

Flowage Preservation Alliance

April 15, 2016 Newsletter

DNR DAM GRANT AWARD

As you probably know by now, at the beginning of April the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources awarded a 50% matching dam grant to the Little Tamarack Baker Spring Lake District.

The Grant application process was very lengthy and complicated; Bob Senechalle deserves much credit for wading through the minute details and completing the application in exemplary fashion.

For the past two years, as permits have been received and engineering work has progressed, property owners on the Flowage have begun to shoulder the tax burden to eventually repay the cost of dam reconstruction, estimated at approximately \$168,000 including engineering and legal fees. The DNR grant award is intended to cut that tax burden by one-half.

EAST FLOWAGE ROAD CULVERT

From the beginning of the project, the Lake District had been told by both the DNR and the engineers that the "old" culvert could remain until it failed. However, the DNR reversed its decision. The Lake District learned of this in late December, having eventually received a memo between the engineers and the DNR dated November 15th, 2015. In this memo, the "construction sequence" was detailed, including "remove existing culvert". When the Lake District Board questioned this, the DNR informed the Lake District that the "old" culvert was now determined to be the weak link in the dam reconstruction, and would be removed as part of the project.

Concern was raised by Lake District members and Myrtle Lake property owners about directing the total flow of the Little Tamarack Flowage through the new "whistle tube" culvert, and its effect on Myrtle Lake and Lapokin Pond.

At its April 2nd meeting, the Lake District Board noted that - at the request of the Lake District - assurances were received from both the DNR and Ayres (the engineering firm) addressing these concerns. Both parties stated that - as Myrtle Lake is upstream of the creek - there should be no effect on Myrtle Lake. In addition, there is aerial photographic evidence that Myrtle Lake would not be affected. However, Lapokin Pond is created by a beaver dam, which will continue to determine the water level in Lapokin Pond, and would need adjustment if the water level rises to an undesirable level.

The DNR made its position clear, that the culvert on East Flowage Road must be removed promptly after the outlet structure at the dam is constructed. This is a necessary component of the DNR's approval of the Lake District's grant application. The cost of removal will be part of the 50/50 grant reimbursement.

Because the culvert on East Flowage Road belongs to the Town of Conover, the Town will reimburse the Lake District for the cost of removal. This was confirmed at the Town Board Meeting on April 14th.

CONSTRUCTION BIDS

Also at its April 2nd meeting, the Lake District Board awarded construction work at the dam and culvert removal to Pember Companies, Menomonie, Wisconsin, for a total sum of \$147,720. The schedule is yet to be determined, but the major part will be accomplished quickly. There will be a coffer dam built during the process, so fishing and other water sports should not be affected by any change in water level. When the dates and sequence of construction are firmly established, we will send out information outlining the process.

IT'S STILL WINTER - WAIT, IT'S SUMMER!

After an unusually warm week in March, the Flowage started to thaw around the edges, and some waterfowl started to appear - wood ducks, trumpeter swans, Canada geese. That is, until the first week of April, when winter came back with 8 inches of snow, and the Flowage re-froze! Almost as much snow as the rest of the winter combined! However, the forecast for this week calls for several days of temperatures around 70 degrees. What season is this? It's anyone's guess!



Spring Lake in April

MIGRATING BIRDS AND BEARS

Birds are starting to migrate through the area - phoebes, finches, redpolls, juncos - and it's great to see them at our feeders. But the DNR has warned that bears are waking up from hibernation, and will be looking for easy food. Some people prefer to stop feeding birds for a month or so to avoid feeder damage. By May, there will be more food in the wild for the bears to feed on, and they won't be so eager to pirate the bird food. Other people don't mind the bears. Your choice!



Young bear at the bird feeder

**LAST-MINUTE NEWS FLASH - THE LOONS
HAVE RETURNED TO THE FLOWAGE!**

MEETING REMINDERS:

April 23 (Saturday) 10:00 am at the Conover Center - Flowage Preservation Alliance Board Meeting - open meeting - all are invited

May 28 (Saturday) 9:00 am at the Conover Center - Lake District Board Meeting - open meeting - all are invited

July 2 (Saturday) FPA and Lake District Annual Meetings - Conover Center or Town Park (morning, times to be determined)

Rich Ruffalo, President



715-547-6869

George Holloway, Vice President



715-547-6048

Flowage Preservation Alliance, P.O. Box 221, Conover WI 54519
flowagepreservation@gmail.com