



Pelican River Watershed District
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Some Commonly Asked Questions: Sallie/Melissa, Floyd Lakes Sewer and Water Supply Study

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1. Why was the study authorized and funded by the Pelican River Watershed District?

The District authorized and funded the study as a direct result of requests from Lakeview Township, Melissa-Sallie Lake Association, and the Floyd Shores Lake Association in June 2007. In the District's Revised Water Management Plan (2005-2014) it states the District will "promote alternative approaches for waste management in shore land zones". Towards this end, the study serves as a *planning document* to assist the residents with identifying the various sewer and water alternatives available to them, to provide some comparative cost analysis on those alternatives, and outline the alternative implementation and funding options. To help defray the \$46,000 cost of the study, these organizations contributed \$4,000.

While the PRWD's mission and focus is primarily on water quality, this study was not authorized by the PRWD as a water quality improvement project. Without very extensive and expensive soil, elevation, and groundwater flow analysis it is impossible to say with certainty that water quality in the lakes of the study area would improve.

Rather, the Watershed District responded to resident requests because of the large number of substandard lots in the study area and the difficulties associated with redevelopment of them. Many of the densely developed areas around Floyd, Melissa, and Sallie lakes are experiencing redevelopment. Seasonal cottages are upgraded to or replaced with larger year-round homes. Redevelopment often triggers additional requirements by the zoning ordinance – updated wells and sewage treatment systems. However, these mandatory upgrades are practically impossible to implement on many lots. The only alternative to closed sewage systems with the associated ongoing pumping maintenance is some form of off-site treatment.

2. How does this study differ from the previous studies and planning documents?

This study differs from previous studies because of its mandate to provide the residents with a cost and feasibility analysis of three alternatives for collective sewage treatment: cluster systems, regional treatment, and connection to the City of Detroit Lakes sewage and water systems. The study also includes the various implementation mechanisms (Township, City, PRWD) for each alternative.

Another unique attribute of the plan is the Floyd and Melissa-Sallie study areas are sub-divided into smaller, potential treatment areas. This modular approach allows greater flexibility and eliminates the “all or nothing/one size fits all” implementation plan used in other studies.

For example, “*Lake A*” has areas with adequate lot sizes and suitable soils for individual septic treatment systems (ISTS); the residents conclude ISTS’s make the most sense for them. In other areas, where lot sizes are inadequate or the soils are unsuitable for ISTS’s, cluster systems may be more appropriate. Areas adjacent to municipal water and sewer systems may decide the city option makes more sense for them.

It should be stressed the area boundary lines used in the report are for general planning purposes. Residents may want to either expand or reduce their project areas according to their needs.

3. What is the Pelican River Watershed District’s involvement in implementing any of the considered alternatives?

The PRWD does not recommend or endorse any course of action for the residents of the study area. It will be up to the residents to decide what is best for them. Further involvement by the PRWD will be at the petitioned request of the residents. PRWD, along with other governmental units such as townships, must respond to petitions for service. In the case of Detroit Township, a subordinate service district already exists on part of the Floyd Lake.

4. Is this study designed to encourage/discourage annexation by the City of Detroit Lakes?

It is absolutely NOT the intent of the PRWD to either encourage or discourage annexation as a means to implement collective sewage and water service. The planning document lays out the alternatives/costs and it is up to the residents to conclude what is best for them. Residents of certain areas may see annexation as the only logical alternative to provide the desired services. Other areas, for either practical or political reasons, may have no desire or need to petition for annexation. In all situations, the Watershed District will not advocate for any of the alternatives.