



FLTF Informational Webinar Recap

April 23, 2025

This recaps the FLTF informational webinar held Wednesday, April 23, 2025. As the primary audience for our updates are property owners on Secord and Smallwood, this will be our focus. We encourage you to listen to the entire 2-hour webinar, which included a lengthy Q&A session here → <https://www.four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com/events.html>

FLTF Update

 MI Circuit Court

 Federal vs Gladwin County

 MI Court of Appeals

 Federal vs Midland County

 MI Supreme Court Application



4/15/2025

Construction was forced to halt due to numerous HCA legal actions. All have been reviewed and either denied or dismissed by the various Courts and Judges engaged.

Construction was suspended on Secord and Smallwood in summer of 2024 as each project completed a stage that allowed the dam to safely be suspended as there was uncertainty when construction could restart.

Current Situation

- With HCA legal action denied by the Courts, FLTF can now issue bonds to continue construction.
- FLTF plans to issue two bonds, one in summer 2025 for \$80 million and then in 2026 for the balance of the funds required to complete the project. Unfortunately, bond market rates are higher than last year.
- The Cost of Delay is projected to remain in the \$10 million to \$20 million range.
- FLTF is working with Fisher Construction to mobilize equipment and crews back to Secord and Smallwood in May with the goal to restart work in June 2025.

In the following sections we will cover TIMING, COSTS, and ASSESSMENTS. We will then wrap up with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's).

TIMING

Recall before the HCA suspension, both Secord and Smallwood were scheduled for completion with full legal lake level in Spring 2025 (Column A). Following is an updated estimated schedule (Column B).

TIME	(A) March 2024			(B) April 23, 2025 After HCA Delay	
		Est Substantial Construction Completion (+ or - 3 Mos)*	Est Lake Fill	Estimated Construction RESTART*	Estimated Construction Completion**
	Secord	Dec 2024	Spring 2025	June 2025	Summer 2026
	Smallwood	Dec 2024	Spring 2025	June 2025	Spring 2026
	Wixom	Dec 2025	Spring 2026	July 2025	Fall 2027
	Sanford	Dec 2025	Spring 2026	June 2025	Spring 2026

**The estimated delay for both Secord and Smallwood is 12 to 15+ months. We will provide a table showing how long it will take to fill each lake depending on the time of year in the FAQ section.

EGLE will not allow a lake to fill in the Oct -Feb period due to wildlife hibernation and to avoid ice damage to boat lifts, docks, and seawalls.

There were questions regarding Sanford Lake. As mentioned numerous times over the past 14 months, construction was required to be suspended when a dam was at a phase that allowed construction to safely stop.

The Secord dam suspended after the embankment and axillary spillway were completed to allow water to exit the lake via the temporary gap in the axillary spillway. When the coffer dam was installed to protect the primary spillway, Secord was approved by EGLE to safely suspend.

Work on Sanford dam continued to complete the construction phases required to safely suspend. As this work was recently completed, the crew from Spence Brothers had not fully removed equipment or personnel from the site. Hence, Sanford should not have the same level of delay costs as the other 3 dams. This represents savings to all in the FLSAD. The schedule for Sanford dam has not been impacted by the HCA delay to the same degree as Secord, Smallwood and Edenville.

COSTS - - Construction

FLTF indicates the estimated cost of delay due to the HCA suspension will be in the range of \$10 million to \$20 million. **FLTF indicates the cost of the project is still estimated to be within the NOT TO EXCEED capital assessment approved by the Counties in February 2024.**

COSTS		Est Total Project Cost	
	(A)	Feb 2024 NOT TO EXCEED Approved by Counties	\$398,875,000
	(B)	Dec 2023 Estimate (Before Edenville Bid)	\$364,290,850
	(C)	March 2024 Estimate (After Edenville Bid)	\$353,620,190
	(D)	April 2025 Estimate (After HCA Delay)	\$370,600,000

} \$34,584,150 (E)

} \$16,979,810 (F)

In February 2024, the Counties approved the NOT TO EXCEED capital assessment (Line A) which represented a contingency over the Dec 2023 estimate (Line B). The planning contingency was \$34.5 million (Line E). The Dec 2023 estimate included the bids for Secord, Smallwood, and Sanford along with an estimate for Edenville.

