



Four Lakes Task Force Responds to Release of Independent Forensic Team Final Report

May 5, 2022 – Four Lakes Task Force has begun to review all aspects of the Independent Forensic Team’s (IFT) Final Report of the investigation of the Edenville and Sanford dam failures, released on May 4. In August 2020, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) engaged the five-member IFT to investigate the failure of the Edenville and Sanford dams in central Michigan. In September 2021, the IFT released an interim forensic report that included findings to date. The report issued Wednesday represents the completion of the IFT’s work.

In the report, the IFT states: *If, many years before the May 2020 failure, the dams had become publicly owned or a public-private partnership had been established, sufficient funds would have been available to upgrade the spillway capacity to pass an extreme flood, and therefore the rise of the lake in May 2020 would have been limited and the failure would almost certainly have been prevented.*

We agree with the IFT’s point that the tragedy of the dam failures could have been avoided if years before the May 2020 failure the dams had become publicly owned or a public-private partnership had been established with sufficient funding for improvements.

Dam failure is exactly what our community was trying to avoid when on May 19, 2020, the Edenville Dam failed, causing the Sanford Dam to overtop and fail as well.

The final report is very comprehensive, taking almost two years to complete. It is important to FLTF that all the findings of this report are considered in the final design of our dam and lake restoration plans, as well as our plans for future maintenance and operations to keep the Four Lakes sustainable and safe for this and future generations.

FLTF will provide a more detailed analysis after a thorough review of the report and will share the actions and learnings we expect to factor into our planning and policy advocacy.

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" under Part 307 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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