



Weidman Mill Pond

Lake Level Order Updates

January 23, 2026

Introductions

- **Bob Willoughby**, *Isabella County Drain Commissioner*
- **Amanda Knutson**, *Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes*
- **Luke O'Brien**, *Spicer Group, Inc.*

Overview

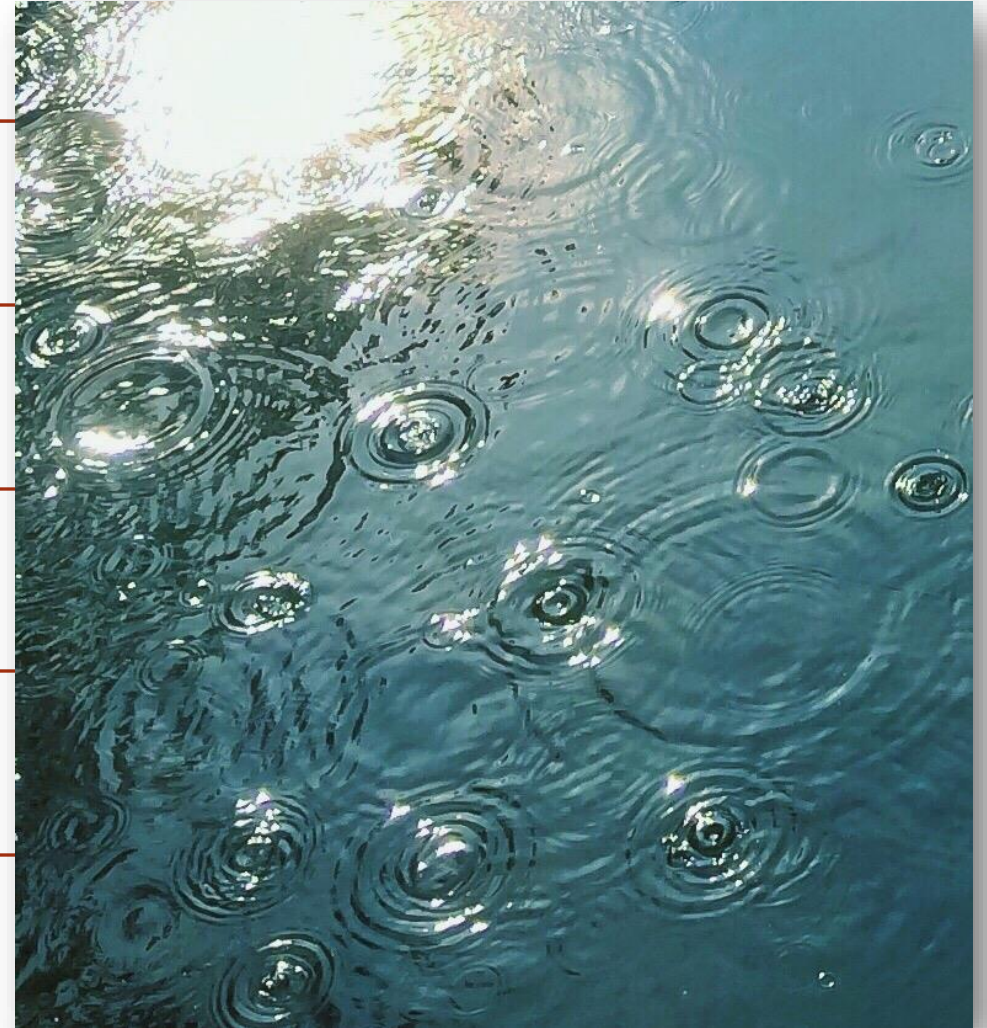
Introduction to Part 307

General Lake Level Order Concerns

Background on Weidman Mill Pond

Lake Level Project & Updates

Circuit Court Hearing



Part 307 (Inland Lake Levels)

- Circuit Court establishes a “legal lake level” administered by County Board of Commissioners
- Process provided in **Part 307** of Michigan’s Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act
- **Hundreds of Michigan lakes** have established lake levels under Part 307

What is the County's Role?

