



Summary of Secord Lake Association Meeting – AUG 15, 2026

This recaps key headlines of our in-person August Member meeting. It was a special day as we memorialized Cliff Houser with the founding donation toward the Secord Lake Legacy Fund.

Secord Lake Legacy Fund

The Secord Lake Association (SLA) is a Michigan nonprofit recognized as a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) that supports Secord Lake improvement projects.

Some Members have asked the Secord Lake Association (SLA) to create a simple mechanism for people to make annual donations toward projects that enhance the Secord Lake Community.

The Secord Lake Legacy Fund will be separate, commonly referred to as a restricted, fund of the SLA from an accounting perspective.

Donations made to SLA, as a designated non-profit, will be recognized with proper receipts to donors. While the SLA Board will provide oversight of the fund, specific donations will be made with input from the participants or families involved.

Secord Lake Legacy Fund – FOUNDING DONATION



Cliff Houser

Several people shared fond remembrance of Cliff. The letter to the left is a fitting testament to the legacy of Cliff Houser in the restoration of Secord Lake.



Four Lakes Task Force

233 E Larkin St. Suite 2 Midland, MI 48640
(989) 941-3005
Fourlakes taskforce.org

To: Secord Lake Association:

July 14, 2026

When I heard of the creation of the Secord Lake Legacy Fund with a memorial in the name of Cliff Houser as the founding fund, I felt the need to write.

Cliff was introduced to me, less than a month after the 2020 Dams' failure, he was passionate about addressing the misinformation that was occurring at Secord. Frankly, he also told me we weren't doing a very good job and felt he could help. Based on his credentials and experience, he seemed obvious we should talk. Cliff listened, and the request I had was that there are a lot of fronts right now, and it would be helpful if he could focus on the Secord Community and messaging to them.

Cliff became the voice of reason on Secord Lake. He did his research and reassured people that the only viable path to restoration was county ownership. He helped dispel the former dam owner's myth that a \$30,000 concrete patch would solve the problem.

People sought and listened to his mentorship, as I did. In 2021, Cliff assembled a team to execute a letter writing campaign designed to confirm to elected officials at the local, state, and federal level that property owners wanted the lakes restored. This action helped our elected officials hear a very loud voice from those that wanted the dams restored.

The letter writing campaign evolved organically into a campaign called RestoreTheLakes. This grassroots campaign had a significant role helping FLTF secure grants exceeding \$200 million for construction.

He met over breakfast, and he had grown confident in the path forward and the funding of the dam. Not too long after that, I received a text from him saying that he was going into hospice and was not going to see the lake come back but was confident it would. I told him I wished we would have met earlier in our lives and thanked him. He responded, "Me Too".

Looking back to 2020, Cliff's guidance at the grassroots level made a difference, a significant difference, and more impressive to me was the passion for life and service. Memorializing Cliff as the founding member of the Secord Lake Legacy Fund is a fitting tribute to Cliff.

Sincerely,

Dave Kepler

President, Four Lakes Task Force



Cliff's children, Beth and Jordan, share reflections of their fathers' love for Secord Lake and present a donation in his memory toward Secord Lake Improvements.

Mission, Vision, Values



- Our goal is simple, to restore Secord Lake as soon as possible while reducing assessment costs for all property and business owners within the special assessment district.
- SLA supports the plan of the Four Lakes Task Force to accomplish this.
- We continue to assist the FLTF to seek additional grant dollars.
- Our mission is to work for the benefit of the Secord Lake Community, communicate relevant information, and advocate for the welfare of our group with local, state and federal agencies. We also provide a voice for our lake within the Four Lakes Task Force.

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Lake Improvement Investments



- \$3,550 West River Drive, Park Road DNR Boat Launch, Mobile Park, Szuch Sandbar.
- Targeted Areas: West Branch Bay and point across from Secord Marina.
- \$7,000 contribution to Clement Township Boat Launch Repair Project.
- \$10,065 contribution to Bourret Township Boat Launch Repair Project.
- \$1,500 last summer to Secord Township Fire / Rescue team.
- \$2,000 Secord Eagles Lakeside Improvements.
- \$4,000 Fireworks from the Dam 2026.
- \$5,000 to Four Lakes Housing Assistance Fund

Funded Lake Related Initiatives

\$5,000 Goose Management

\$5,000 Secord Dam Site
Land Use Enhancements

\$7,051 Fireworks on the Dam

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The Secord Lake Association is a non-profit focused on Secord Lake for generations to come. If you are a Member, thank you. If you want to become Member, we welcome you.

<https://www.secordlakeassociation.org/membership>

OUR MEMBERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Lake Improvement Projects

- Remove Nuisance Trees
- Maintain Sandbars
- Secord Fishery
- Clement Boat Launch
- Bourret Boat Launch
- Secord Fire Rescue
- Secord Eagles Dockside
- Goose Management
- Quake on the Lake Fireworks

Advocacy to Restore Secord

RESTORE THE LAKES

Secord Social

- Secord Dam Pontoon Tour
- Golf Outing
- Chili Cook Off
- Lake Improvement Projects
- Helping Hands
- Monthly Meetings in Season
- Fireworks

Membership \$25 YR
Family Membership \$35 YR
 Membership today is good until end of August next year!
www.SecordLakeAssociation.org

This past year, thanks to the generous donations of Member, Sponsors and supporters, we earmarked over \$33,000 toward Secord Lake improvement projects.

