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Round Lake watershed project could carry up to \$175,000 price tag

[Will LaBreche](#) / Web Editor/Staff Writer/Photographer
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A request to set aside \$175,000 for funding will be included in the Round Lake Task Force's final recommendation to the county board concerning the Round Lake watershed. The Task Force met for one last time to finalize its recommendations Thursday, Nov. 8.

Directed by Shirley Riedmann, the Task Force heard from Bernie Lenz of Short Elliot Hendrickson (SEH) Engineering, who explained how he arrived at his final analysis and provided background on the project and its potential impacts to the watershed.

Lenz designed his plan with the assumption that all beaver dams within the system will remain intact. However, he asserted that the entire process is contingent upon the Highway NN culverts being lowered. The goal, Lenz stated, is to retain as much water as possible during low flow and release necessary amounts during periods of high flow.

The Task Force outlined its recommendations as follows:

- That an application be submitted to lower the Highway NN culverts.
- That the county continue to push for a modification of the 1941 Public Service Commission order to reflect the natural variations of the watershed.

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- That the county apply to insert a new, concrete structure at the site of the current Carlson Dam wooden structure. This includes a 12-foot v-notched weir which would serve as a control mechanism to provide a constant water flow depending on water levels.
- To recommend to the Finance Committee that they set aside \$175,000 to fund the project.

Lac Courte Oreilles tribal attorney Kris Goodwill reminded those gathered at the meeting that the LCO tribe has complete and unfettered governance of the land, and that any applications should be forwarded to the tribe for their review.

Riedmann agreed and stated that the application to lower the NN culverts would be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the LCO Tribal Governing Board and to the Voight Task Force, an extension of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC).

Because lowering the culverts would eliminate a small wild ricing area, Riedmann questioned Goodwill as to whether GLIFWC had investigated the site. Goodwill said the agency, as of last Thursday, had not.

WDNR's Frank Pratt, when questioned whether Lenz's proposed concrete structure and weir are acceptable, stated he did not see a lot of concern with the plan.

To complete the project, Lenz said that it would cost the county \$134,750. A contingency plan, which provides very little benefit to the watershed according to Lenz, would cost the county \$24,200 and would mean just replacing the weir and leaving the wooden structure as is taking action on this, Riedmann asserted that up to \$175,000 should be set aside in order to compensate for any unforeseen expenses during construction.

The Sawyer County Board of Supervisors was set to take action on the Task Force's recommendation at its Tuesday, Nov. 13 meeting. Look for full coverage in next week's Sawyer County Record. Depending on the board's action, any applications will then be filed with the WDNR and other agencies previously listed.

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