

Proposed Winans Lake Drainage District

SUMMARY: Since our last article, the drainage district has been established. The Drain Commissioner will schedule an informational meeting for everyone in the district, probably this spring/summer when we can meet outdoors.

Meanwhile, before that meeting, the Sedimentation and Stormwater Runoff Committee would like to listen to your concerns and address those which we can via a **zoom meeting**. Your input will help us prepare for future discussions with the Drain Commissioner and his staff. We have scheduled two such meetings **for Monday and Tuesday March 08 and 09 at 7:00 p.m.** Please email wla.ssrc@gmail.com to register and a link will be sent to you.

ISSUE: WLA members have expressed concerns about the drainage of sediment into Winans Lake via Teahen and other roads for many years. The development of Winans Woods and additional houses along Teahen exacerbated the drainage concerns, which include:

- Significant untreated sediment causing excessive aquatic vegetation and forming “muck bars” along the northernmost portions of Winans Lake
- Excess water from Winans Woods subdivision killing trees in the “frog bog” north of Old Drive and seasonally flooding Old Drive
- Runoff along Cowell Road from Chilson to Pleasant Lake Road

In 2018, the WLA board formed a Sedimentation & Stormwater Runoff/Drainage Committee (SSRC) to define the overall issue, review past efforts, and investigate possible solutions. After meetings with Dr Jude (Freshwater Consultants), Hamburg Township and Livingston County Road Commission officials, the committee most recently met with the Livingston County Drain Commissioner. After several meetings and legal review, the Drain Commissioner recommended that the residents affected by the sedimentation petition for establishment of a drainage district. Ten residents filed such a petition with support from the WLA board.

PROCESS: The drain commission accepted the first petition. Subsequently:

- The drain commission hired an engineer to delineate a proposed district based on topography. The engineer has inspected the area and prepared a preliminary improvement plan and cost estimate.
- After meeting with the WLA Sedimentation and Stormwater Runoff Committee, subject to change, the **scope has been preliminarily defined** as:
 - Pave 2,200 feet of Teahen Road with curb and gutter. If practical, divert water to depressions west of Teahen Road.
 - Add/improve sediment traps, check dams, forebays and retention ponds/ditches to better handle stormwater along Cowell Road from Chilson to Pleasant Lake Road

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- Address flooding at the east end of Old Drive. Lower the water level in the “frog bog” east of Old Drive to historical levels prior to the construction of Winans Woods.
- Replace the culverts under Chilson Road with a box culvert to improve fish spawning west of Chilson Road.
- Ongoing maintenance of these structures, plus the outlet to Gutt Lake.
- **The Drain Commissioner determined the drainage district to be practical** and delineated a potential drain centerline. The district includes properties:
 - on Winans and Tamarack Lakes
 - along Teahen Road to the top of the hill
 - north of Cowell Road between Teahen and Tamarack Drive
 - on the south side of Community Drive
 - along Clubhouse Drive and Mercer Road (including two holes of LGCC)
 - within most of Arrowhead subdivision
 - within all of Winans Woods subdivision
 - (possibly between Winans Drive and Winans Lake Road. Although drainage is to the south, LCDC is considering because these properties have access to Winans Lake)
- LCDC staff prepared a second petition to establish the district and calculated that 43 valid signatures will be required to proceed further.
- **Additional signatures are being gathered.** If you want to add your name, contact wla.ssrc@gmail.com . A circulator might knock on your door after the zoom meeting noted below.
- After submission of this second petition, the Drain Commissioner will host an informal public meeting to discuss the process. All affected landowners will be invited.
- The Drain Commissioner will then appoint an independent Board of Determination. Detailed design is completed and costs estimated. Criteria for apportioning cost are proposed based upon benefit (benefit includes handling storm water from upstream lots that otherwise have to contain onsite most of the rainwater falling on the lot).
- After receiving bids and calculating costs, the Drain Commissioner holds a Day of Review (a public meeting to hear comments on the project, including the apportionment of benefits and assessment of costs). The Drain Commissioner can make revisions based on the comments and any objections. The costs being reasonable per the Board of Determination, construction will start. After completion, remaining funds will be used to maintain structures, etc. in perpetuity.

COST: All properties within the drainage district must participate in paying for improvements, but the amount can vary greatly. Apportionment criteria may include lot size, soil types, how much impervious surface drains toward the lake and the point at which that water is released, improvement of lake access, slopes, lake frontage, etc.

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Cost will be determined after engineering plans are put out for bid. A percentage of costs will be borne by Livingston County and by Hamburg Township. The remaining percentage will be assessed to the approximately 400 lots within the Winans Lake drainage district. (Due to the private nature of Winans Lake, resident percentages will be higher than if the lake was public. These percentages have yet to be determined for this project.) Funding will be used that spreads costs over twenty years for individual assessments.

As an example, if \$2,000,000 (conceptual estimate from LCDC) is needed for the overall district, the individual assessment could average \$175 per year for 20 years. Most lots would probably be assessed less, with those lot owners receiving the most direct benefit paying more. Those benefiting most include property owners along Teahen (who will have a paved road), property owners along Cowell and Teahen (who contribute significant amounts of stormwater onto the roads rather than retaining onsite), lakefront properties significantly affected by sedimentation (who will probably cede some property rights to the drain commission) and all lakefront owners (who will have improved water quality and fish habitat). The individual assessments would be added to winter tax bills from the township.

OUTREACH:

WLA members who want specific information are invited to contact the subcommittee at wla.ssrc@gmail.com with a phone number and a brief note of your concern (the appropriate member will call you). As noted above, at least three opportunities to discuss this project will occur:

- informational meetings for WLA members with your SSRC committee March 08 and 09
- an informational meeting for all freeholders in the district will be scheduled by the Drain Commissioner
- later the formal public hearing noted above as the Day of Review will be scheduled

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