In March 2024, FLTF updated the cost estimate after receiving the Edenville bid which was lower than the estimate used in Dec '24 (Line C). Had the project not been suspended, this likely would have been the number used to establish capital assessments representing a reduction of \$45.2 million vs the NOT TO EXCEED assessment (Line A minus Line C). In other words, a reduction or savings for ALL property owners in the FLSAD.

When we look at the April 2025 estimate (Line D) it is below the NOT TO EXCEED assessment (Line A). The current estimated Cost of Delay is Line F (Line D minus Line C). This number is subject to change.

COSTS – Operations and Maintenance

FLTF indicates this remains unchanged with the assessment approved by the Counties in February 2024 for the next 5 years (2025 to 2029).

ASSESSMENT

The approved **Operations and Maintenance** assessment will appear on the Winter (December) 2025 tax bill due in February 2026. This assessment is approved and set for the next 5 years. The Operations and Maintenance assessment **cannot** be increased annually as claimed by some on Facebook.

Due to the 2025 bond issuance of \$80 million, a modified **Capital** assessment will appear on the Winter (December 2025) tax bill due in February 2026. This amount will be approximately 60% (or 40% less) of the NOT TO EXCEED assessment approved. The NOT TO EXCEED amount is shown on the FLTF assessment map.

The issuance of the second bond will occur in 2026. On the Winter (December) 2026 tax bill due in February 2027 the full annual capital assessment will be due. This should be based on a final cost computation rather than estimates and cannot be greater than the NOT TO EXCEED capital assessment approved in Feb 2024. The capital assessment **cannot** be increased annually as claimed by some on Facebook.

There are options to pay off the capital assessment at any time either partially or in full. There is an option to pay the entire capital assessment by July 1, 2025, to avoid any interest. FLTF will be mailing a letter to each property owner of record in early May to explain in detail the capital assessment and options available for payment.

This FLTF chart outlines the next steps regarding financing for property owners.

Financing Schedule	
17	
Date	Activity
Week of May 5	Prepayment letter enters mail system to property owners
May 9	Special Assessment District maps updated <ul style="list-style-type: none">Changes will incorporate updates to land ownership over the past year
~June 3	Bond issuance
July 1	Prepayments due to county
July 2	Interest begins to accrue on first bond issuance
December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">First Capital Assessment appears on winter tax bill – principal and interest on first series bond and principal only on second series bond25-29 O&M Assessment appears on winter tax bill
December 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Second Capital Assessment appears on winter tax bill – principal and interest on first series bond and second series bond25-29 O&M Assessment appears on winter tax bill

FREQUENTY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: How long will it take a specific lake to refill realizing EGLE will not allow a lake to fill in the October to February timeframe?

Let us review the table FLTF provided in 2023 addressing this question:

Lake Refill Durations				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dependent on river flows, season and weather conditions<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wetter years = quicker refill which will reduce the maximum length of time to achieve the permitted lake levels but will not reduce the minimum days to refill as that rate is based on a permit requirement to limit refill to 1 foot per dayDryer years may extend the time to refill beyond what is reported in the tableEstimated times depend on differences in each lake's inflow, storage capacity, and minimum permitted flows required to pass through the reservoir while refilling				
Estimated Lake Refill Times with 50 Percent Flow Exceedance				
Lake	Minimum Days at Median Flows (50% exceedance)	Maximum Days at Median Flows (50% exceedance)	Total Days if Refill Starts Between March and May	Total Days if Refill Starts Between June and October*
Secord	4	27	4 to 11	17 to 27
Smallwood	6	16	6 to 9	9 to 16
Wixom	10	58	10 to 15	29 to 58
Sanford	13	67	13 to 16	31 to 67

*Winter months (October through February) are excluded due to the expectation that environmental concerns will not allow changes in water levels during this period due to concerns related to aquatic life.

Q2: Will Secord, Smallwood, and Sanford fill before Wixom?

YES, each lake can fill when construction is complete, and a fill permit issued by EGLE.

Q3: If a property owner pays the capital assessment in full, and for any reason the total project cost is lower, will a rebate be issued for the difference?

YES. If the total capital assessment amount is lowered, and one paid in full, a rebate will be issued to the property owner of record at the time of the rebate. FLTF will provide more details in the May mailing.

Q4: Can the assessment increase up to 10% annually as some on Facebook claim?

NO. Once the Capital assessment is established it remains as approved. It cannot be increased annually. The Operations and Maintenance assessment is approved for the next 5 years. It cannot be automatically increased annually. It can be modified in the next approval process by the Counties for Winter tax bill 2030.

