

Green Lake Property Owners Association
Summary of Meeting with DNR
July 27, 2011

A meeting organized by Terry Frazee, Executive Director of the GLPOA, was held on July 27, 2011. In attendance were Skip Wright, DNR; Ethan Jenzen, DNR; Chad Anderson, Middle Fork Crow River Water Shed District; Roger Stehn, GLPOA board; Dennis Peterson, Kandiyohi County Commissioner; Jeff Bredberg, County Water Quality Director; Val Sechlar, GLPOA board; Tom Chearvey, West Central Tribune; Leonard Rossel, Green Lake property owner; Terry Frazee, Ex Secretary, GLPOA; Dick Gunderson, GLPOA board member.

Opening comments were offered by each of the attendees, all of whom acknowledged that Green Lake is at a very high level, a condition that is contributing to lakeshore erosion, property damage and cause for general concern of property owners. The total amount of damage is unknown at this point but based on anecdotal evidence is likely to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. If the current level of Green Lake persists until it freezes over additional damage could occur because of the expansion of ice on the lake this winter.

Comments by representatives of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provided perspective on the current situation. High water conditions exist throughout Minnesota. Factors involving above average rain-fall throughout the region, especially in the watershed area affecting Green Lake, and extreme ground saturation which contributes to significant run-off after each rain, are the major reasons explaining why the level of Green Lake has risen and remains so high. As of this date the level of Green Lake is 1,157.97 ft. (above sea-level), about 9.8 inches below the all-time high of the lake recorded in 1986.

During the meeting the following points were offered and discussed:

- The current rate of water flow into Green Lake through the dam at the Olde Mill is about equal to the flow out of Green Lake into Lake Calhoun.
- The dam at the Olde Mill is controlled by a private party (and has been for decades) who coordinates actions with the DNR to control flow out of Nest Lake into Green Lake to match the rate of flow from the New London dam.
- There is currently no way to control the rate of flow out of Lake Calhoun. A concrete structure was put into place decades ago that cannot be manually adjusted to control the flow rate.
- There is virtually nothing that can be done in the short-run by the DNR or any government agency to control the level of Green Lake. However, favorable conditions downstream from Lake Calhoun may at some point result in a higher rate of outflow from Green Lake vs. inflow, which would be a favorable development. The

water level before the lake freezes will be governed by the amount of rainfall, humidity, wind and temperature.

- We are currently in a “wet” cycle and conditions are likely to change in the future; however, the timing is highly uncertain. Under “ideal” conditions the water level of Green Lake could drop several inches over a period of two to three weeks; however, the most likely scenario, assuming no additional heavy rains, is a gradual reduction in the lake level over the balance of the year. In 2010 the drop between July and November was about four inches.
- Decades ago water level control systems impacting Green Lake were largely eliminated in an effort to allow water flows to proceed more naturally. Given the absence of these controls, Green Lake property owners have been and remain subject to the impact of weather patterns.

Looking ahead, if this coming winter results in above average snow-fall, and the spring/summer of 2012 produces above average amounts of rain, next year could be “wet” again. However, because of the unusual circumstances surrounding the events of 1986, breaking the record lake level recorded that year is somewhat remote. As a way of injecting levity into the discussion it was suggested there might be a future meeting at which the focus would be on Green Lake being too low. Weather goes in cycles. Recall that the record high for Green Lake was set in 1986, and only two years later the record low was achieved.

Dick Gunderson
GLPOA Board Member and Treasurer

RLG
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