

UPDATES

BLACK CREEK WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Black Creek Project (BCP) is in the final stages of testing before releasing its water into Alligator Creek. The first of six filtration cells is now being tested to assure water quality meets appropriate standards. That is the final step before releasing the water into Alligator Creek. Each filtration cell (six in all) will be tested. The Project can pump, filter and release **up to** 10 million gallons per day (mgd), with an **expected yearly average** of 7.5 mgd. The status of the BCP seems to make the next update even more important!

LAKE GENEVA RESTORATION PROJECT

The elevation of Lake Geneva is expected to increase as the Black Creek Project becomes fully functional. Forty plus years of low lake levels allowed trees and heavy vegetation to grow throughout the lakebed. The purpose of the Lake Geneva Restoration Project is to “restore” the lakebed by removing the trees and heavy vegetation that have grown up in what was once the lakebed of Geneva.

A meeting was held at Trinity Baptist Church on January 30th to update the Lake Geneva landowners and to answer questions. To keep everyone informed, SOLO will continue answering landowner questions in our newsletter and on our website www.saveourlakes.org.

LAKE GENEVA LANDOWNERS Q & A

Q – IS PERMITTING REQUIRED?

A – Yes. Clay County will oversee the Project. They plan to submit their permit application the week of February 24th and hope to receive permitting within a month. With a fully functioning Black Creek Project, Lake Geneva is expected to return to its historic normal of 102.9’ elevation. [The scope of removal includes the trees/vegetation the areas below that 102.9’ elevation.](#)

Q – TREES TO BE CLEARED?

A – No trees outside of the designated areas are planned to be removed. No trees above the 102.9’ elevation will be cleared as a part of this Project.

The intent of the Project is to remove the upland tree species that are likely to die when the lake level returns to historic conditions. Native wetland tree species will be left to the extent practicable, particularly above elevation 99.

There are no limitations on the size of trees to be removed.

The contractor will be provided with the areas for tree removal, and except for trees marked to be left behind, will be able to remove all trees below 102.9’ within the designated areas.

The tree removal is taking place on state property as a part of the Lake Geneva Restoration Project. This Project is not in conflict with the Clay County Tree Protection ordinance.

If inadequate funding is available to remove all the trees planned for this Project, then the County will work with the contractor to remove as many trees from the lake bottom as practicable within the designated areas.

Q – SPECIES PROTECTION?

A - The Project is required to meet FWC guidelines to avoid impacts to listed species including migratory birds. A wildlife survey will be performed prior to the start of restoration activities. The work area will be limited **or** the Project will be delayed to accommodate FWC guidelines to avoid impacts to species.

Q – ACCESS – CROSSING WATERWAYS?

A – A small amount of fill is planned to be placed across the existing ditch to access portions of the Project area. Any temporary fill will be removed as a part of the Project. Lake Geneva has been determined not to be a Water of the United States and therefore not subject to section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Q - WHEN WILL THE WATER START FLOWING INTO LAKE GENEVA?

A - **That depends** on Mother Nature (rainfall) and the Black Creek Project. We **know** that when fully functioning, the Black Creek Project will send an average of **7.5** million gallons of water per day (mgd) into Alligator Creek. Lake Brooklyn's elevation, as reported at the February 11th SJRWMD governing board meeting, was approximately **111.5 ft.** **IF** the annual rainfall in the Keystone Heights area is normal (approximately 51.5 inches), we could expect Lake Brooklyn to reach its outflow level (approximately 114ft) by the end of 2025. The outflow from Lake Brooklyn goes into Little Lake Keystone and then on into Lake Geneva.

Q – HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR LAKE GENEVA'S LEVEL TO REACH 102.9 ft?

A – The answer is less predictable than it is for Lake Brooklyn. We **know** the current level of Lake Geneva is approximately 94.5 ft., that it is larger in area than Lake Brooklyn and will take longer to return to historic level conditions. Lake front landowners should have sufficient time to address any concerns they may have.