

A Brief History Of A Proposed Fish Ladder For The Pike/Round Chain

2017- Our Lake Association Board was informed by the Federal Forest Service and the WI DNR of the possibility of constructing a fish ladder on our chain. This ladder would connect the water beneath our spillway, with the water above the spillway on Round Lake. The basic rationale for their proposal of a fish ladder was that it would allow free movement of fish and other water inhabitants between these presently separated waters.

2017- Our annual Lake Association meeting saw guest speaker, Jeff Scheirer, from the DNR present an overview of the fish ladder project. The overview included a number of aspects, including detailed studies on the waters below and above the spillway, projected costs of the project, pros of the project and **final approvals that would be needed by our Lake Association, the Forest Service, the DNR and other governmental agencies for the project to become a reality**. After hearing this initial presentation a motion was made and passed by those members present that we “continue to look into” the fish ladder project with the Forest Service and DNR.

2018-The Lake Association Board continued a dialogue with the Forest Service and DNR about the fish ladder project and various reports and studies were given to our Board by the Forest Service and DNR. At that time the Board was told by the fish biologist Sue Reinicke, from the Forest Service, that the actual process of building a fish ladder would take at least five years with all the permits and impact studies that needed to yet take place. Sue also stated that at present it appeared that governmental funds might not be available for this project.

2019- Fish biologist Sue Reinecke spoke with Lake Association Board members and community members updating the Board about the fish ladder project. At this meeting Sue also addressed concerns that various Board and community members had about the proposed project. Some people were satisfied with Sue’s response to their questions, while others were not satisfied with her responses.

2019-At the annual meeting of our Lake Association a major presentation on the proposed fish ladder project was given by fish biologist Sue Reinicke of the Forest Service and fish biologist Jeff Scheier of the DNR. After the presentation members of the Lake Association were given the opportunity to ask a number of questions. The answers given to their questions resulted in the following observations.

- The final costs of building a fish ladder at that time was still undetermined.
- No formal architectural plans had yet to be drawn for this ladder, although a rough sketch of the ladder was displayed.
- Because the final cost was yet undetermined there was no way of knowing if the project would be a responsible use of tax payer money.
- If the ladder was built it would take years to determine the final impact that the ladder would have on the chain or the water below the spillway.
- If the ladder was built the Forest Service and DNR could not guarantee that the ladder would maintain our current average water level on the chain.
- If the fish ladder was built it would mostly bring redhorse fish and possibly sturgeon into the chain.
- If the ladder was built it would not impact the historic logging structure that currently graces Round Lake.

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- If the fish ladder was built it was unclear if it could be determined that the ladder added value to our chain, to our fishery and to the ecological environment under water.
- Fish ladders built on river systems are common, fish ladders built on lakes are rare and no studies have been done on lake fish ladders to evaluate if the ladder was helpful or harmful to the lake.

2020- With the onset of Covid-19 many Forest/DNR projects were put on hold including the proposed fish ladder project.

2021-The Lake Association Board was informed that funding for any aspects of this project would not be available. Our Board also learned that the lead fish biologist Sue Reinicke, who was overseeing the ladder project, had been reassigned. Without a replacement, the Forest Service was not able to proceed with the ladder project until a replacement was found.

2022- The proposed fish ladder project basically laid dormant.

2023- Fish biologist Nick Burndt, from the Federal Forest Service, asked to visit with our Lake Association Board of Directors about the proposed fish ladder project. Nick informed our Board that he was now the lead fish biologist and he would oversee the ladder project if it was initiated. Nick visited with the Board and updated the Board on the proposed project. Nick is interested in continuing to explore the proposed fish ladder for our chain, **but only if the members of our lake association and our Lake Association Board approved of this project.** It was decided to invite Nick to our annual meeting to give a **brief** overview of the proposed ladder project. A more detailed presentation about the proposed ladder is tentatively set for August 12th at 10 AM, with fish biologist Nick Burndt from the Forest Service. Please plan to attend this important presentation. Ultimately after hearing all the facts and costs of the project, our Lake Association will hold a vote of its members to determine if we will proceed with the proposed fish ladder project or reject this project.

Remember: A more detailed informational meeting about the fish ladder has tentatively been scheduled for August 12th at 10AM here in the fire station.