

Star Lake Property owners Association
P.O. Box 155
Dent, MN 56528

Wednesday, August 10, 2011

The Board of Directors of the Star Lake Property Owners Association (SLPOA) has been closely following the proposal to connect Little McDonald, Krebs, Paul Lakes (near Perham) to OTC Ditch #25 as a possible solution to the unprecedented high water problems on those lakes. This issue is critical to Star Lake because all water flowing through Ditch 25 eventually gets released into Star Lake.

The Little MacDonald Lake Improvement District (LID) has been very diligent and aggressive in seeking approval from Ottertail County to gain access to Ditch 25. They believe they can "vent" high water levels on those lakes by draining through Ditch 25 into Star which then drains via Star Creek into Dead lake and on into Ottertail Lake. They have publicly stated they intend to release upstream water into Ditch 25 only when the down stream lakes have capacity to handle more water—however, capacity has yet to be defined.

Two members of their LID Board made a presentation at the SLPOA board meeting in early June. Subsequently, Ditch 25 was the primary discussion topic at the Annual Meeting of the SLPOA. After extensive discussion, the SLPOA Board retained an attorney experienced in lake management issues to advise us on the issues and strategies necessary to protect Star Lake.

Although we wish to be good neighbors and recognize the upstream lakes have serious problems, we have submitted a letter to the OTC Commissioners through our attorney expressing opposition to the proposal unless several critical issues can be satisfactorily resolved. The SLPOA board has also adopted a formal Resolution stating we are opposed to and will resist any discharge of LID water through OTC Ditch #25 into Star lake until and unless satisfactory assurances are given for the issues listed the resolution (enclosed) by the OTC Commissioners and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

On August 8 the Little MacDonald LID held the first of two critical public meetings in Perham. Star Lake was well represented at the first meeting. A second and more critical meeting called by the OTC Board of Commissioners is scheduled for **7:00PM, Monday, August 22, --also in Perham High School.** This will be the required public hearing to formally consider the petition filed by the Little MacDonald LID to access Ditch 25. If you can, PLEASE ATTEND THIS MEETING! We need to communicate the potential critical and negative impact of additional upstream water on Star Lake. Our numbers are important!

Although the Little MacDonald LID has worked to identify and mitigate the potential impacts on down stream lakes (i.e. Star Lake) we feel there are numerous details not yet answered: water quality concerns, administration and control of the outlet from Little Mac, maintenance of Star Lake's outlet, ditch maintenance fees to be assessed, etc.

Given the schedule, time is extremely limited to review the pending engineering report and proposed operating plan. The LID is pushing hard and they are seeking approval to start construction this fall!. Remember, August 22nd is the formal hearing for the project!

What can you do?

1. Use the addresses below to write a letter to the County Commissioners today. They need to understand the magnitude Star Lake's current high water issues. (Flooding, erosion, shoreline rip-rap problems, beach loss, floating bogs resulting from high water, etc.) Beyond high water, they need to hear the additional concerns regarding invasive species and potential water quality issues as a result of 1) numerous flooded septic systems in LID lakes and 2) from the higher flows through Ditch 25 wet lands which presently serve to filter water as it works its way down stream.

Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners:

Douglas A. Huebsch 1126 Lakeside Est E Perham, MN 56573	Wayne D. Johnson OTC Gvt. Svcs. Bldg. 515 Fir Ave. W. Fergus Falls, MN 56537	John Lindquist OTC Gvt. Svcs. Bldg. 515 Fir Ave. W. Fergus Falls, MN 56537	Roger Froemming OTC Gvt. Svcs. Bldg. 515 Fir Ave. W. Fergus Falls, MN 56537	Lee Rogness OTC Gvt. Svcs. Bldg. 515 Fir Ave. W. Fergus Falls, MN 56537
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Copies to OT County Auditor- Wayne Stein 510 Fir Ave. W. Fergus Falls, MN 56537
OT County Attorney – David Hauser 510 Fir Ave. W. Fergus Falls, MN 56537
OTC Land and Resource Manager- Bill Kahler 510 Fir Ave. W. Fergus Falls, MN 56537
Minnesota DNR, 1509 1st Avenue North, Fergus Falls, MN 56537

2. We need your support by attending the hearing at the Perham H.S. at 7:00PM on August 22 in Perham. Ask your questions and express your concerns. We understand that the letters WILL be read at the hearing. Our strength is in our numbers and the sincerity of our cause.

3. If you are not yet a member of the SLPOA, please consider becoming a member. If you are already a member and want help with the expenses we are incurring in this effort, feel free to contribute an additional amount.

4. Please visit the SLPOA web site for further information as it becomes available. The Little MacDonald LID is well prepared to present their case before the Board of Commissioners and they are VERY determined. www.starlakeassociation.com

5. Please consider your concerns and ask questions of your County Commissioners to consider before they rule. Some questions and concerns we have are:

- Our natural outlet, Star Creek drains into Dead Lake. In the past, it has become “plugged” by bogs and excessive vegetation. Who will maintain it so we can flow? Who pays for the maintenance?
- It is our understanding that the Little MacDonald LID will "own" the gate structure. Does this mean they will control the drainage water too? Who will monitor and define the capacity of down stream lakes for drainage purposes?
- Who is responsible for down stream damage resulting from additional water being introduced into ditch 25?
- The Engineer's Report and “Operating Plan” for the project will not be available until ten days prior to the OTC hearing. They are to be posted on the County's web site, but that allows very little time to evaluate.

Help protect the quality of Star Lake.

Respectfully,

Arlette Preston, President
Star Lake Property Owners Association