

Forest Lake Spillway Report
December 7, 2023
By: Dan LeFevre

Since our November 1st report we reached two important milestones; (1.) on November 29th the 23rd Circuit Court for the County of Arenac established a lake level special assessment district for Forest Lake, and (2.) on December 5th the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) - Water Resources Division posted a notice of application that runs through December 25th and after which the Phase 1 - downstream stabilization work may begin. Since the May 19, 2020 storm our community has invested three and a half years of hard work to reach this important stage. I am thankful for all of the efforts put forth, and excited that in a few weeks we will see the long-awaited start of construction.

There remains important work to be completed. On the funding front we submitted a \$3 million grant pre-application request to EGLE on December 1st for their 2023-24 Dam Risk Reduction program. If our project is selected we will submit a formal application in early 2024 to seek funding for engineering and non-USDA grant eligible costs. We also remain in contract with USDA and plan to submit a request for an increase in our existing \$3.2 million NRCS-EWP grant. The goal remains to fund as much of the project through grants as possible.

GEI expects to submit the final Phase 2 design package to EGLE next week and then finalize the contractor bidding process immediately thereafter. We published minimum general contractor qualification requirements at the end of October, and seven contractors attended the required information meeting. Qualification submittals were due in late November and due to existing work backlogs and the proposed project timeline only two contractors submitted. While the contractors are preparing their bids GEI will continue to gather data from recently installed monitoring wells to clarify sub-surface factors impacting the design. Construction bids will be due in mid-January when we expect to select a contractor and negotiate a contract. The plan remains to start the Phase 2 spillway reconstruction project in the spring and complete by the end of August 2024.

With respect to the Forest Lake Level Authority Board and the resolution adopted by the County Commissioners in October, the FLPOA BOD engaged Scott Steiner of the Rhodes McKee law firm to represent our interests. Mr. Steiner has been in contact with County attorneys to discuss FLPOA's concerns.