

**Willow River State Park Dam and Little Falls Lake Drawdown
Public Meeting Minutes – February 24th, 2015
Hudson Town Hall**

Attendance: Aaron Mason, Brian Markowski, Mike Rogne, Gordon Stinson, Marty Engel, Craig Thompson and Kevin Harter.

Public Attendance: 44 people.

Agenda:

- A. Welcome & Staff Introductions - Craig Thompson

- B. Program Presentation
 - Willow River State Park History & Overview – Aaron Mason
 - Little Falls Dam Assessment – Mike Rogne
 - Engineering Feasibility Study – Gordon Stinson
 - Impending Drawdown & Sediment Management – Mike Rogne & Gordon Stinson
 - Fisheries Management – Marty Engel

- C. Public Questions & Comments – Craig Thompson
 1. What are the contamination and sediment concerns going into Lake Mallalieu and St. Croix River?
 2. What work was done to the dam during the last drawdown in the 1980's?
 3. What effect will the drawdown have on the water table?
 4. Will we be retrofitting the dam for hydropower?
 5. After the drawdown will the lake expand?
 6. Do we have restrictions of placing fish up stream until lake is restored?
 7. Do we have to quarantine all the fish if we want to return them to the lake?
 8. What extent does the dam control flow now and in the future?
 9. Wouldn't the water just go over the dam during a 100 year flood?
 10. What will the size of the new dam be?
 11. What exactly does a 1,000 year flood mean?
 12. Don't recall Little Falls Lake ever flooding.
 13. Did the Little Falls Lake ever flood?
 14. Applaud looking at 1,000 year flood for safety concerns.
 15. Is the 2013 inspection available to the public?
 16. Will there be updated information about the dam on the website?
 17. How's the budget for the dam?
 18. Since this would have a local impact, we might have special interest groups to assist with funding.
 19. The DNR took out two dams already on Willow River and now you will take out a third without any money to replace it?

20. What are the hazards to property and people during the drawdown period?
21. Will the drawdown raise the water level on Lake Mallalieu?
22. Can Lake Mallaieu dam control the water levels during the drawdown period?
23. The dam at the park won't control water levels on properties downstream?
24. Will the DNR be changing the nature of the dam? Flood control? Structure?
25. Will Little Falls Lake water levels change?
26. Have we compared other WI dam replacements for drawdowns, repairs and costs?
27. Sawyer County (Eddy Creek & Grimh) had dams removed since they weren't on state lands.
28. It's a shame we lost two dams already, but a three year drawdown will decrease park visitors.
29. Hope state refurbishes Little Falls Lake and River to be accessible.
30. Concerns of lost lake shore and decrease in property values.
31. We need to look at funding.
32. Concerns the dam won't be replaced.
33. We need to look at all alternatives now, not in three years in case funding isn't there.
34. What about a cofferdam?
35. How will this affect other wildlife?
36. Will this increase property taxes?
37. What economic impact will the drawdown have on the park?
38. Wouldn't a decrease in revenue and visitors at the park give the state a reason to replace the dam?
39. Economic impact to property values would decrease if not replaced.
40. Are we looking at hydroelectric dam to producing green energy and as an option to generate revenue?
41. Did the 2013 dam inspection address major safety concerns?
42. I would like to see the dam rebuilt or we leave the dam for now if funding isn't there.
43. How long will it take to drawdown the lake?
44. Will the sediments be tested in the lake bed and will this impact the dam decisions?
45. Are we looking at the phosphorus impact to Lake Mallalieu since the lake is already in a federal program?
46. Look at federal funding (EPA) and grant opportunities on this issue with water management staff and Land Conservation Department.
47. Will the lake bed and river be off limits to the public during this time?
48. Will the project continue through the winter months?
49. Why isn't the funding not in place before the drawdown?
50. Can't we raise the money first?
51. Can't we give the public interest groups a year before the drawdown?
52. If we wouldn't have taken out the other two dams this wouldn't have been an issue.

53. Are there more public meetings to come?
54. Is there a guarantee the dam will be rebuilt if private funding is there?
55. Contact your representatives who will have an impact on the finance of this project.
56. What's the water level going to be below the dam?
57. How is this dam different than the one in New Richmond?
58. Who will be doing the construction?
59. Will there be water table and groundwater changes?
60. If the cost of replacing is so high will we be walking away from this project?
61. Is there still a possibility to repair the existing dam?
62. What will the cost be?
63. Isn't repairing just a temporary fix?
64. The 2013 inspection should be a PDF online for public review.
65. Can't we delay this until after Little Falls Lake summer fishing contest?

D. Next Steps In Process – Craig Thompson

- Summary – Drawdown May or June (2-3 year period).
 - Best Options - Feasibility Study
 - Sediment Management Plan
 - Funding

**Little Falls Dam, Willow River State Park
Public Meeting Minutes – May 6, 2015
Hudson Town Hall**

Staff Attendance: Aaron Mason, Brian Markowski, Mike Rogney, Gordon Stinson, Ben Bergey, Dan Bauman, Peter Biermeier, Missy Vanlanduyt, Paul Bruggink, and Kevin Harter.

