

Save Snake River: Remove Cross Lake Dam

• Joe Neubauer editorial

The flooding and fluctuation on the Snake River in the Pine County area has increased since the installation of the Cross Lake Dam and has worsened with the new modification of the Snake River railroad bridge, which increased rock fill and obstructed the river flow.

The solution is to remove those obstructions and get the river back into a free-flowing state. We need to take out the Cross Lake Dam and open up the waterway under the railroad bridge. Sacred cows must go. No ifs, no buts, no errors.

The so-called stabilization dam (at the outlet of Cross Lake) has caused severe damage to embankments below the dam, so severe in fact, that buildings have been jeopardized to the extent of possibly ending up in the river. Above the dam, the river is filling in with sand and silt and the banks are eroding away making the river wider and more shallow. The increased water elevations (caused by the solid, fixed-crest dam) are limiting the depths to which tree roots penetrate. Some trees die, but many are undermined and/or blown over, taking the whole shallow root system along with them. Even eyes which see not should be able to comprehend that this is not as it should be. From the big bridge (Highway 7) to the cut-off, this situation is especially bad and river channels are changing fast. Each change moves sand and silt ever further downstream.

The Snake River from Pokegama Lake to Cross Lake and Cross Lake itself can only hold so much of these sediments. Many, many thousands of cubic feet of upriver sediments have been deposited in a certain area of Cross Lake. Many thousands of cubic yards are on the move headed to the same place. This new sand bar has been established and is growing. It has extended itself from Hodges Point eastward several hundred feet toward Holler's grossly eroded point. Suitable monitoring could have, should have, but was not done. Much valuable data is already lost. Proper monitoring is still necessary. Heaven help us to avoid the likelihood of the nasty subject of deliberate negligence raising its ugly head. The dam is the main cause of this irreversible sedimentation phenomenon.

An Albert Einstein is not needed to see that all the mistakes in Pine County affect the Snake River to above the Twin Bridges. Rice Creek, Mud Creek, Mission Creek, Pokegama Creek and all the little creeks from Cross Lake Dam to above the Twin Bridges are plugging up where they meet restricted waters in the system. Add to this, deposition of chemicals, mud, organic and inorganic debris, a mosquito paradise from flooding and fluctuation, unnecessary flooding of roads, septic systems, wells and property, and we do have problems of which the causes are clearly visible. And, to this must be added the putrid conditions resulting from slow flow or no flow being riled up by power boaters and water skiers in the impounded areas during the heat of summer. All this is eutrophication at its worst. The mismanagement of our water and waterways in the Pine County Snake River area is a man-made environmental catastrophe.

The DNR dam was built in 1964. The 1965 flood was almost a 100-year flood. The 1972 flood was a 100-year flood. The 1972 hundred-year flood was 15 feet higher at Pokegama Lake than the dam bedrock elevation. More people are jeopardized by more and greater hazards at that flood elevation than at the DNR dam. The 100-year flood elevation is that flood elevation that could reasonably happen once every 100 years. With the present mess they are more likely to happen more often.

What would taking the dam out do? That blessing would be:

- Restore the Snake River at that location to a free flowing river with attendant natural conditions for spawning runs which had existed for thousands of years.

- Eliminate all stated hazards at that location forever. No ifs, no buts, no errors.

- Stop the DNR from any more DNR's dam foolish meddling at the dam site.

- The unabated erosion would be lessened.

- The phosphorous and many other unwanted chemicals and nutrients would be lessened.

- The remaining brush, trees and terrestrial greenery would be saved.

- The water elevation would be lowered so that powerboats and their likes could not run up and down the river at their devastating and insane speeds.

- The fragile ecosystems from the Pokegama outlet to the Highway 61 bridge at Pine City would be able to survive. They must be protected first.

- The available storage of the Snake River would be restored. In this case, the available storage is that volume of space that is filled with water from the dam at the 933.3-foot crest of the dam. There is no longer any space for more water to come into when the water elevation is being held artificially high. The water floods higher instead of flowing naturally.

- A \$300,000.00 rock pile fiasco would be unnecessary. A \$300,000.00 windfall could be applied to something sensible such as four high water gauging stations and a flood warning system.

- Docks would not have to be pulled up or out during every freshet.

- The green pollution in the back bays of the river that we now have and didn't have before should be expected to be eliminated.

- The buoy system would be eliminated. The people doing the buoy work could do something for the public needs and welfare more consistent with their training.

- River mud, vegetation and spawning beds would not be molested by powerboats. Human lives and eroding areas would not be at the mercy of foolish and inconsiderate powerboat operators.

Manpower water conveyances and their owners will be able to reclaim their rights to their share of the Snake River waters that are compatible for their and nature's interests.

- The wild rice beds and the old fishing holes will be restored.

- The river flowing through the present obstructing areas of the dam 24 hours a day would lower flood elevations.

