

Round Lake Management Meeting 01/26/2006 Summary

This is a summary by Tom Kintzinger RLPOA Website Administrator with Sue Kintzinger RLPOA Board member collaboration written on 01/28/2006.

Meeting Location was Famous Dave's Restaurant from 9AM-12PM.

Meeting attended by UW extension (moderator Kris Tiles), Sawyer County Record, Sawyer County (Shirley Riedmann) & legal council, GLIFWC, several representatives of DNR, LCO (Mic Isham), RLPOA (Jack Ardoyno), Osprey Lake and Tiger Cat Chain. There were several other people present as well. Sue Kintzinger, Tom Kintzinger, and Al Reinemann were present from the Round Lake Property Owners Association and a few others.

I came away with an impression of a very tedious, comprehensive multi goal complexity intertwined with several bureaucratic governmental agencies, public, lake organizations & lawyers. **The County led by Shirley Riedmann took the lead** to keep this process moving forward. The public and environmental interest was stated as an important goal. I believe the final goal is to have a good Round Lake Water Management Plan but to use this to support facilitate/change existing code to eliminate or minimize Sawyer County liability for water levels either high or low. Sawyer County wants to get this done as soon as possible. The Round lake Management Plan is a guide and not law. It is the first step in supporting changes to existing water level regulations which were used to sue the County .

It should also be understood that in this report I'm referring to **The Round Lake Management Plan or the Water level Plan** etc. but this name was not agreed upon. I'm using it for the sake of simplicity.

This report is a best effort recollection of the meeting done with some notes.

Kris Tiles UW EXT distributed the book: How's The Water? Planning for Recreational Use on Wisconsin Lakes & Rivers. The book was Edited by Tamara Dudiak and Robert Korth. This is a University of Wisconsin publication.

The long three hour meeting results were as follows:

1. Sawyer County will coordinate the formal writing of a Round Lake Management Plan using the Chippewa Flowage Plan as a template where relevant considering the more developed nature of Round Lake. Shirley Riedmann requested/insisted upon cooperation with her County staff from all concerned parties in doing this critical foundation project. The Chippewa Flowage plan looked like it was about a 50+ page report and reportedly took 10 years to complete.
2. It is my understanding that once the plan/guide is agreed upon and presented to the public for their input that there will then be legislative/code recommendations about management of the water level on Round Lake. The Round Lake Water Management Plan is not law but will be used to recommend modifications in existing law. Ultimately I believe that Sawyer County wants to eliminate or minimize their financial liability to lawsuits such as the recent Hausmann suit/settlement. The County wants to have a plan in place for Round Lake and affected waters that are in the public's best interest and environmentally sound but ultimately eliminating/minimizing financial liability with new water level code/regulations.
3. It was discussed that The Lake Shore Owners do not own the lake but the State of Wisconsin does. It was briefly discussed that the public owned the land below the customary high water mark. The Lake shore owners are very important but it should be

understood that they don't own the lake bed/water but the public or State of Wisconsin does.

