



Secord Lake Association Restoration Plan – Revised April 2023

A key milestone was reached in July when the Counties approved both the construction budget and the operations / maintenance assessment. With these pieces in place, complemented by the \$200 Million Grant, **the construction phase for Secord moves forward** (funding is required to obtain many essential permits).

The Secord Lake Association (SLA), in partnership with the County and Townships, is focused over the coming months to prepare Secord Lake to return to the legal lake level. There continues to be planning and work on nuisance weed / tree control, shoreline clean-up of debris, and to cut some of the tall tree trunks sticking out of the water.

The Secord Lake Association is a volunteer club. As property owners and friends of Secord, we seek to create a safe, enjoyable lake environment for generations to come. Seeing Secord refilled with nuisance trees, the loss of full use of the public areas on the lake and floating debris is not a future we desire. While we cannot beat Mother Nature, we believe we can work with her to **RETAKE** areas of our lake.

With 69 miles of shoreline and 1100 acres of water, the entirety of Secord Lake will need a coordinated effort. **This will take a volunteer effort to RETAKE OUR LAKE. NOTE: You do not need to be a member of the SLA to volunteer or help.**

This overview will highlight key questions and address action items for the return of water. This plan continues to evolve. This version replaces those of August and December 2022.

With the lake drawn down, why treat the aquatic weeds?

The aquatic weeds continue to grow and need to be managed. Imagine an uncontrolled aquatic weed mass growing and then having 8-10 feet of water applied to the top of it when the Lake is restored. The unchecked weeds will quickly grow to fill in the 8-10 feet of water causing the Lake to “choke out” making boat traffic nearly impossible. Weed choked lakes are not conducive to fish, wildlife, or water sports.

Secord Township has managed and continues to manage this weed growth with periodic treatments by PLM. Clement Township began to treat weeds in the Summer 2022. Bourret Township will begin treatments in 2023. The goal is to keep the weeds managed during the drawdown to position the Lake for the return of full water.

What about the non-aquatic weeds and trees growing in the exposed lakebed? Including the areas around the shore, the mud flats, and sandbars?

After the drawdown, as property owners we were encouraged to plant grass or let weeds grow to help manage shoreline erosion. The need for grass and weeds with their roots systems to help manage erosion is still a best practice. We do not recommend the removal of the grass / weeds as their root systems provide benefits. These grasses and weeds will die when they are covered with water.

A new development is the emergence of willow and cottonwood trees. These trees are fast growing, are a nuisance now, and will be an ongoing nuisance when the water returns.



This is an example of a Secord Lake front property. One can see the 4 to 6-foot trees in the before photo. The after photo shows the removal of the nuisance trees with the grass / weeds in place to continue to manage erosion.

These nuisance trees can grow 4 to 6 feet per year. There are nuisance trees in some areas of Secord that are 8-10 feet tall at this point. Left alone, over time will make them both taller and thicker. They can impede boat traffic and water sports when the lake returns.

While one could simply cut the trees off close to the ground, the issue is the “spike” or “stake” left behind. These are wood and the spikes can remain causing a hazard to unsuspecting waders and swimmers when the water returns.

We encourage these trees be pulled up by their roots near swimming areas in front of properties.

NOTE: The trees will die when the water returns, if the trunks are not cut and removed, they will impede boating, swimming, and wading.



HOMEOWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CLEARING THEIR LAKE BOTTOM

Property owners can manage their lake frontage area now. Some of these ideas were shared this past summer. It's amazing to witness the initiative property owners along our lake have shown. THANK YOU! Removing the nuisance trees by pulling them out by the root in swimming / boating areas is suggested. In some areas, cutting the tree as close to the lake bottom as possible may be appropriate.

While the Summer 2020 direction was not to access the lakebed due to it being unstable with possible sink holes, the lakebed appears to be stable now to allow for access. Property owners should use caution to enter the lakebed to manage the nuisance trees and weeds. There are still soft or mushy spots that can be hazards for people, pets, and equipment.

People have asked how to dispose of the trees once they are removed. They can be burned in your campfire; or bundled up with twine for removal as yard waste by the trash collector when that service is offered. Should appropriate property be available, with the owner's permission, they can be piled to create habitat for small animals as they decay. It is best not to leave the trees on the lakebed as the wood will float to the surface when the water returns.