Public Attendance: 57 people.

Agenda:

E. Welcome & Introductions

F. Program Presentation

- Opening Remarks
- Recap & History On Little Falls Dam Project
- Drawdown Strategy
- Drawdown Effects On Park Recreation
- Feasibility Study Review & Capital Development Budget Process

G. Public Questions & Comments

1. Why is dam in jeopardy today but not 3 years ago?
2. How can you assume lives are at stake?
3. What are we going to do with all the dead fish?
4. Hydraulic pumping?
5. Bathometric Survey?
6. Concerned with silt in Lake Mallalieu.
7. How can we draw down the lake before a silt management plan?
8. Was the dam made with washed or dirty concrete?
9. No alternatives for funding for project?
10. Isn't waiting for dam decision too late for looking at funding?
11. Do we need to move forward with drawdown before decision is made?
12. During a 1,000 year event, should I be concerned at all?
13. Why this dam and why now when others are out there?
14. If lake isn't drawn down, what would happen to cause loss of life?
15. Do we know flow during 100 year storm last year?
16. Can we question model with actual data to avoid drawdown?
17. Don't understand if this is a reasonable standard?
18. Is repairing the dam really an option?
19. What impact is there at Lake Mallalieu if no dam during a 1,000 year flood?
20. Would all sediment go to Lake Mallalieu?
21. What's the capacity of Lake Mallalieu's dam?
22. Why not a partial drawdown?

23. Who will oversee drawdown?
24. Partial replacement and 35% design?
25. Why 35% design?
26. Can drawdown wait until fall?
27. What DNR professionals are doing the drawdown plan?
28. What can we do to make sure dam is replaced?
29. How's this different than the other 2 dams that were removed?
30. Past experience has caused lack of trust with previous dams.
31. Some don't have trust in this room.
32. We need to trust DNR staff and believe the experts.
33. Why a drawdown?
34. Why didn't we learn about this issue 2-3 years ago?
35. Study on what's going to happen during 1,000 year flood?
36. After 2-3 years is when we could lose trust and you decide not to replace the dam.
37. How much safer am I with a different dam?
38. We should look at 1934 dam failure data. Possible deaths?
39. Need to call your local representatives.
40. What's best for the people & park?
41. How will decisions be decided?
42. Concerns with recreational activity loss.
43. Loss of revenue?
44. Why \$3 million requested back in 2013?
45. Not getting information out to the public now could make it too late.
46. Why limited information on engineering?
47. Are we likely looking at 5 years of drawdown?
48. Could we include in budget to pay for damage to Lake Mallalieu?
49. Any experience/examples to help build support with this type of project?
50. During drawdown, how much sediment is expected with flow?
51. Retrofitted for hydropower?
52. Can you provide list of DNR staff at this meeting?
53. What percent of dams have been removed not in compliance?
54. Was Montello dam state owned?
55. Monitoring sediment?
56. What are we doing to gather survey information from 700,000 visitors?
57. Is the dam point source for EPA?
58. We need to publicize more and notify businesses.
59. Can we give out direct information to synthesize the data?
60. Funding approval?
61. If funding doesn't get approved by the legislature what happens?
62. Would drawdown continue if funding is not approved?
63. What happened to the fish relocation option?
64. Starting the drawdown June 1, but the \$3 million may not be approved?
65. Has the actual flow rate ever exceeded the rating at the current dam?
66. Wasn't the 1965 flood, flow rates below rated value?

67. Why not draw down the lake about 2 feet to avoid serious downstream flood?
68. Is 1 in 100 the rating applied to the dam capacity?
69. If dam is removed will there be compensation for the impact of losing dam?
70. How many dams have been replaced in the last 5 years?
71. When would funding be requested for rebuilding the dam?
72. How much rain does it take to reach 100 or 1,000 year flood?
73. What is probability of dam reconstruction and lake is restored?
74. What is probability we restock trout?
75. Avoid invasive seed when seeding lake bed.
76. If dam is not replaced and decrease of visitors would the park close? Sold?
77. Economic impacts because of decrease in recreational opportunity?
78. Does comprehensive plan allow for a reduction of land use for anything but park?
79. How does the Little Falls dam compare to other state owned dams?
80. Why is no feasibility study for hydroelectric? Power Company Partnership?
81. How long has Q100 and Q1000 criteria been exceeded?
82. What is the level of river channel compared to drawdown depth? Silt level?
83. Would we only dredge near the dam?
84. Will the feasibility study be available for the public?
85. What are the phosphorus levels in the sediment?
86. What method of sediment control will be in place?