Establishment

Construction/Ownership

Inspections

Operation/Maintenance

Insurance

Financing

Assessments

Delegated Authority

- County Board can appoint a “**Delegated Authority**”
- Delegated Authority performs the duties under Part 307 on the County’s behalf
- Allows **day-to-day operation** to be conducted by the Delegated Authority, with County Board approval required for major decisions

Delegated Authority



**Isabella County Drain
Commissioner** serves as
the delegated authority for
Weidman Mill Pond

General Lake Level Order Concerns

- Legal lake level & survey datum
- Lake level variations
- Special assessment district

Legal Lake Level & Survey Datum

- Lake level included in court order should **accurately match the physical lake level**
- Lake level order should include **updated survey datum**
 - Mean sea level
 - US NGVD 29
 - US NAVD 88 (current standard)

Lake Level Variations

- Variations may occur due to:
 - Weather or natural conditions
 - Construction of lake level infrastructure
 - Operation of lake level infrastructure
- Any variations should be ***explicitly permitted*** by the lake level order

Special Assessment District

Special assessments are the **funding mechanism** for:

- *Operation costs*
- *Inspections*
- *Repairs and improvements*
- *Updating court orders*

Special Assessment District

- Special assessment to property (not a tax or use fee)
- Generally made up of properties that have **private legal access** to the lake
- Access may be:
 - Direct (waterfront or closest parcel to lake)
 - Indirect (deeded, platted, etc.)

Special Assessment District

Special assessments to property owners can be offset by other funding sources (grants, etc.)



Weidman Mill Pond Dam



- **Hazard level:** significant
- **Spillway:** good condition
- **Embankment:** poor condition
- ***Reconstruction of embankment is necessary***



Weidman Mill Pond Dam

Significant deterioration of east embankment

- Significant seepage with sediment transport along downstream slope
- Extensive brush and tree growth
- Inconsistent cross-sectional area
- Erosion on upstream slope near water line
- Animal burrowing

Weidman Mill Pond Lake Level Order

- Legal level established in 1987
- Amended in 1998
- Legal level – 885.4 feet above mean sea level
- Special assessment district established in 1987 but not attached to Order

Weidman Mill Pond Updates

- Isabella County Drain Commissioner initiated a **project to repair/reconstruct the Weidman Mill Pond Dam**
- As part of the project, the Drain Commissioner reviewed the historical lake level order and found that **updates are necessary**

Weidman Mill Pond Updates

Necessary to update the lake level order to:

- ✓ Update legal level in order to match physical lake level
- ✓ Clarify survey datum as NAVD88
- ✓ Add variation language
- ✓ Confirm special assessment district boundaries

→ *Requires hearing in Circuit Court*

Tentative Special Assessment District Boundaries

Special Assessment District



40 +/- direct access parcels



77 +/- indirect access parcels



117 +/- total parcels



Isabella County, Nottawa Township &
Sherman Township

Special Assessment District

Confirming the boundaries of a special assessment district is the **first step**

- Only determines who is “in or out”
- Does NOT set the methodology or amounts of special assessments (determined at a future public hearing)

Project Funding

- Isabella County received ~\$125,000 in 2% grant funding to establish a special assessment district and conduct an engineering study of the Dam
- Additional funding opportunities:
 - Future 2% grant cycles
 - Potential coordination with Tribe

Circuit Court Hearing

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026

Time: 11:00 AM

Location: Isabella County Circuit Court

***Property owners are invited to attend the hearing
and provide testimony/evidence to the Court***

Circuit Court Hearing

- Use the **testimony form** included with your notice (and posted at ***www.isabellacounty.org***) to submit written testimony or indicate that you would like to provide oral testimony
- To ensure consideration by the Court, it is requested that all testimony forms **be received by February 16, 2026**

We Want Your Input!

View the tentative special assessment district at
www.isabellacounty.org



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