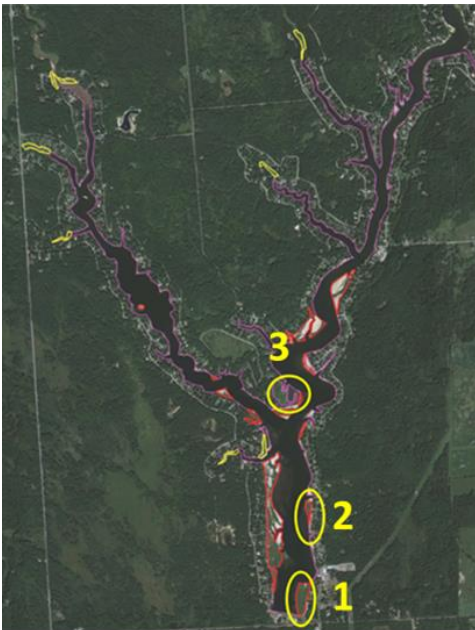
Property owners can remove the trees and will want to maintain some weeds or grass, so their root system helps with erosion management. Once trees are removed, some property owners can mow the area with a mower at a high setting and others simply use a string trimmer to manage the weeds while keeping the trees from emerging again.

Property owners can remove wood or other items on the lakebed that can float. When the water returns, floating debris will create a hazard for boating and water sports.

Tips, Tricks and Things Not to Do

- The cottonwood and willow tree roots are easier to pull the smaller the tree. For larger trees, using a garden spade or shovel to loosen around the root makes it easier. Think of this as a big dandelion.
- **Help your neighbors** - - - removing the trees is hard, manual work. Getting a couple of people to do the work makes it go quicker. If you have elderly neighbors, please lend them a hand.
- It is manual work - - - pace yourself, take breaks and drink a lot of water while you work.
- If you are using equipment, saws, trimmers, cutters, or mowers, please use caution.
- Once the nuisance trees are removed, the ongoing maintenance with either a mower or string trimmer is easier.
- There is a list of contractors that will provide this service for a fee. [Restoring Secord - Weed & Tree Control | Secord Lake Assoc. \(secordlakeassociation.org\)](https://www.secordlakeassociation.org/Restoring-Secord-Weed-Tree-Control)
- It is **NOT** recommended individuals use herbicides near or on the lake bottoms. Remember grass and weed growth is desired as their roots aid with erosion. It's not a good idea to introduce herbicides to the lake system.
- It is **NOT** recommended for individuals to conduct controlled burning or create fires on the lakebed.
- You **CAN** cut stumps, trees, and shrubs without causing rutting or disturbance of sediment to lower injury potential or damage to boat props. Cut logs must be removed from bottomlands. STUMP ATTACHED TO THE LAKEBOTTOM CANNOT BE REMOVED WITHOUT A PERMIT FROM EGLE.

Large Public Boating Areas



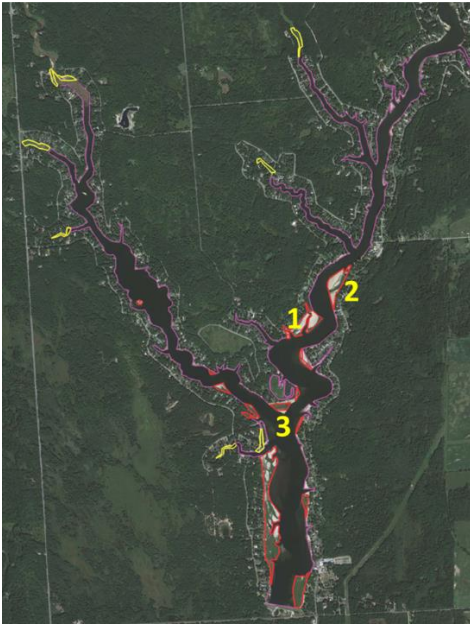
Public Gathering Sandbars

Secord Township and SLA identified three large areas this past summer with a large expanse of nuisance trees. Secord Township, after securing the proper Permits, contracted PLM to treat the nuisance trees to kill them. At the end of November, Secord Township contracted with Mid Land Maintenance LLC to utilize a forestry mulcher to cut and pulverize the nuisance trees.

Areas 1 and 3 were cut the last week of November 2022. There is some additional cutting to be done in Area 1 scheduled for April 2023. Area 2 had been cleared by the team of property owners prior (THANK YOU).

The cutting eliminated the nuisance trees and there is some stubble remaining. Area 1 & 3 are not areas people historically waded in, rather are flats where boat traffic is common.

NOTE: This map has been shared in the past and people have asked what the "red" and "yellow" highlighted areas mean? More on this question in a bit.



Secord Township and SLA identified three public gathering or sandbar areas this past summer where a large expanse of nuisance trees had grown along the edges. Secord Township, after securing the proper Permits, contracted PLM to treat the nuisance trees to kill them. At the end of November, Secord Township contracted with Mid Land Maintenance LLC to utilize a forestry mulcher to cut and pulverize the nuisance trees.

Sandbar Areas 2 and 3 were cut the last week of November 2022. Sandbar Area 1 is scheduled to be cut in April 2023.

