



January 2022

Dear Property Owner:

The Four Lakes Task Force (FLTF) continues to progress toward restoring Secord, Smallwood, Wixom, and Sanford Lakes. A critical next step in doing so is the development and implementation of a special assessment in connection with the improvement, restoration, operation, and maintenance of the Four Lakes “lake level” system.

### **Costs for Capital Improvements and Operation & Maintenance**

There are two cost components in maintaining the Four Lakes System:

#### **Capital Improvements for design and construction of repairs, and restoration of each of the four dams.**

FLTF continues to proactively pursue opportunities to secure grants from all sources, including the State of Michigan, to fund every aspect of design and construction. We currently await word from the State of Michigan related to a significant funding appropriation that could have an impact on the Capital Improvement assessment. Until such time as we know the amount of state funding the lakes will receive, if any, we will not know the potential amount of the Capital Assessment.

**Operation & Maintenance Improvements** for annual administration, operation, and maintenance of the Four Lakes system. We know that annual Operation & Maintenance costs will be approximately \$1.6 million per year. This cost is separate from the Capital Improvement costs. FLTF proposes a special assessment to cover the costs associated with Operation & Maintenance for the next three years, at which time the annual Operation & Maintenance cost will be reevaluated. The property owner percentage (referred to as an apportionment) of this annual cost is derived from several property-related benefit factors. The associated special assessment dollar amount will be itemized on your 2022 winter taxes.

### **Preliminary Public Informational Days of Review on Special Assessments**

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of these upcoming opportunities for you to have a one-on-one discussion regarding your tentative special assessment.

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#### ***Key Takeaways***

- *There will be an Operation & Maintenance assessment implemented in late 2022*
  - *Preliminary Days of Review in February and April will give property owners a chance to discuss their assessment with FLTF*
  - *Formal hearings will be held in June before the assessment amount is finalized*
  - *Property owners have the right to appeal their individual assessments*
  - *The first Operation & Maintenance assessment will be paid on the 2022 Winter tax bill*
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The purpose of these sessions is to give you an opportunity to:

- Meet with the FLTF team and its engineers
- Review how the property-related benefit factors (i.e., methodology) are weighted
- Review how your property's apportionment was calculated
- Review your estimated annual assessment cost
- Provide your input

FLTF may revise the special assessment roll based on property owner input during the Days of Review. To clarify, these are not legal hearings, rather they are preliminary public Days of Review. No appointments are necessary and property owners may arrive at any time during the session. The Days of Review are currently scheduled as follows:

**Tuesday, February 15, 2022** | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Secord Township Hall

**Thursday, February 17, 2022** | 4:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. | Jerome Township Hall

**Tuesday, April 19, 2022** | 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. | Jerome Township Hall

**Wednesday, April 20, 2022** | 4:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. | Secord Township Hall

### **Special Assessment Hearing**

After the preliminary public informational Days of Review, there will be a "Special Assessment Hearing" to formally review the project cost and the special assessment roll. Part 307 (Inland Lake Levels) of the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, MCL 324.30701 et seq. ("Part 307"), guarantees notice and an opportunity to be heard before the final determination of the project cost and special assessment roll.

Four Lakes SAD property owners will be able to present information and objections to the project cost and special assessment roll. Objections must be presented in person or in writing to appeal. The Four Lakes Special Assessment Hearing is tentatively scheduled for June 2022. Notices for the Special Assessment Hearing will be mailed to property owners and published in the newspaper in late spring. At the conclusion of the Special Assessment Hearing, FLTF will then present the final project cost and proposed special assessment roll to the county boards of commissioners in Gladwin and Midland Counties for approval. Each county board of commissioners must either approve or reject the project cost and special assessment roll as presented. If the counties reject the project cost and/or the proposed special assessment roll, FLTF must revise, and again present the same to each of the boards for approval.

### **Special Assessment Appeal**

Once each county board of commissioners approves the special assessment roll, property owners and municipalities have the right to appeal in the circuit court of Midland and Gladwin Counties within 15 days after the approval. Note, the Michigan Tax tribunal does not have jurisdiction over appeals of lake level special assessments, and therefore, appeals must be made in the county circuit court where the



assessed property is located. Also note, the appeal process is for you to raise objections to your special assessment. It is not an appeal of the project cost, SAD boundaries, or the necessity for legal lake levels.

### **Special Assessment on 2022 Winter Tax Bill**

We anticipate that in December 2022, the first year of a three-year special assessment (for the administration, operation, and maintenance of the Four Lakes system) will appear on tax bills.

### **Stay Engaged and Informed**

This will be a busy and important year for the Four Lakes Task Force. Please take this opportunity to understand the Operation & Maintenance assessment and make your thoughts known during the Preliminary Days of Review if you disagree with the apportionment for your property.

We thank you in advance for your collaboration, patience, and support. If you are not already, please sign up for our weekly electronic news flashes at <https://bit.ly/FLTF-subs> to stay up to date.

Sincerely,

Dave Kepler  
President and Chair of the Four Lakes Task Force

On behalf of the Four Lakes Task Force Board of Directors:

Adam Beebe  
Don Zakett  
Dave Rothman  
Mark Mudge

Phil Dast  
Chuck Sikora  
Karen Moore, Representing Gladwin County  
Mark Bone, Representing Midland County

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***Information & Resources***  
*To view the **December 6 Public Information Session** where the SAD methodology was reviewed in detail, to find your property on an **interactive property map**, or to review **Frequently Asked Questions** about the process, please go to [www.fourlaketaskforce.org](http://www.fourlaketaskforce.org).*

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This letter is not a legal public notice.