four dams in the Four Lakes system at the end of the year. An informational webinar is scheduled for January 18 to provide an update by the FLTF. You can sign up for that webinar on the FLTF website.

Here is the current guidance providing timing shared in the recent past:



At this point, barring raw material or other unforeseen issues, the FLTF and their Engineers project the Secord Dam reconstruction improvements will be completed in Q2 2024.

Due to the number of boat lifts; portable piers and other property that could be damaged by ice, the plan is to allow Mother Nature to help fill Secord Lake with the Spring thaws / rains in 2024. This assumes the filling of the lake will meet the required Minimum Flow Requirements.

Secord is on schedule to be returned in 2024 – The Secord Lake Association is beginning to focus on what is needed over the next 18 months to prepare Secord to return. There is planning work underway on weed / tree control and removal. **We seek volunteers to help prepare the lake for its return.** You can learn more at [Secord Lake](#) | [Secord Lake Association](#) | [Restoring Secord](#)