At this meeting, we passed our operating budget for the next 12 months dedicating \$54,000 toward Secord Lake improvement projects.

Membership, Sponsorships and support for fund-raising events make this possible.

We thank Phil Dast and Chuck Sikora for their Board leadership since the inception of the SLA in 2019. Their positive contributions to Secord Lake represent the best in our motto "Our Members Make a Difference".

We welcome and thank Heidi Schroth and Bob Wittig for stepping forward as they join our leadership team.

Our Sponsors Make A Difference -- THANK YOU for Your Continued Support!



August SLA Board Elections Alternating 3 Year Terms

Term End Aug 2027	Term End Aug 2028	Term End Aug 2029
Paul Gorans	Mike Szuch	Heidi Schroth
Marti Drabing	Kim Carlson	Bob Wittig
Ken Wells	Jeff Sorensen	_____

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Golf Event - Kim

2025 SLA Golf Outing raised \$13,231

Thank You Brent for your past leadership



Registration is OPEN – Enrollment form on website.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
September 19, 2026

NEWS FLASH
Only 7 Foursomes Available

Congratulations to our 1st place team of Chris Szpara, Lee Campbell-Clayton, Brian Harmon, and Mia H...
2nd place went to Brian H...
Longest drive went to Karin Fry and Glenn Belcher.

Chili Cook Off - Paul

2025 SLA Chili Cook Off raised \$10,011



MARK YOUR CALENDARS
October 17, 2026
Secord Eagles Club



2025 Winners!

1st Place – Courtney Friedle

2nd Place – Jim Braidwood

3rd Place – Christopher Ochab

Our fund-raisers support the Secord Lake Association mission while providing time for friends to celebrate our lake community.

To learn more about the **Golf Outing** -

<https://www.secordlakeassociation.org/2026-golf-outing>

To learn more about the **Chili Cook Off** -

<https://www.secordlakeassociation.org/2026-chili-cook-off>

To learn **how you can help support either or both events**, please check out our Amazon wish list – you can order and have the items shipped to us.

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Donations of gift cards and scratch off lottery tickets are welcomed as they make great items for prize or auction baskets.

To read Frequently Asked Questions published by the Association [Secord Lake FAQs July 28 2026](#)

There is now a [Secord Dam](#) update page available on the FLTF website:

FLTF Update

• Fill date remains April 15, 2027.

• Substantial Completion Date moved to Nov 2026.



FLTF Update

SECORD DAM SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION & LAKE REFILL

May 2 Gate Delay

July 28, 2026

Property owners may notice that the gate to bay 2 of Secord Dam is being removed. The gate passed quality assurance tests before it left the factory, but unfortunately when we tried to install it, two pieces did not fit together correctly. We will ship both halves of the gate back to the factory over the next few days as repairs can be made in their facility rather than trying to address the issue in the field. We hope to have the adjusted gate re-installed in a timely manner. Crews will continue working on other items while we wait. We do not believe this will impact getting the gate commissioned before the winter and will not have an impact on the planned April 15, 2027 lake refill.

HOW LONG WILL REFILL TAKE?

WILL THERE BE A PAUSE DURING REFILL?



FLTF Update

HOW LONG WILL REFILL TAKE?

Secord Lake refill is planned to begin on April 15, 2027. Assuming normal snowmelt and spring rain, Secord could fill to the normal summer level in 7 to 14 days.

WILL THERE BE A PAUSE DURING REFILL?

Because Secord Lake is already elevated, including at the winter level, it does not require a two-week pause period during refill.

FLTF Update

WHAT DOES LAKE "FILL" LOOK LIKE BASED ON THE CURRENT LAKE LEVEL?

Water levels constantly fluctuate due to flow of water in and water out. As of July 27, 2026 FLTF indicates Secord Lake is currently about 4-1/2 feet below normal summer lake level.

Normal winter lake levels will restart on Secord in Winter 2027-28 and is about 3 feet below normal summer lake levels. This means Secord's future normal **winter** lake level will be about 1-1/2 feet higher than it is today.

WILL THERE STILL BE A WINTER LAKE LEVEL?

For 2026-2027 there will not be a winter lake level. The lake level will remain in the current state experienced over the past few years. Water levels will fluctuate as in past years.

Once the lake is filled, yes, there will be a winter level that will occur from mid-December to mid-April as in past years starting in Winter 2027-28.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN



- 1) Prepare Your Lake Front
 - 2) Help Your Neighbors
 - 3) Pick Up Anything That FLOATS
 - 4) Remove Temporary Piers
 - 5) Secure Your Docks, Piers, Hoists, Lifts, Boats
- Summer Level Will Come Quick In April

On August 1st there will only be 247 days until April 2027.

