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## Round Lake must look forward

Sawyer County Record

Thursday, December 28th, 2006 12:26:37 PM

Editor:

*Story Continues Below*

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Fishing, hunting, and hiking are especially pleasurable in the Hayward area because the ecosystems are still intact to support the wildlife. Most people who choose to live here (and people who choose to bring their tourism dollars here) value the aesthetics of nature, healthy ecosystems that nurture wildlife, and people responsibly coexisting with the natural environment in a manner that will preserve those aesthetics and wildlife for generations to come. That's what makes the Hayward area attractive and unique to people.

The Town of Round Lake is at a crossroads that will determine the character of this area for the future. On Jan. 11, the board of supervisors will decide whether or not to allow a high density subdivision to be developed on a small lake with a delicate ecosystem. Lovejoy Lake, like all small lakes, is

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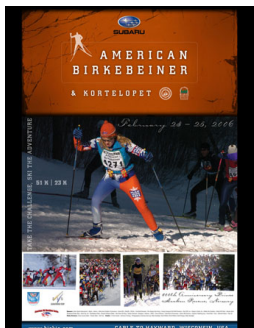
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extremely sensitive to environmental pressures. The proposed subdivision would abut the natural wetlands surrounding the lake and would create undue pressure on the lake from the clearing of woods and the creation of so many septic tanks and lawns.

Coincidentally, the Sawyer County board is currently studying the creation of a "wilderness" class of lakes because it is widely recognized that small lakes must be protected since they sustain more substantial damage than larger lakes when developed inappropriately. A wilderness designation would not prevent development, but it would only create some minimal regulations that respect the small lake ecosystem, such as requiring lots to be five acres and have a minimum of 300 feet of shoreline, a depth of 700 feet, and homes would be set back at least 100 feet from the water.

To create a high-density development on a small lake may currently be legal, but it is not desirable unless one values slumping banks, eroded shoreline, sedimentation, and loss of habitat to name just a few of the consequences. If the Town of Round Lake allows developers to create high density housing in sensitive ecosystems, they are setting a precedent. If we cannot stand up for our wilderness environment, then Hayward will not be a place to fish, hunt, and enjoy the beauty of nature. It will eventually become another Lake Geneva or Wisconsin Dells.

Round Lake Township has the opportunity to make a decision based on their vision for township's future. They have the opportunity to be forward-looking enough to require development on small lakes in the township to align with the regulations of the proposed wilderness class of lakes. The township board of supervisors has the opportunity to set a precedent of which they can be proud, and they can tell their grandchildren that they did something important to preserve this area for them. They have an opportunity to be leaders, setting a positive precedent that other townships might choose to follow, spreading the impact of their decision. For everyone who loves this area, for the children who hope to live in or visit the beauty of the north woods here, let's hope they embrace this opportunity.

Jill and Mark Grove

Belvidere, Ill.

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