

A Sustainable Future for the Four Lakes

A Note from Dave Kepler,
Chairman of the Four Lakes Task Force



As many of us who live on Smallwood, Secord, Wixom and Sanford Lakes know, we have had a cloud of uncertainty with our dams and our lake levels as far back as the 1970's. In February 2018, the difficulties accelerated when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, proposed revocation of the Edenville project license. The lake associations, state and federal elected officials, and Midland and Gladwin Counties all requested that FERC delay a final decision to November, so we could work with Boyce, Consumers' Energy and the counties to address the immediate issues, and work with the owner on a transition to a public ownership structure.

Since that time, the new Four Lakes Task Force has worked hard to pass resolutions in Gladwin and Midland Counties and hired an engineering and legal firm to prepare us for a circuit court hearing to establish legal lake levels for the four lakes. These lake levels will establish state requirements they must maintain our four lakes in the event the FERC will not. We have also engaged Fisher Construction on cost studies for the structural repairs on all four lakes, hired consultants to do economic assessments for our ownership options and funding, and are in negotiations with BoyceHydro to have the community acquire the dams.

Our Four Lakes Task Force has evaluated several options over the last few months. We've run the numbers, we've talked with dozens of experts, and we have come to the conclusion that purchasing the dams is the smartest path forward.

The question we must answer now is how to raise funds to buy the dams, and to fund the necessary work on the dams to make sure they can be operated safely in the future.

We believe the key to financial and operational stability of the dams, and long-term consistency in our lake levels, is to raise funds from lake property owners through a special assessment. Last night, we proposed the boundaries of these proposed special assessment districts to key elected officials. While they review the draft maps, we would like to ask you, the lake property owner, what it is worth to you to be able to enjoy your view and your water activities each summer? A cup of coffee a week? A dollar a day?

The Task Force is committed to keeping the public fully informed as the process to create legal lake levels moves forward, and we continue to work through the options to raise funds to purchase and operate the dams into the future. We will do that through this site, social media, local news and public hearings.

We are asking for your support of our work to create legal lake levels, and to restructure the ownership and operations of the four dams through a special assessment starting sometime in 2019.

Our lakes – and our future enjoyment of them – rests on your support of the Task Force's recommendations to buy and invest in the dams, and we need your support to do so. Will you join us?

Thanks,

Dave