



## SECORD LAKE ASSOCIATION

December 17, 2021

[www.secordlakeassociation.org](http://www.secordlakeassociation.org)

### 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

It was December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, when the counties gained ownership of the 4 dam properties and bottom lands via condemnation from Boyce Hydro. While this entire process seems like a “long time,” about a year has passed. This is a complicated issue with many moving parts and things do (and will) change.

This 2021 Year In Review will focus on key questions and progress as we understand it today.

**What work is being done on Secord?**

**What about the Independent Forensic Report?**

**How will this get paid for?**

**What is the Secord Lake Association doing?**

**Q1: What is happening with the Secord Dam? We see cranes and trucks down at Wixom, what about our dam?**

**A1: The FLTF continues to actively work on Secord dam.** This link will take you to a detailed progress update complete with a project list and timeline for key milestones. [Secord Dam - FOUR LAKES TASK FORCE \(four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com\)](http://four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com)

As of November 12<sup>th</sup>, everything was on schedule for Secord. For Secord, the 60% engineering plan is on schedule to be submitted by the end of year as planned, with the 90% plan due the end of March 2022 and final engineering for Secord scheduled for completion by June 2022.

Here is an update shared at the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 FLTF Board Meeting - - - ***Secord is approaching completion of 90% of the engineering plan. The process to begin to apply for the required construction and environmental permits will begin as early as the end of this month (Dec '21).*** If we compare this update to the plan shared earlier this past year, it appears the engineering for Secord is ahead of schedule. To level set expectations, we do not expect the fill date of summer 2024 to change, we simply highlight the plan to restore Secord appears to be on or slightly ahead of schedule.

You can review the plans for the other lakes. You will read that Secord and Smallwood are planned to be brought back prior to Wixom and Sanford. The current work on the southern lakes is focused on dam stabilization.

**Q2: How will funding work for the construction / restoration of the dam? How will annual maintenance and operations be funded?**

**A2:** In order to get permits, the counties via the FLTF need to have a detailed plan with specific engineering (Q1 above) and be able to provide proof of financing. Financing / funding for repair and construction along with funding for long term maintenance and repairs. Without financing or funding in place, obtaining the necessary permits is not possible.

This is the current plan, which has changed from past plans we have reported. We make no guarantees and encourage you to do your own homework to learn more.

**Reconstruction and Restoration costs** consume the Special Assessment discussion as it makes up the largest amount of money. At this point, legislation is moving through the state of Michigan to help with repairs and rebuilding. **“The Michigan Senate on Thursday (Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>) unanimously approved \$3.3 billion in water infrastructure spending to replace lead pipes and repair aging dams** around the state while also sending money to a Detroit-area system that has struggled with flooding.”

[Michigan Senate Approves \\$3.3B Water Infrastructure Bill | Michigan News | US News](#)

“More than one-third of the lending for dams is set aside for a task force that oversees dams and lakes in Midland and Gladwin counties, where a “500-year” flood resulted in the failure of two dams and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to property.”

The bill language passed by the Senate reads in part “Sec. 403. (1) From the funds appropriated in part 1 for dam risk reduction revolving loan fund, \$250,000,000.00 shall be allocated to a task force that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and is the delegated authority for Midland and Gladwin Counties for the four lakes special assessment district under part 307, inland lake levels, and part 315, dam safety, of the natural resources and environmental protection act”.

**In terms of next steps - - The funding bill now advances to the MI House for the same consideration. Once approved in the House, the bill is sent to the Governor for her approval / signature. We are monitoring this closely.**

Remember, there are no guarantees. However, if this legislation is passed, with \$250 Million appropriated to the FLTF to rebuild and repair the 4 dams known as Secord, Smallwood, Edenville and Sanford, this will remove a significant financial burden from property owners to restore the lakes.

**Once the dams are rebuilt, there is annual maintenance and operations.** In early December the FLTF shared the proposed plan for operations and maintenance with the community. This proposal is focused solely on the Maintenance and Operations cost. It proposes a special assessment methodology where lake property owners assume 70% of the annual special assessment for maintenance and operations with the counties of Gladwin and Midland along with the Village of Sanford and the 9 townships around the lakes assuming the remaining 30% of the annual special assessment for maintenance and operations of the lakes.