Q5: How do I learn more about the Capital Assessment and payment options?

FLTF will be mailing a letter to each property owner of record in early May to explain in detail the Capital assessment and options available for payment. You can also visit <https://www.four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com/>

Q6: Why did FLTF not suspend work on Sanford?

Work at Sanford was scheduled to be suspended with the phase recently completed. With the MI Supreme Court ruling, work can continue and there is no reason for Spence Brothers to remove their equipment or crew from the work site. There will be limited costs to redeploy equipment and crews at Sanford. Unfortunately, the other three dam construction sites will have costs to redeploy equipment and crews.

Q7: What work is required to be completed at Secord dam?

EGLE has described Secord as requiring three significant work phases: 1) Enforcement of the Embankment, 2) the Axillary Spillway and 3) the Primary Spillway and Gates.

The Embankment and Axillary Spillway phases are complete.

Our “Facebook engineers” indicate all that is needed is to hang the new gates. Not the case.

The Primary Spillway currently has a coffer dam around it. That concrete spillway requires significant work to bring it to safety standards and to allow the new gates to be installed. This work is complicated by the coffer dam holding back the Secord Lake impoundment. There is a smaller footprint for crews and equipment to work resulting in more time required to complete the primary spillway work. There are also safety hazards for the crew that may slow down their work.

Conversely, similar primary spillway work at Sanford and Edenville is easier and less costly to complete as there is no lake impoundment to hold back resulting in a larger work area. Crews have more flexibility to work.

Q8: Is FLTF continuing to seek grants to reduce the cost to all property owners?

YES. As mentioned, several times over the past year, it is easier to receive grants when there is no encumbrance with court challenges. Unfortunately, the past year was difficult for this reason.

FLTF was denied grants from the MI DNR Fisheries; EGLE Dam Risk Reduction and Consumers Energy Citizen Planet.

Several federal government grants applied for and anticipated are no longer available.

FLTF **secured** a \$1.4 million grant for High Hazard Potential Dams from FEMA.

Members of the Secord Lake Association are actively engaged with FLTF to seek grants and will continue our efforts to help FLTF secure support to reduce assessment costs for ALL property owners in the FLSAD.

Q9: What is the anticipated bond interest rate?

The market has more volatility today than a year ago. FLTF anticipates rates between 5-6% with a not-to-exceed rate of 6.6%. The rate on the first bond of \$80 million will be known around May 20, 2025. The rate on the second bond will be determined at the time it is issued sometime next year.

Q10: Is there State Grant money available to complete the projects?

NO. There is no grant money beyond what is already considered in the computation of cost, based on the \$200 Million received in 2022. FLTF indicates there is about \$24 million remaining from the state grant, with a plan to spend the remainder of funds prior to the September 2026 grant expiration date.

More Information

People are encouraged to review the FLTF website for information, past webinars, news, assessment information and Frequently Asked Questions. <https://www.four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com/>

One can use the search function on the FLTF website or send an email to info@fourlakes-taskforce.com

Another resource available is the Secord Lake Association. www.SecordLakeAssociation.org You can sign up on our website to receive future updates delivered to your email address.

The [Resources](#) section contains several years' worth of published newsletters, updates, FAQs, and Year In Review summaries. You can also send us an email and we will do our best to research your questions. SecordLakeAssociation@gmail.com

We also provide updates with Q&A sessions at our monthly meetings. We meet each month during the season (April to October). [This is the recap from our April meeting.](#) You are invited to attend - - - here is our remaining schedule for the 2025 season:

Meetings for 2025 Season

Saturday, May 17 – 10 AM Secord Township Hall

Saturday June 21 – 10 AM Secord Township Hall

Saturday, July 26 – Noon - - Secord Lake Dam Pontoon Tour at Secord Lake Marina – On the Water™

Saturday, Aug 16 – 10 AM Secord Township Hall

Saturday, Sept 13 – 10 AM Secord Township Hall

Saturday, Oct 11 – 10 AM Secord Township Hall

Golf Outing – Sept 20

Chili Cook-Off – Oct 18

Our Members Make a Difference! From ongoing advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels, to social events to bring our lake community together to include **FUN**draisers, to the SLA investing back into the Secord Lake Community. We encourage you to read our [2024 YEAR IN REVIEW](#)

If you like what we did in 2024, please join us in 2025. You can learn more at www.SecordLakeAssociation.org

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