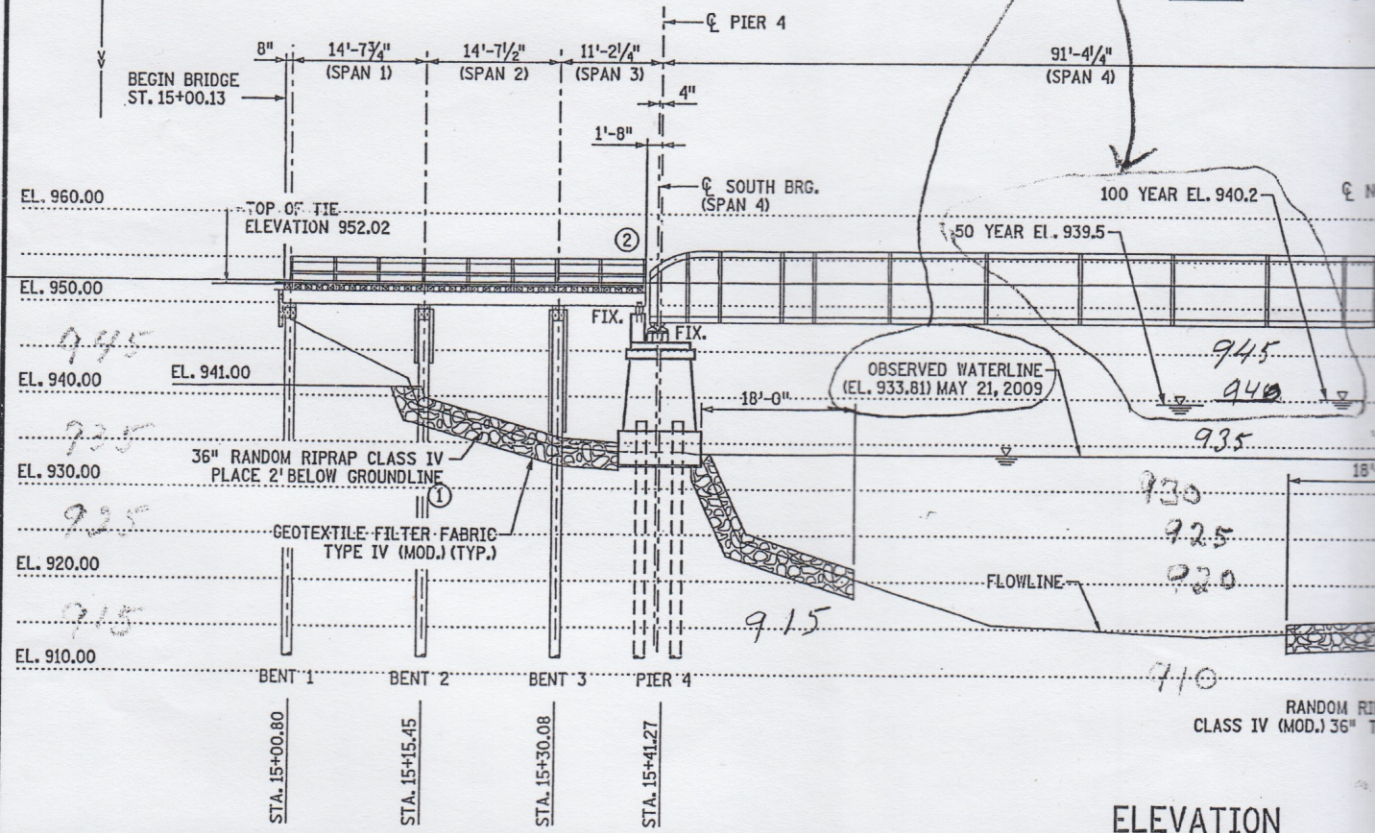
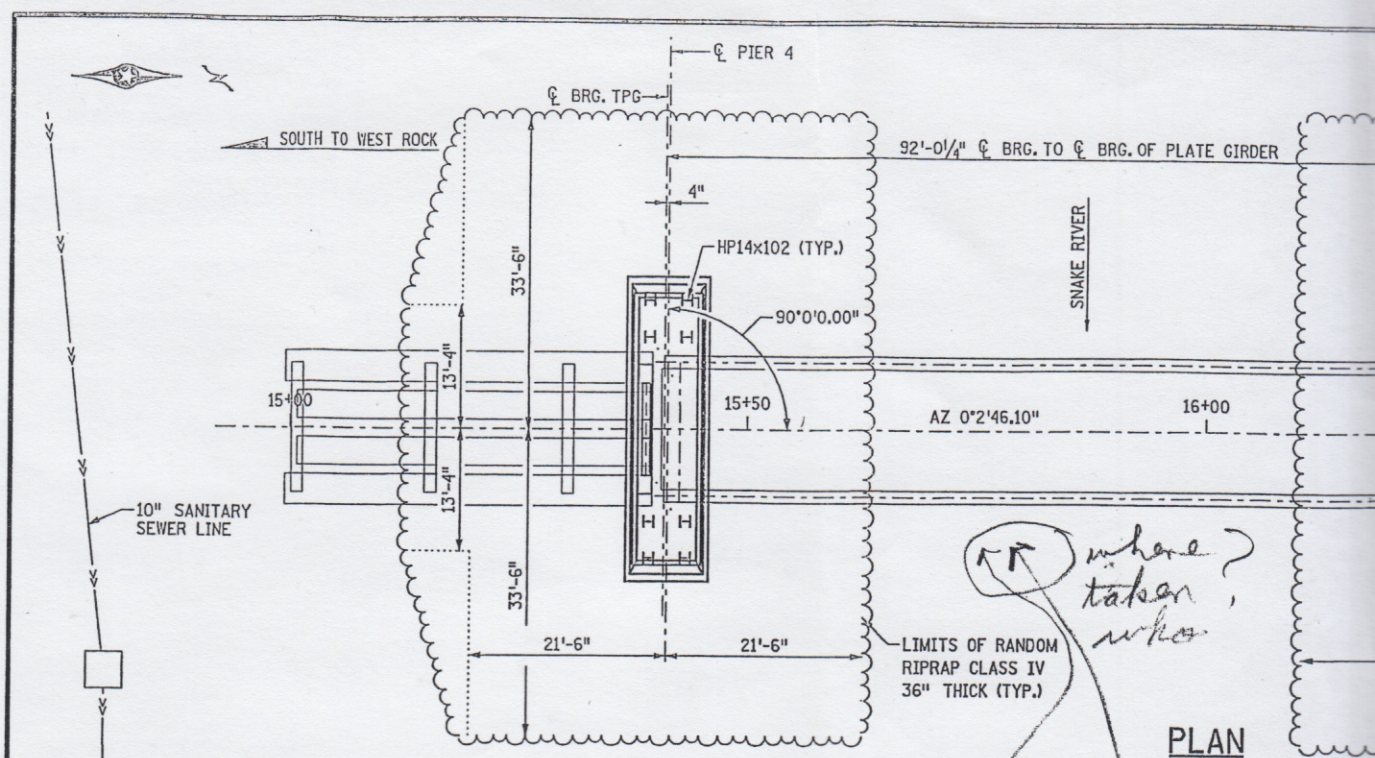
- Remove the dam and the railroad bridge would be exposed as the main cause of high elevation flooding up to above Little Walleye Landing depending on the flood elevation. "Do not destroy the available storage space; pass flooding events as low as possible; this is the name of the game." The corps of engineers, the DNR and the railroad make their own rules and use them while smoke screening the public. The public beware. For the truth and the proof read the eddies at the railroad bridge during flood events.

