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Task Force sends two options for Round Lake watershed to committee

 [Will LaBreche](#) / Staff Writer
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The Round Lake Task Force has decided on a pair of options to send to the Land and Water Committee regarding its recommendations for managing the Round Lake watershed.

This action comes after the county held two public information meetings in June and July where numerous residents turned out to voice their support and concerns over the issue of how to manage the water flow as it pertains to Osprey Lake and its downstream effect on both Little Round and Round Lakes.

Last week's task force meeting was directed by county supervisor Shirley Riedmann who clearly defined her intent in the three-hour discussion — that the task force had to arrive at two options which would be sent to the Land and Water Committee and ultimately to the county board for approval.

Frank Pratt of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources attended the meeting as did Bernie Lenz of SEH Engineering, who sat next to LCO representation including tribal attorney Kris Goodwell and tribal governing board member Brian Bisonette.

For the majority of the meeting, Bisonette and Goodwell remained quiet but did voice concern over the removal of a beaver dam along Osprey Creek, an action, Goodwell said, that would likely mean a lawsuit. Goodwell did suggest, as others on the task force agreed, that a conference should be organized between LCO, DNR and county legal representation in order to resolve issues of contention that could arise.

Furthermore, according to Pratt, before any final recommendations are put in place, he advised that the county submit those recommendations to the DNR prior to the county board meeting in September so that agency can comment on whether or not aspects of the recommendations require permitting "or are even possible," he said.

Labeled as "option A" and "option B," both recommendations were drawn up at the Task Force meeting and are described as follows:

- Option A
This option takes into consideration the original recommendations outlined by the technical committee, which included DNR input, from their Aug. 9, 2006 meeting.

This team recommended implementation of a passive system which would include:

- Abandoning the Little Round Lake dam;
- Removing and actively managing beaver dams on Osprey Creek;
- Lowering the Highway NN culverts;
- Changing the Little Round Lake 1941 order to reflect the natural variation of the lake;
- Abandonment of the Placid Lake diversion canal;
- Address the north channel of the Osprey culvert situation off Thunderbird Road.

At this point, Pratt interjected that "while DNR members were a part of this technical team, that does not mean the DNR won't entertain other options.

"My main goal in participating in this group (the Task Force) is to make sure whatever options chosen fulfills

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the code requirements," he added.

Option B

This option considers a proposal submitted by the Round Lake Property Owner's Association.

These recommendations include:

- Replacing the Carlson dam with a new, more permanent and wider concrete dam (or weir) which will mean higher flow rates;
- Modifying the 1941 order to manage the lake at 77.25 feet;
- Notifying LCO that the beaver dams upstream of Highway NN are a "public nuisance" and should be removed;
- Replacing or repairing the Highway NN culverts.

Replacing the Carlson dam could mean purchasing flood easements downstream, Riedmann said, and acknowledged that there are no dollar amounts as of yet to communicate to taxpayers exactly how much this action would cost.

Riedmann particularly highlighted the need for a beaver dam management plan which, she said, would be a collaborative effort between county, DNR and LCO representation. A suggestion was made that a beaver dam task force be formed to address these issues.

On that, Riedmann said "tribal input is essential" to the process.

The process

As described by Riedmann, these two options will be submitted to the Land and Water Committee for further discussion before the DNR can review the recommendations to assure that they are feasible.

She also said that a conference will be held between LCO, DNR and county legal counsels to maintain open communication in moving forward with any watershed plan.

She did acknowledge that the county board would review the recommendations at its September meeting as this would allow for a more reasonable time frame. She stressed that both the Land and Water Committee and county board meetings are public, open meetings where people can attend to once again voice their support or concerns about the proposed recommendations.

The Land and Water Committee will meet on Monday, Aug. 6, at 9 a.m. in the assembly room of the Sawyer County courthouse.

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