You can learn more at [New SAD Methodology Accounts for More Factors - FOUR LAKES TASK FORCE \(four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com\)](#)

This proposal by the FLTF for maintenance and operations of the lakes was only recently communicated and is being reviewed closely by the counties and townships. There are many different paths the counties and townships could take to make this methodology work. The Secord Lake Association will continue to provide updates as this current proposal evolves. Anything stated or posted to social media should be considered speculation or opinion. It is simply too early to determine how this proposal may look.

To obtain permits, funding for repair / construction and long-term maintenance / operations need to be established. Without funding, permits will be impossible to acquire. Funding and permits are needed to move to the bidding / construction phase. Delays with funding may delay the expected lake restoration in which the current plan states restoration of summer 2024 for Secord.

### **Q3: What is the status of the Independent Forensic Team Report?**

**A3:** While the interim **Independent Forensic Team Report** (appointed by FERC) has been issued, the final report is pending. As this is an independent group of engineers, there is no influence we can use to move this report along. [investigation failures edenville-sanford interim report sept2021 final.pdf \(four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com\)](#)

**Q4: What is the Secord Lake Association doing to help restore the lake? And how can I help?**

**A4:** Our President, Phil Dast and VP, Chuck Sikora represent Secord on the FLTF Board. They are volunteers, as are the other FLTF Board members. Phil is on the Finance Committee and Chuck is engaged with a cross functional team focused on engineering and permitting.

Mike Szuch is a Secord property owner, member of the Secord Lake Association Board and is a Gladwin County Commissioner. Mike is engaged with Chuck on the cross functional team as he represents both our lake association and the county. Mike is a conduit from the property owners to the county and from the county back to property owners.

Joel Vernier is a Secord property owner and Secord Township Supervisor. Joel is engaged at the local, county and state levels to secure the resources required to restore the lakes.

We are blessed to have an active fund-raising committee co-chaired by Jeanette Houser and Jenny Combs. They are the first to admit they get lots of help. This past Summer the Secord Lake Association donated another \$10,000 to the FLTF Secord restoration fund. This brings the total to \$15,000 when combined with the Fall 2020 donation. In the Fall of 2021, a successful golf outing earned over \$18,000 which positions the Secord Lake Association to make another donation.

Finally, a group of Secord Lake Association volunteers spearheaded the RestoreTheLakes campaign. This grass roots effort focused on bringing awareness to our elected officials and seeks financial support to RestoreTheLakes. The team has personally met with key legislators at the local, state, and federal level. They expanded the campaign to include all 4 lake associations and have initiated the delivery of over 16,000 individually addressed and signed hard copy letters via US Mail to elected officials. This is on top of the email letters sent to elected officials using the tools from the website [www.RestoreTheLakes.org](http://www.RestoreTheLakes.org) which is projected to easily eclipse the hard copy letters that were mailed. There are many people involved from the Secord Lake Association with this 4 lakes campaign. The Secord Lake Association helped fund the cost of office supplies and postage. NOTE: We will recognize and celebrate this team when the legislation is passed, for now we will let them continue their advocacy.

So, if you are wondering “what is the Secord Lake Association doing to restore the lake?” You have a summary above. You may be asking “how can I help?” It is simple - - - get proactively involved. Join the Secord Lake Association. Attend the meetings, read the updates we provide and seek ways you can use positive energy to help keep this momentum.

In closing, we realize this YEAR IN REVIEW contains several links to more information. This is a complicated project, and we try to address the questions received. We hope this helps provide confidence as work continues for Secord.

In a little more than a year, we have come closer to our goal of restoring our lake. The timeline for permitting has quickened, the hope of financial help in restoration and reconstruction is on the horizon. People helped through the RestoreTheLakes letter writing campaign. Together we can achieve more by seeking positive, proactive solutions to this challenge.

Should you have additional questions, we welcome them at [secordlakeassociation@gmail.com](mailto:secordlakeassociation@gmail.com). We will continue to monitor and update as we learn more. Please visit [www.four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com](http://www.four-lakes-taskforce-mi.com) or [www.SecordLakeAssociation.org](http://www.SecordLakeAssociation.org) for additional information.

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