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## Round Lake property owners offer to work with county on water issue

by Terrell Boettcher  
News Editor

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Representatives of the Round Lake Property Owners Association (RLPOA) last week extended an olive branch to Sawyer County, offering to work toward a joint resolution of water level issues which are the subject of an ongoing lawsuit fled by the organization.

In a related matter, a Department of Natural Resources water management supervisor said a state hearing examiner will hold a public hearing, probably at 6 p.m. Oct. 14 at the courthouse, on the county's application to abandon and fill in the Lake Placid diversion dam and canal.

County Clerk Kris Mayberry told the Conservation and Zoning Committee Sept. 9 that "the county will consider, evaluate and move along the whole Round Lake (management) process we were involved in a few years ago. Extensive engineering and studies have been done on floodplains and control structures. Also, we have not been able to get the 1941 water level order (from the state Public Service Commission) revised and get a new order that is workable." However, Sawyer County is "a step ahead of a lot of other counties" in water management systems, Mayberry said.

"We have valuable shoreline and we're partly responsible for the stability and quality of those waters. Historically the county should get a lot of credit for taking a role in that."

Mayberry urged the county board to petition the DNR with a proposal for specific solutions,

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including the existing control structures, with input from shoreowners and the LCO Tribe. In particular, "we need to have a way to deal with high water," he said.

County Conservation and Zoning Administrator Dale Olson said the county needs to "start from scratch and take baby steps," beginning with the Lake Placid diversion canal and the Highway NN culverts.

Tom Aartila, regional water management supervisor for the DNR, said, "We could have come forward with a revised water level order for Little Round Lake, but it wouldn't make sense until all the parts came together, if the issues weren't resolved downstream."

RLPOA board of directors representatives Bill Cadogan and James Purdin told the committee that, "We look to work with all the stakeholders. We've had some initial discussions with Kris (Mayberry). We're really open to find a solution that works. Too much time has gone by. Whether it's seven years or 70 years, it's far too long. There's a lot of anxious people who are really looking for a permanent solution."

They agree with Mayberry's observation that, "We need to take a comprehensive, holistic look at the watershed," said Cadogan, who has a background as a professional control systems engineer.

"We need to set aside any petty differences and try and move forward with something that serves the overall interests of everyone. Let's take a fresh look and see if we can't get something accomplished here in the next year or so. We are flexible on a number of points to try to find a solution that works for everyone," he said.

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Round Lake resident Alan Reinemann said the first step is to revise the 1941 order.

Phil Nies, who lives on Lac Courte Oreilles, said they also have an interest in what happens with the water, because "It's all one watershed," including Lac Courte Oreilles and Grindstone lakes.

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