The cutting eliminated the nuisance trees and there is stubble remaining. We worked with EGLE to finalize a plan to reduce the stubble as this is an area people and pets wade and swim.

We will seek volunteers to help the Sandbar Captains prepare the area to receive water. More on “Captains” in a bit.

Stumps and Trees

- A stump attached to the lake bottom may **NOT** be removed without a permit from EGLE.
- A stump or tree attached to the lake bottom **CAN** be cut. There are tree trunks from when the lake was formed 100 years ago that have been exposed by the drawdown. These tree trunks **CAN** be cut to enhance safety. As this activity will more than likely take place when the ice is safe, there are two things to consider. First, safety. These trees have been under water for a century and may be difficult to cut. Second, any tree pieces cut need to be removed from the lake ice.
- The SLA has contracted / partnered with Oakridge Tree Service to safely remove tree trunks and stumps that may pose safety hazards. Planning is underway, and the work will be done when the ice is safe during the 2023-24 winter season. We appreciate the fundraising efforts and contributions to make this a reality.

Park Road DNR Boat Launch Area

- In late October 2022, members of our team walked the quarter of a mile or so from the boat launch to the water. While we did see some nuisance trees, for the most part it is grass and weeds. We understand this is not an area where people swim. The SLA plans to have these nuisance trees and weeds cut. We appreciate the fundraising efforts and contributions to make this a reality.

Rope Swing Area

The land owned by the State of Michigan may have fallen trees and debris. The SLA is finalizing a plan to address this area with volunteers over the winter. We believe as lake owners and volunteers we will need to address these areas.

Lake Debris

While we do not think of Secord as having debris issues like Sanford and Wixom, we do have some challenges to address. Large trees have been identified along the lakebed in areas to include the Rope Swing and in the areas known as “State Land”. These large trees are on the dry lakebed now, but it is believed will begin to move once the returned water allows them to float.

What about those “red” and “yellow” areas on the map that are highlighted?

These are areas our team identified that “may need additional attention”. For example, these may be cuts that need a coordinated effort. Or possible downed timber was identified. If you live near one of these areas, please view the CAPTAINS question below.

What about dredging of the lake bottom? Who do I contact to learn more about permits?

Lake bottom dredging is covered by EGLE and requires permits. [Dredging Projects \(michigan.gov\)](https://www.michigan.gov/dredging)

A good place to start is the Gladwin Drain Commission. While they do not have authority to issue permits, they are a great resource. Terry Walter (Drain Commissioner) and Lucy Zeestraten (Deputy Drain Commissioner) can be reached at 983-426-7561 with their office at 555 W. Cedar Ave in Gladwin. Hours M-F 8:30 to 4:00

When you reach out to them, please have specific location information.

Regarding EGLE permitting, Lucy and her husband live here on Secord. They live on a cut. They just went through the process with EGLE to get a permit to dredge as they want to be able to have boat clearance when the water returns. She mentioned the permitting for their project is around \$500. The permitting fees are based on the project and how much soil needs to be removed. She can be a wonderful resource to anyone seeking to obtain an EGLE permit. You can reach Lucy at the Gladwin Drain Commission office or zeestraten@gladwincounty-mi.gov

What is a CAPTAIN?

With 69 miles of shoreline and 1100 acres of water, the entirety of Secord Lake will need a coordinated effort with property owners and volunteers. **This will take a volunteer effort led by TEAM CAPTAINS to RETAKE OUR LAKE.**

A TEAM CAPTAIN volunteers to lead and coordinate the effort to address an area of the Lake. It may be a neighborhood, subdivision, a cut, or a public gathering place like a Sandbar. Think of it like the neighbor teams that emerged to support the Chili Cook Off fund raiser. TEAM CAPTAINS have already stepped forward for each of the 3 public sandbars.

CAPTAINS will coordinate with the SLA Team. CAPTAINS will direct efforts and volunteers. Volunteers may include neighbors, friends, family members and other volunteers from across the lake. Coaching will be provided to CAPTAINS. If you are interested, please contact us and a member of the team will call you. SecordLakeAssociation@gmail.com

NOTE: You do not need to be a member of the SLA to volunteer as a Captain or to help with RETAKE OUR LAKE efforts.

In Closing - - The Secord Lake Association is a volunteer group of Secord Lake property owners committed to Secord Lake. As property owners we call Secord Lake home and look forward to its return. As we pivot our focus to get Secord Lake READY to return, we will continue to reach out to the Secord Lake community. We believe that TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE. The path to **RETAKE OUR LAKE** will take coordination and volunteers. You can learn more at: [Secord Lake | Secord Lake Association | Restoring Secord](https://www.secordlake.org)

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