

BMLID thoughts on Ditch 25 June 2024

Page 3 of Houston report states "Cleaning the portion of ditch 25 south of CSAH 35 will likely have a minimal effect on static water levels, due to the height of the culverts under Big McDonald Lane." As noted in the zoom meeting, if it won't work, why do it. we are suspicious that their next move, after this work fails, would be to try to get the culverts lowered.

The Houston report contradicts itself in the section on Effects of Repairs / Water Quality section, page 3, starting with the last paragraph and going on to the first paragraph of the next page. This is contradicted in the next paragraph.

WE HAVE DATA. WE can prove that the water quality in the ditch down to Co 35 is bad, and the levels of total phosphorus, total suspended solids, and e coli going into the lake since 2018 are also above acceptable levels. Even so, those levels are significantly reduced by passing through the (undisturbed) wetland. According to Moore, "Protecting the wetland complex between Hwy 35 and Big McDonal Lane should be a priority for protecting water quality" in the lake.

In 2020, RMB labs did a very detailed analysis of Big Mac's water quality. One of the key recommendations was "Wetlands in the lakeshed could be degraded by land use practices and their nutrient and sediment retention potential may be exhausted. This can be addressed through constructed nutrient treatment systems or by rehabilitating the wetland to its previous function." This is expert opinion that the wetland DOES act as a biological filter.

Removing a 500 foot long by 2 foot deep blockage in the middle of an important wetland is not a minor change. The risk of harm is likely greater than any assumed benefit.

Common sense tells us that moving contaminated water faster and more directly into the lake is not good practice.

1. It's difficult to be downstream.
2. We understand and support the need to lower water levels on the farm land but water quality must be guaranteed to be clean. As much as it can be.
3. The engineer fro Houston said the ditch won't affect water quality. It may not but increasing the speed at which the water flows through the wetlands will. By nature of the lack of filtration time.
- 3a. The engineers report is their professional OPINION. The historical science has shown different results.

4. Is exploring the possibility of expanding the capacity of the wetlands a possible consideration.
5. The science has shown that opening up the channel in the past has **NEGATIVELY** affected the water quality in BMCDL
6. This ditch proposal has the possibility to positively effect the farmers above the lake (3-10) but has the major potential to **NEGATIVELY** affect the 160 homes on the BMCDL as well as everyone else downstream. 160 (or whatever the actual number is) tax paying citizens of ottertail county. Whose interests and concerns are every bit as valid as the other interested parties.
7. We would like to explore the possibility of abandoning the ditch.
8. Has DNR has been contacted and had the opportunity to weigh in on the proposal?
9. We did not hire legal counsel to litigate but rather to **NAVIGATE** the myriad of legal entities, rules, and statutes. Also to help protect our rights and interests associated with all of them and to educate us as to all of the potential ramifications.