December will be here in 122 days.

We have a FINAL COUNTDOWN planning document.

Sense of Urgency.

Please Help Spread the Word.

For the vast majority, Secord Lake property owners have participated in the **Retake Our Lake** initiative since its inception in 2022.

As we enter September, there will be about 6 months before April 2027 lake fill.

The **FINAL COUNTDOWN** provides guidance on what Secord Lake property owners can do to prepare for summer lake level.

- 1) Prepare Your Lake Front
- 2) Help Your Neighbors
- 3) Pick Up Anything That FLOATS
- 4) Remove Temporary Piers
- 5) Secure Docks, Piers, Hoists, Lifts, Boats, etc.

In addition, a proactive plan to address Spring FLOATERS is being created with more details to be shared as we move into Fall.

Helping Hands is available for neighbors in need.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN



Concerned that cattails and invasive species that were not in the water in front of your property prior to the dam failure will remain permanently?

Looking for an effective way that has a high likelihood of killing them so that they do not return with normal summer lake level?

Timing is everything — cut cattails, invasive species, and tree seedlings as low as possible in late summer/fall, when they enter dormancy and can't store nutrients for spring regrowth.

Oxygen is the lever — these shallow-water species depend on their leaves for oxygen; once cut, rising spring water levels starve them out.

Method matters — weedwack or mow low, then promptly remove debris to avoid it floating or creating a rotting biomass; winter access on firm soil makes the job lighter and easier.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN IS IN YOUR HANDS!



What? A volunteer team helping neighbors unable to clear debris such as floating stumps, trees, and logs from their Secord Lake shoreline and immediate waterway.

When?

We are targeting **August 29th**.

How can I volunteer to help?

Volunteer to "help your neighbor", please email SecordLakeAssociation@gmail.com

If I need some assistance?

Please email SecordLakeAssociation@gmail.com with details regarding the location and clean up required; we will reach out to you.





Question & Answers:

Q1: With the dam substantially complete in November, what will the winter 2026-27 lake level be?

A: For this year 2026-27, the lake level will remain in the current state we have experienced over the past few years. Water levels will fluctuate as in past years.

Once the lake is filled, winter level will occur from mid-December to mid-April as in past years starting in Winter 2027-28.

Q2: Will the gap in the auxiliary spillway be filled or closed this Fall?

A: YES. FLTF indicates October timing. They plan to utilize a small coffer dam type system to complete this phase of the project.

During our Q&A session, there were concerns raised regarding the gates and the fact the water level at Secord is not required to pause at winter level as the lake is filled.

Because Secord Lake has already been elevated, including above winter level experienced this past Spring, it does not require a two week pause for monitoring as it has already occurred. The two-week period was for embankments, the gates are tested in a number of stages, including wet testing using stop logs.

The entire dam structure is engineered, designed, and constructed to meet dam safety requirements including those as outlined in the June 2021 letter from EGLE. Various engineers, including third party reviews, EGLE and dam safety experts, have been engaged in the process since the beginning.

The adjustment required to Gate 2 is a minor setback that is not likely to impact lake fill to begin April 15, 2027. The gate was sent back to the manufacturer as it is the more practical method to get the gate properly aligned. The gate manufacturer accepted responsibility for cost related to the adjustment.

The entire new dam structure, to include the gates, is a significant upgrade to the 100-year-old plus structure built between 1923-1925. The original structure was at the end of its' design life and was deemed unsafe.

FLTF indicates Secord Dam will have the gates commissioned in November, with Spring 2027 fill. Substantial completion means the dam is functioning to impound water at the lake level. Meaning the dam can safely impound water. There will still be minor projects to complete on the site, as is the case with Sanford and Smallwood dams today.

A concern shared the marking of tree trunks in the lake with either arrows or driveway markers posing a potential safety risk to unsuspecting swimmers (or people jumping off a boat) when the legal lake level returns. We understand the past few years, individuals may have marked stumps in an effort to assist with navigation. The use of a string and milk bottle attached via nail to a stump, other examples include pool noodles, arrows and driveway markers sticking straight up from the stump.

There was agreement in the room that driveway markers or arrows sticking straight up may pose future risk as they will be under the normal lake water level. While SLA has no regulatory authority, we have been consistent to encourage people to not use this method to mark stumps.

As a lake community, it will be beneficial to remove ALL stump markers when the boating season winds down around the first week of October. Again, SLA has no regulatory authority, is not engaged in marking stumps, but will act as a communication conduit to the lake community to seek removal of ALL stump markers prior to return to legal lake level.

Should you have additional questions, we welcome them at SecordLakeAssociation@gmail.com

Our next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Sept 12th at 10 AM – Secord Township Hall.

Saturday, Sept 12

SLA Golf Outing – Saturday, Sept 19

Saturday, Oct 10

SLA Chili Cook Off – Saturday, Oct 17



Visit us at www.SecordLakeAssociation.org

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