



# FRED CLARK

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE ♦ 42ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Montello Dam / Sunset Drive Steering Committee**  
**Friday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 – 12:00 PM**  
**Marquette County Courthouse**

Meeting Summary

In attendance: Howard Zellmer - Marquette County Board Chair, Bill Lewis – Buffalo Lake District, Bill O’Connor – Buffalo Lake District, Brent Miller – Marquette County, Derek Krentz – Mayor of Montello, Jack Yates – Marquette County Highway Dept., Frank Breitenbach – Marquette County Board, Rick Olson – Chief of Montello Police Dept., Jerry Smart, Marquette County, Tom Nigus – WDNR, Linda Hyatt – WDNR, Steve Miller – WDNR, John Hunter – Buffalo Lake District, Al Rosenthal – Marquette County Lakes Association.

Committee Charge and Scope of Work

The group approved the drafted charge to the steering committee:

*Assess current conditions and identify short and long term actions, and funding sources, to 1) assure the integrity of the dredge bank and Buffalo Lake, 2) secure alternate transportation routes to assure emergency access throughout the county, and 3) consider improvements to enhance the recreational and aesthetic benefits of the Dredge Bank and Buffalo Lake for residents and visitors*

Current Conditions

The Dredge Bank road has been gated and closed to public access since June 2009 when WDNR received preliminary reports about the condition of the earthen dam from their engineering contractor.

Tom Nigus, WDNR, reviewed the report from McMahon Associates, their findings, and their four alternatives for remediation. The options were detailed in the report entitled “Evaluation and Preliminary Design for Repairs of the Montello Dam”, prepared by McMahon and Associates, August 27, 2009.

Linda Hyatt confirmed that removal of the dam was also something WDNR would routinely consider internally when evaluating options.

## Current Concerns

The following concerns were expressed by participants.

- Concern that there has been insufficient effort at routine maintenance or monitoring of the condition of the Dredge Bank up until last year.
- The complete closure of the Dredge Bank has eliminated public boat access on the east end of Buffalo Lake, harming the local economy.
- There are few suitable locations for a Montello boat landing.
- Another closure of nearby Hwy 22 would force the same dislocation as occurred during June of 2008 due to lack of alternate routes.
- Removal of the dam was opposed by all the local stakeholders present.
- Marquette County estimates that dam removal (and elimination of Buffalo Lake) would affect 78 million dollars in property values in Marquette County that would go from lake shore property to “swamp front” property.

## Alternatives

Stakeholders present all supported an alternative for the Dredge Bank that includes complete rehabilitation, supporting 2-way traffic (McMahon - Option C), and the rehabilitation of the existing boat landing with enhancements that would include additional parking, lighting, and rest rooms.

WDNR would desire to explore possibly transferring the Dredge Bank property or developing an MOU transferring maintenance and other responsibility, to the local units of government. Representatives of Montello and Marquette County agreed that was an option they would consider.

The group discussed a desire to pursue a short-term and long-term approach.

- In the short-term, make necessary repairs to the Dredge Bank to support access to the boat landing from one end only (no through traffic), limited to cars and pick-up trucks.
- In the long-term develop a design, budget, and secure funding for implementing the preferred alternative.

## Next Steps

The group agreed to the following next steps

- WDNR staff will confer with their engineers to examine the safety parameters and improvements that might be needed to support the short-term alternative.
- WDNR will identify a process for developing a design plan to implement the long-term alternative.
- Rep. Clark's office will request support from the Governor's office and organize a meeting with the Governor and his staff, Senator Olson, and representatives of Marquette County, Montello, and other affected parties to address the needs to secure funding and support for this project.