

Higgins Lake Lake Level Special Assessment District

*Modernizing the Lake Level Control Structure
for Safe Operations and a Reliable Lake Level*



**ROSCOMMON
COUNTY**
MI

A map of Higgins Lake and the surrounding area in Roscommon County, Michigan. The lake is shown in blue, and the surrounding land is in green. Roads are labeled with numbers and names, including Old US Hwy 27, N Roscommon Rd, and Old 76. An inset map shows a closer view of the lake's southern shore, highlighting the location of the Higgins Lake Level Control Structure (LLCS) where the Cut River enters the lake. The LLCS is marked with a red rectangle on the inset map.

Responsible Management of Higgins' Lake Level Control Structure

Roscommon County is responsible for the operation, maintenance and improvement of the Higgins Lake lake level control structure (LLCS).

The Roscommon County Circuit Court last entered a lake level order noting Higgins Lake's legal lake levels in 1982. Roscommon County has paid for the operations and maintenance of the LLCS out of the County's general fund.

This model of operating is no longer feasible or sustainable. The LLCS needs repairs that Roscommon County alone can no longer pay for. Gate operations of the decades-old LLCS is labor-intensive, unsafe and susceptible to tampering.

As the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) revisits rules and regulations surrounding LLCS, now is the time for Higgins Lake to modernize to a safe LLCS that ensures a consistent lake level. This modernization calls for the creation of a special assessment district made up of properties with deeded access to the lake.

About the Higgins Lake LLCS

The LLCS is located where the Cut River emerges from the southern shore of Higgins Lake.

It is 33 feet in length and consists of tilting weir gates, stop log bays, and a sheet pile weir.

Operation of the LLCS is entirely manual. Vertical wooden slide gates are hoisted out of the water by hand and secured in an open position by chaining the gates to the structure's handrail.

The SAD will pay for structural improvements to modernize LLCS operations and maintenance.



What Is a Special Assessment District?

To defray the cost of updating and repairing the LLCS, the County will be asking the court to establish a special assessment district that will finance improvements to the LLCS and the future maintenance of the legal level of the lake.

According to Part 307, Inland Lake Levels, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 Pa 451, the Roscommon County Board of Commissioners has authority to pass a resolution stating that the cost to maintain a lake level structure can be defrayed by a special assessment against property owners who benefit from the lake/bodies of water when costs are incurred. The assessment will be an annual cost that appears on the property owner's property tax bill after the assessment has been established.

Properties Included in the Special Assessment District

Privately owned parcels of land, subdivisions and state-owned land with access to Higgins Lake that benefit from the lake level will be in the special assessment district. This will also impact local units of government.

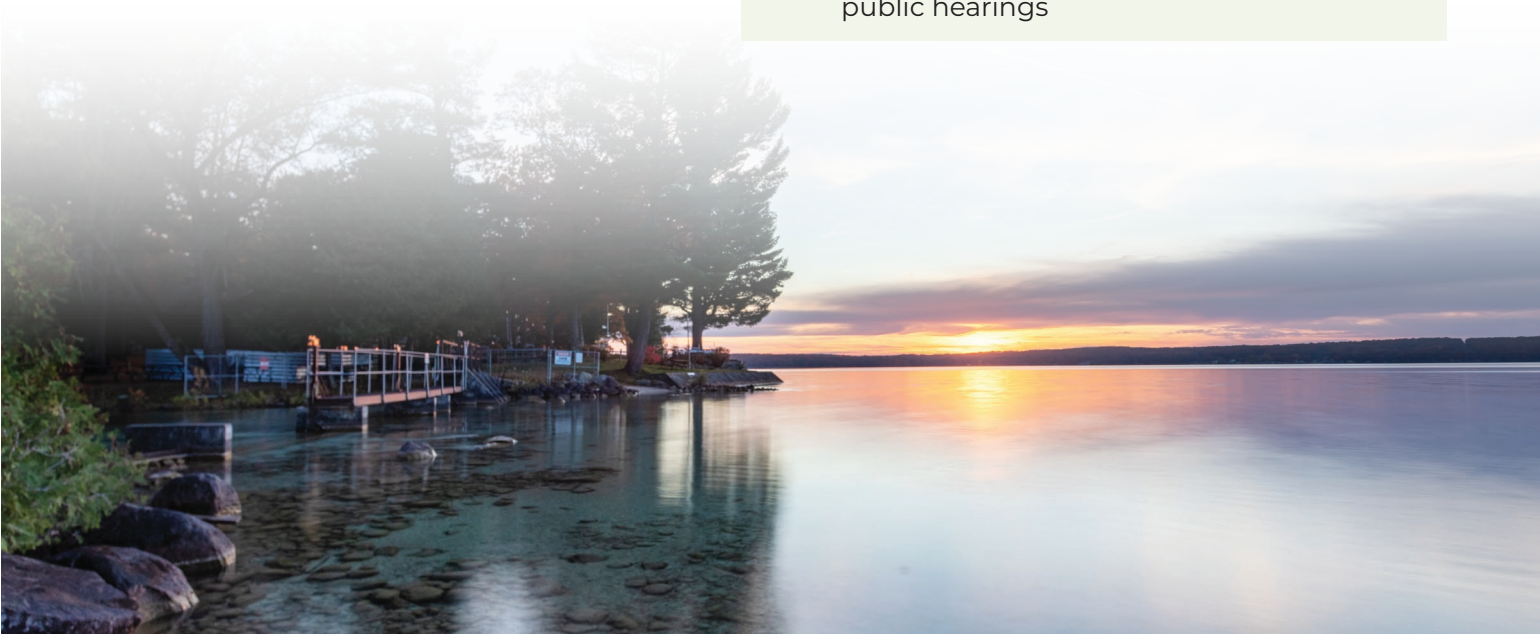
This includes:

Waterfront Lots | Non-waterfront Lots | Residential Lots | Condos & Apartments | Hotels | Cabins | Mobile Homes | Campgrounds | Commercial Lots | State-Owned Land

Process for Establishing a Lake Level Special Assessment District

The Roscommon County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution to begin the process of establishing a lake-level special assessment district for Higgins Lake. The first step in the process is to establish the boundaries of the special assessment district.

1. Prepare draft lake level special assessment district (completed)
2. Delegated authority (county controller) files petition in Roscommon County Circuit Court to amend Higgins Lake Level Order to establish a district
3. Court holds hearing on proposed district and all those included in district will receive mailing notice and can attend and comment at hearing
 - Hearing only determines who is "in or out" of the district and does not determine the share of any future assessments/apportionments
4. Court enters amended Order with special assessment district
5. County uses separate public hearing process to consider assessments for repairs to LLCS, study the legal lake level, and develop the scope of repairs and improvements
 - Requires additional public hearings and a meeting of the County Board of Commissioners to approve any assessments
 - Property owners receive mailing notice of public hearings





People Are Asking

Q: Does the public get to vote on this?

A: State law does not give the public the ability to vote on lake level assessments or establishing a lake level special assessment district. Yet, it offers various opportunities for public comment and input. The County must balance interests from various stakeholders (such as lakefront and backlots) in this process, but encourages public comment to help it come to the best proposal for any assessments or assessment district.

Please see a full list of frequently asked questions on our website.

Ensuring Higgins Lake is Sustainable into the Future

The creation of the special assessment district is an important next step in ensuring the long-term operations and sustainability of the lake. Visit our website to learn more.



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