The stewards of "our" water resources are mentally handicapped by academically indoctrinated preconceived misconceptions. Sacred cows must go.

Mother Nature will create a free flowing river shoreline according to the needs of both aquatic and terrestrial plants. A thirty mile green buffer strip will be created, not disturbed by bureaucratic idiocy, at no cost to the taxpayers and done properly by Mother Nature. Mother Nature is a great gal. She will tolerate a bit of stupidity but is stern and unmerciful when stupidity gets out of hand. Time and flood tides wait for no man. Time reveals; flood tides demonstrate and prove. Mother Nature and Father Time can not be conquered. No ifs, no buts, no errors.

Dummy up folks.

dam 933.3 - block 929.6



GENERAL NOTES:

NEW CONSTRUCTION SHOWN IN HEAVY SOLID LINES. EXISTING STRUCTURE TO REMAIN SHOWN IN LIGHT LINES.

ATTENTION: THE SUPERVISOR STRUCTURES OR FOREMAN IN CHARGE SHALL VERIFY THAT ALL UNDERGROUND UTILITIES HAVE BEEN LOCATED AND IDENTIFIED PRIOR TO BEGINNING CONSTRUCTION.

FIELD PAINT ABRASIONS OR CUTS ON NEW STEEL SPANS WITH ONE PRIME COAT OF ORGANIC ZINC RICH PAINT OF MATCHING COLOR.

GENERAL NOTES (CONT.):

STATIONING, PROPOSED ALIGNMENT, AND ELEVATIONS ARE BASED ON SITUATION SURVEY OF BRIDGE 62.78, DATED MAY 21, 2009, BY TKDA, OF ST. PAUL, MN.

TEMPORARY BENCH MARK: "X" MARKED ON TOP OF SOUTHEAST CORNER OF WINGWALL ON BRIDGE 58510 DOWNSTREAM.

STATION: 13+31.10 488.68' WEST OF C. TRACK ELEVATION = 945.34

NOTES:

- EXCAVATION INCIDENTAL TO RIPRAP PLACEMENT
- CUT EXISTING TIMBER STRINGERS FLUSH WITH NORTH FACE OF FIELD-CAST CONCRETE RISE
- CUT EXISTING TIMBER STRINGERS 4" NORTH CENTERLINE OF BENT 6.

NO.	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION OF REVISIONS
1	10/19/09	HJC	REVISED SIGNATURE BLOCK
2	10/14/09	HJC	MOD. OF PIER 5 COL. CASING

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

SIGNED: *Matthew J. Christensen* MATTHEW J. CHRISTENSEN
DATE: 10/19/2009 LIC. NO. 43076

TKDA
ENGINEERING • ARCHITECTURE • PLANNING

DATE: 10/19/2009 TIME: 11:35:07 AM
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