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Applications for Round Lake watershed submitted to DNR

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Applications concerning the Round Lake watershed have been sent to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for review, as was stated in the Land and Water Committee meeting last Thursday.

As proposed, one application will be directed to the DNR to lower the Highway NN culverts, and another application has been submitted to replace the wooden Carlson Dam structure with a more permanent, concrete structure. Committee member Shirley Riedmann pointed out that the DNR is not the only agency that will review the applications.

Because of a culturally-sensitive wild rice bed, which would be eliminated if the NN culverts are lowered, copies of the applications will be reviewed by the Voight Task Force, an arm of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. Its input, according to Riedmann, will be to address concerns raised by Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO).

Copies of the application will also be supplied to LCO, based on a request from tribal attorney Kris Goodwill during the final meeting of the Round Lake Task Force.

Riedmann stated that the applications are available in their entirety on the Land and Water Department's Web site or by going to www.sawyercountygov.org.

The review of these applications means that getting down to work on the project is a long time off, Riedmann suggested. In the meantime, concerns have been raised about inserting boards into the dam after this season's early snowfall to preserve water in the system.

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"I got two phone calls from directors of the Round Lake Property Owners' (Association) and their question was 'When are the boards going to be put in the dam?' so that if we do have any runoff this spring, we don't lose that water," said Al Reinemann, Round Lake property owner. "According to the minimum flow requirements that we understand, only 25 percent of the water is supposed to be free-flowing at any time. Having all the boards out is 100 percent flow and we want to know if the county is going to do something to prevent us from losing our water this spring without having

100 escaping."

"It's 25 percent of base flow," said County Conservationist Dale Olson. "Are we up to base flow levels now? Probably not. We will certainly look at it when we get spring runoff. Last year we put boards in in the spring as long as we could, and we probably will this spring as long as we don't exceed the 1941 (PSC) order. So everybody hope for snow and lots of it."

Olson said that the county is required to pass at least 25 percent of the base flow, but suggested that since the watershed is down significantly, putting boards in to retain water is something yet to be determined.

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