

Date: 8-21-21

To: WFLPOA membership

From: Dennis Westphal

Re: Historical information - Billy Boy Dam – the single adjustable dam controlling attached water-shed area map

- The original dam was a logging structure. In 1935 residents along Courte Oreilles and Grindstone lakes requested a dam be constructed at the outlet of Courte Oreilles to maintain water levels.
- The Lac du Flambeau Indian Agency did not approve the planned site because it would interfere with the thoroughfare between Big and Little Courte Oreilles.
- The old logging dam site on the Billy Boy Flowage was approved and the dam rebuilt in 1936. The original dam utilized stop logs. In 1942, after two years of higher than average rainfall, riparian's voiced concerns that the dam had insufficient flood capacity.
- The County widened two bridges upstream of the dam to allow greater flow. Following continuing high water levels, in 1954 the PSC (Public Service Commission) ordered that the upper 2 feet of the spillway be removed and moveable gates be installed to increase flow.
- Water levels gradually improved. In 1955 the PSC ordered that all gates be fully opened whenever the water levels reached 97.3 feet and fully closed when levels reached 96.8 feet.
- The dam is owned by Sawyer County and operated and maintained by the Zoning and Conservation Department.
- During times of drought minimum flow must be maintained in the Couderay River below the dam which may cause lake levels to be below the minimum ordered level.
- 11 lakes feed into the Billy Boy Flowage. Only LCO has ordered elevations to be maintained. (Others are all effected by that ordered level).
- Studies have shown that numerous factors other than just the dam impact the ability to control the water levels on the system. Constriction points at the bridges, vegetation in the channels, a natural constriction in the channel between Little LCO and the dam known as "Belisle's Fish Trap".

*Above data provided by Tim Seidle from Sawyer County Conservation Department. (2021)