H. Closing Remarks

- Summary – Drawdown June 1, 2015 (2-3 year period).
 - Best Option – Replace, Repair or Remove?
 - Monitoring
 - Sediment Management

Question/Answer Discussion

Willow River State Park Little Falls Dam Project October 20 public meeting

1. About the timeline, when you bid the project in Dec '17, will we know what the cost of the project will be?
 - a. We will know the cost of the project in April '17. A/E consultant will have a good handle of the estimate based on their experience. They could also acquire the services of a contractor to hone their estimates.
2. Why is remove/restore river still an option?
 - a. As a state agency, we need to vet all options to address the problem. Once those options are vetted, agency leadership will decide which alternative to pursue.
3. Will all stakeholders be given opportunity to provide input (park users)?
 - a. All stakeholders will be given opportunity for providing comments on the alternatives analysis through GovDelivery and the website.
4. Will there be an opportunity for all to “vote” on the alternatives—replace dam or remove/restore river?
 - a. The alternatives analysis will be available for comment as stated above and comments received will be incorporated into the document. No official “vote” will occur.
5. What will fishery be like for the next few years before the dam is replaced?
 - a. In the river condition, it may have adequate temperatures to support a trout fishery. Not likely to have reproduction so fish would have to be stocked. Some fish may migrate from upstream into the segment.
6. How much will be obligated by the end of this budget cycle for this project?
 - a. A few thousand is available now through cash reserves, but the larger \$8M amount will not be available until the Building Commission approves it for use. We estimate that about \$3-400K will be used for sediment management and other miscellaneous work before the project money is allotted.
7. Will DNR have another public meeting?
 - a. Yes, likely a spring meeting to discuss the final decision and the project is in the hands of Dept of Administration.
8. Comment: If removal/restore river is selected, a swimming beach could be developed like the one at Lake Elmo Park in MN.
9. When DNR hands the project over to DOA, will DNR still have influence over the project?

- a. While DOA will have control over the process and project particulars, DNR will still be involved to ensure that the final product meets the goals of the project as proposed.
10. Who determines how much sediment and when it gets removed as part of the dam project?
 - a. DNR will base its decisions on needs of the property, ecological and river system impacts, and budgetary considerations. The impoundment assets (fishery/habitat improvements, re-contouring, etc.) and park road improvements will be considered as part of the project.
11. What will the dam be like?
 - a. The A/E consultant will make a more detailed investigation as to the various alternatives that would fit the setting as well as comply with state flood flow requirements. It will be similarly sized, have a bottom-draw and be part of the park. If the cost comes in over budget, we will have to reassess our level of funding and look for additional funds.
12. Will seeding this fall really have an effect?
 - a. Seeding this fall after the complete drawdown was worth our effort.
13. Is there any background describing the history of the park available?
 - a. There is some history of the park available on the website. There will also be a significant portion of the alternatives analysis devoted to history of the park and the dams that had existed.
14. What amount of money is going to Lake Mallilieu?
 - a. The project is for the Little Falls Lake dam. We are not allowed to divert dollars to another purpose. The 2013 aquatic plant survey captured some “pre-conditions” of Lake Mallilieu. The fine sediments that are suspended in the water now will either eventually settle out and be nearly indistinguishable or be flushed out to the St. Croix River.
15. Was there consideration for lowing Lake Mallilieu to help flush more of the fine sediments through?
 - a. It was considered, but DNR didn’t feel confident that it would be effective.
16. Who will determine when to clean out the sediment trap?
 - a. Park staff, engineers and fish habitat experts. This is a fluid situation and it will be done on an as-needed basis.
17. What other engineering studies were done? How was it determined where to do the breach? Why the strongest part of dam?
 - a. A group of engineers discussed the situation early this summer and determined, based on their collective experience, that it would end up costing more to “band-aide” repair part of the dam rather than to simply replace it entirely. It would also all but eliminate the uncertainty of the dam foundation.
18. What happens if the project comes in over budget?
 - a. If it is a minor amount, some value engineering could be done. If it is significant, we may need to seek additional funding from legislature.
19. How long will it take for the suspended solids to move out of Lake Mallilieu?

- a. It could take some time, depending upon the weather. It would need some storm/spring melt flows to create the energy in the water needed to move the sediment.
20. Can you commit to emptying the sediment trap?
- a. Yes, the sediment trap will be maintained to capture much of the bedload, coarse sediment and keep it from travelling downstream.
21. What is the effect of the suspended sediment once it settles out? What would ¼ inch, ½ inch of this sediment cause in Lake Mallilieu?
- a. It is uncertain at this time what effects, if any, will occur. However, sediment is a naturally occurring component in rivers. Whatever happens as a result a small amount of sediment settling would not be unusual.
22. Comment: Fear no money will be left for sediment management.
23. Who is accountable for sediment on Lake Mallilieu?
- a. DNR is responsible for the decisions it makes on this project. However, sediment in the river is naturally occurring, although human practices upstream can cause more sediment to enter the system. Sediment has been held up in the various impoundments of the river over time. Drawing down Little Falls Lake and creating a breach in the dam has allowed some of the sediment to continue its course downstream. The dam at Lake Mallilieu is causing the sediment to hold up in the flowage.