

Big Rice Lake Extension DNR email Request

From: Lien, Ricky (DNR) <ricky.lien@state.mn.us>

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 2:15 PM

To: Mark Johnson <mark.johnson@lsohc.mn.gov>; Joe Pavelko <Joe.Pavelko@lsohc.mn.gov>

Cc: Wilder, Kelly (DNR) <kelly.wilder@state.mn.us>; Gangaware, Jamie (DNR) <jamie.gangaware@state.mn.us>

Subject: Big Rice Lake question

Dear Mark and Joe,

I'm asking for your guidance on the following issue. Habitat work to improve Big Rice Lake (M.L.19) involves three components: improvement of the access to allow passage of equipment, cutting of pickerel weed with an airboat and by other means, and modifying the lake outlet to improve water levels for wild rice.

We have made excellent progress on the first two components at considerable cost savings. We have exceeded the acre goals for the pickerel weed cutting and the access work was completed early in the project. The wild rice seems to be responding as well. All good news. However, the outlet work has been more challenging in large part due to the remoteness and forested nature of the areas surrounding the channel.

Recall that earlier this summer we received approval to purchase new survey equipment from separate OHF funding for use by our newly hired State Wetland Project Coordinator, Matt Olson. Matt took delivery of this equipment two weeks ago and early this week was able to put it to use gathering information specific to developing plans for the third component of Big Rice Lake, the outlet modification. This new equipment had the capacity to work better in forested areas than earlier models of the Trimble units enabling us to collect much needed accurate elevation data. We this new data in hand, we are more confident in the specific plan we have to move forward with the outlet modification work. The remaining funding appears to be adequate, but the appropriation ends this coming summer, and the project manager is uncertain about our ability to do final engineering and construction in the time remaining. **Do you think the Council would be receptive to a request for an extension to complete this project?**

The remaining funds would also allow us to continue using the airboat for cutting pickerel weeds if the time for this appropriation was extended, as funding appears to be sufficient for this as well.

The people involved with this project would be happy to talk with you about Big Rice Lake and the work that needs to be completed.

Thanks.

Ricky

Ricky Lien

Wetland Habitat Team Supervisor | Division of Fish and Wildlife

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road

St Paul, MN 55155-4020