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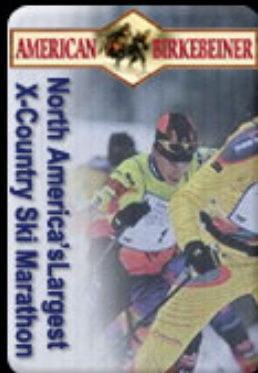
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Round Lake task force discusses possibilities

Terrell Boettcher
 Sawyer County Record

Thursday, November 02nd, 2006 04:14:50 PM

Round Lake water management task force members discussed the recently-authorized engineering study at their Oct. 26 meeting.

In October, the Sawyer County Board contracted with Short-Elliott-Hendrickson (SEH) out of Rice Lake to perform several tasks:

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1) Determine the regional flood elevations on 11 water bodies which are in the Lac Courte Oreilles watershed including Round Lake; the multi-lake watershed's outlet is at Billyboy Dam into the Couderay River; the study's findings will be reviewed by the DNR;

2) Perform a dam break analysis at Billyboy Dam; the analysis then will be reviewed by the DNR to see if it meets state code requirements;

3) Evaluate various scenarios to determine the impact of various hydraulic

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controls that may impact Round Lake water elevations. These scenarios include:

- At what range of flows does the Little Round Lake Dam control the lake levels and what are the associated lake elevations during that period;
- What other hydraulic controls or combination of hydraulic controls impact Round Lake elevations and what are the associated flows and lake elevations for these controls;
- Under what range of flows does the east diversion channel into Osprey Lake contain flow;
- How would lowering the culverts on Highway NN through which Osprey Creek flows change the hydraulic controls that impact Round Lake elevations.

SEH's study is to be completed by next March 15.

"Round Lake is not a completely natural system," said County Conservationist Dale Olson. "Historically, the Carlson Lane dam (at the outlet of Little Round Lake) was a berm, so water couldn't get out there at all. Now we've got a channel that's cut through there so water doesn't fluctuate by five feet anymore, but by a couple feet. It won't fluctuate wildly like it did in the 1930s, but hopefully by an acceptable range. That's part of what SEH will be looking at."

Olson said that SEH indicates that even if the dam were taken out, the water levels will "stay pretty close to what (Round Lake Property Owners Association) wants." The RLPOA board said they would be open to that possibility, he added.

Olson added that the task force's technical advisory team recommends taking out the diversion channel from Lake Placid/Tiger Cat Flowage to Round Lake. That recommendation "is pretty much a done deal," he said.

County board member Fred Zietlow said Round Lake reached a 10-year low on Oct. 24, with 10 to 30 feet of exposed shoreline. DNR staff examined various spots to assess the ordinary high water mark.

County Land & Water Conservation Committee chairperson Shirley Riedmann said "the county is not paying for this (SEH study) to get the answer we want, but to get the right thing done for the right reasons." LCO Tribal Governing Board Mic Isham said he agrees.

The task force is continuing to work on a draft lake management plan.

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