

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2020

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Bankruptcy Court Ruling Enables Condemnation to Proceed Operations Transition Team Announced

December 7, 2020 – Judge Daniel Opperman of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Michigan granted a motion to allow Four Lakes Task Force (FLTF) to acquire title to the Boyce properties through condemnation. The ruling is a key step in FLTF’s efforts to rebuild the dams and restore the lakes following the catastrophic dam breaches on May 19.

On July 31, FLTF filed actions in the Midland and Gladwin county circuit courts to acquire Secord, Smallwood, Edenville, and Sanford dam properties through condemnation, also known as eminent domain. The condemnation was put on hold while the bankruptcy proceeded. Judge Opperman’s ruling allows the condemnation to move forward. Earlier in November, FLTF and dam owner Boyce Hydro and various creditors agreed to terms for the condemnation.

“Gladwin and Midland Counties made a brave decision after May 19, 2020, under their authority to take the Boyce properties,” said Dave Kepler, FLTF chair. “This is an important step for our lake communities to gain control of our future. We have a lot of work ahead of us as we take over operations, recover, and develop an affordable path forward to rebuild our lakes but with the community’s support, we are ready for the task.”

In separate news, FLTF also announced it has formed an Operations Transition Team to manage the safe transfer of assets of the Secord, Smallwood, Edenville and Sanford dams from Boyce Hydro to FLTF. The transfer of property is expected within the next few weeks.

The FLTF Operations Transition Team consists of experienced volunteers, consultants and employees with expertise in operations, engineering, regulatory compliance and dam safety. The team is led by **Monty Heins**, a volunteer who represents the Operation Team on the FLTF board of directors and currently a global operations director with the Dow Chemical Company. Heins has 35 years of operations experience and is a Sanford resident. Supporting Heins will be:

- **Fred J. Szufnarowski**, a managing partner and principal engineer with The Essex Partnership, will serve as consultant. Fred brings over 45 years of experience in operations,

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maintenance, engineering, licensing, land/lake management, regulatory compliance, and dam safety.

- **Robert Gates**, also with The Essex Partnership, will serve as consultant. He has over 39 years of experience in operations, maintenance, engineering, licensing, land/lake management, regulatory compliance, and dam safety.

In addition, Consumers Energy, which operates over 13 dams on five Michigan rivers, will serve in an advisory capacity, providing broad knowledge, expertise and best practices towards the operational transfer and stand up.

As part of this process, FLTF appointed **Brad Fedorchak** as operations manager, responsible for the overall management of operations and maintenance at the dam sites. He will assume his role effective January 4, 2021. In addition, **Greg Uhl** was named operations foreman. Uhl, formerly with Boyce Hydro, will lead daily operations and maintenance activities across the four dam sites and respective bottomlands.

“We have many people to thank today. They include our local, state and federally elected officials, community leaders, foundations, corporations, property owners, donors and the many volunteers who have worked long days and months since May to bring back hope to our community,” Kepler said. “We are ready for this transition.”

About Four Lakes Task Force

Four Lakes Task Force is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization managed and operated by lake residents and industry experts. It serves as a "Delegated Authority" for Midland and Gladwin counties to administer and oversee the maintenance and operations of the four dams and lakes, so the lake communities can enjoy the water long into the future.

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