4. It was stated several times that most of the work/research that was needed for The Round Lake Water Management Plan was already done-a lot of it because of the "lawsuit". No documents or actual research was presented at the meeting by anyone.
5. This Round Lake Management Plan will possibly be used to apply for a financial grant-I believe from the State of Wisconsin. The Feb. 1 deadline can't be met and the Aug. 1, 2006 deadline is more realistic for having the grant application done. The amount of money involved was not discussed. The grant money would have to be administered by someone and reporting to the issuing agency/state would be needed as well. A sample grant application or specifics about the grant process were not discussed other than stating that it was a complex-big job with ongoing reporting and fiduciary responsibilities. It's my understanding that the grant money will be used to implement the recommendations of the Round Lake Management Plan. There is some confusion regarding this and some people think the grant money will be used to pay for development of the Round Lake Management Plan. It could be both?
6. There was some discussion about a scale or reference point/benchmark that could be used to determine actual Round Lake water levels. Shirley Riedmann of Sawyer County suggested some sort of simple, economical reliable means for this. It was my understanding that she wanted something reasonably accurate to within a couple of inches not mm. There was some discussion about the problems of getting extremely accurate measurements of Round Lake water level. The history of Round Lake water level was discussed and there was a stated need to get objective reliable data for this. Most of this was probably addressed in the recent Round Lake Water Level lawsuit. Some of the documents and engineering reports used in that lawsuit are copyrighted and can't be copied and distributed to the public. There was discussion about requesting the Engineering firms to release their copyright protection. It was not certain if the copyright protection was applicable because of the "open information" requirements of governmental agencies and the Hausmann lawsuit payout. These documents can be viewed at the DNR offices by the public. The DNR did not offer a solution for determining water level. Mean sea level was mentioned and the inaccuracies of lake gauges was discussed in reference to freezing, location, waves, tampering etc. GPS was brought up as a measuring tool.
7. There was quite a bit of discussion about what should be in the Round Lake Management Plan Including: history & system, watershed land use, hydrology, demographics, aquatic plant community, invasive species, swamp land changes, existing governmental regulations & governing bodies-state, county, towns etc., recreational needs, shoreline protection/littoral zone, fisheries/wildlife, forestry, water quality/clarity, development/impervious surface- etc. This went on for an exhaustive amount of time at which point Shirley Riedmann volunteered the County would write the plan using the Chippewa Flowage Plan as a template. See #1 above. The County stated that they want to facilitate this project and don't want it to take years to complete. Kris Tiles stated several times that she did not want to address the water level at this meeting.
8. There was some discussion of water table levels and impact on adjacent watersheds. The Tiger Cat Flowage representative was concerned about any drop in water level stating that they needed existing ? higher levels because of all the backwaters and flowage connecting channel nature of the Tiger Cat. The Tiger Cat is primarily controlled by a good sized concrete dam 20 or so feet high on the Chief River outlet. The outlet from Tiger Cat to Round Lake is artificial and controlled by a several foot high dam structure going down to Round Lake. It was not addressed if this Tiger Cat-Round Lake channel was still putting water into Round Lake this last 2005 summer during the drought. The

DNR stated that if there was a drop in water level at Round Lake that there likely was a “ground water” connection between the two bodies of water. The natural course of nature (droughts & floods) was discussed as well as the limits of human control on water level. No options about controlling water level were discussed. Restoring NN culverts to original level was not discussed. Making the dam at Carlson Bridge more effective was also not discussed. How the drainage from Tiger Cat into Round Lake is monitored/controlled was also not discussed.

9. The DNR representatives in general were concerned with the complexities, unknown interconnecting relationships/consequences, and problems of management. One DNR representative mentioned impervious surface issues a couple of times but offered no recommendation. The DNR did not offer any practical solution to any issue discussed at this meeting. It is my understanding that they are the main entity in setting water levels.
10. Mic Isham was concerned that all or a lot of these bodies of water were on Indian reservation land and that The LCO Tribe/Nation-Government must have their appropriate input. In general Mic Isham and the Tribe have a deliberate, hands off and environmentally “sensitive” viewpoint.
11. One DNR representative stated that the RLPOA Inc. Water Level Statement was (paraphrasing) meaningless and not worth anything. Jack Ardoyno RLPOA representative stated that: RLPOA has a limited advisory role. Our position is that Sawyer County/ DNR is responsible for regulating the levels of the lake determined by the DNR. We are happy to be invited to participate in the process.
12. The NN culverts were not addressed in any meaningful way. Remember these apparently were repaired (without permit) a few years ago and placed a foot or so higher than original making an effective small dam.
13. The next meeting will be on 03/09/2006 to avoid Birkie conflict possibly at The LCO Casino.
14. Mic Isham of the LCO tribe offered The LCO Casino as a sight for the next meeting on 03/09/2006. He stated that he would be most happy (paraphrasing) to host the next meeting. Kris Tiles (moderator) of UW Extension was not sure about the next meeting location and that she was very particular where the meetings were held. I think these two will talk about the next meeting location.

Sincerely,

Tom Kintzinger

www.roundthelake.com Website Administrator

Questions or Comments contact Board Members.