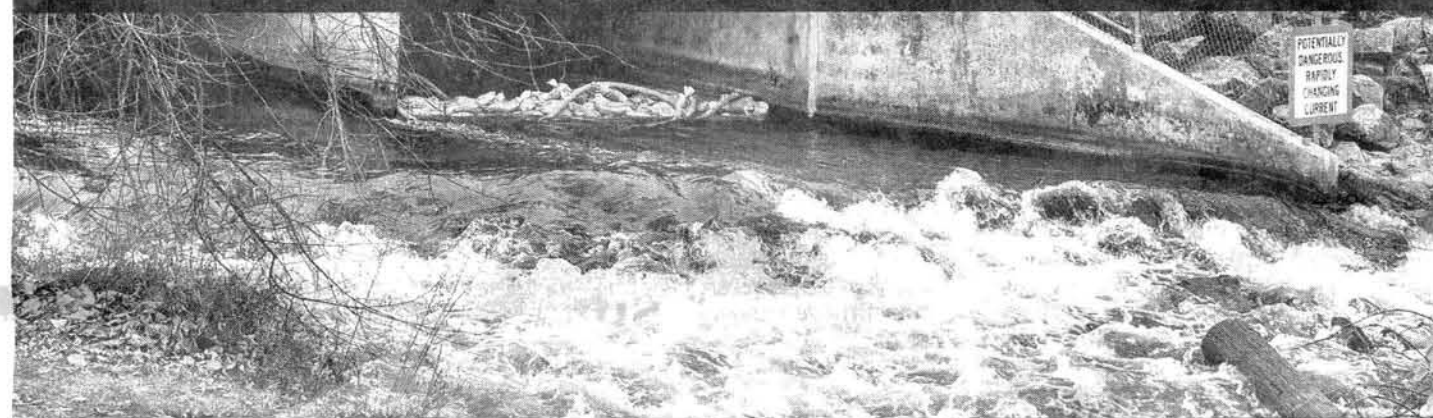


Whiting residents on McDill Pond to see property values drop; Stevens Point side stays level

DRAWDOWN



DRAWS DOWN



SOME TAXES

The McDill Pond Dam can be seen from the Plover River on Monday. Crews expect to have the repairs to the dam finished by mid-November, and water restored to McDill Pond in the spring. STEVENS POINT JOURNAL PHOTO

By **B.C. Kowalski** | Journal staff
bkowalski@gannett.com

Residents on McDill Pond will be paying different taxes next year depending on what side of the pond they live on.

Residents who live on the Stevens Point side of the pond will pay similar rates to previous years, while those on the Whiting side will pay taxes based on assessments that are reduced as much as 60 percent while the pond is drawn down.

McDill Pond has been drawn down since June 2011, when village of Whiting officials discovered a leak in the McDill Pond Dam. Crews are repairing the dam, and the pond should be refilled by

spring 2013.

The difference in taxes represents a difference in taxing philosophy. City Assessor Jim Siebers said Stevens Point chose not to change the assessments for the city's

roughly 160 residents on the pond because the pond would eventually be refilled.

Siebers said lowering the values temporarily would mean other taxpayers would have to make up difference.

Values haven't been affected as much as one might think, according to Siebers. Four homes on McDill Pond sold in the last half of 2011,

See MCDILL, Page 7A



Don Helfenstein, 54 of Burlington, (right), and James Peloquin, 31 of Cambridge, fill in concrete as part of the repairs to the McDill Pond Dam on Monday. B.C. KOWALSKI/JOURNAL STAFF

McDill

Continued from Page 3A

and another two sold so far this year. Sale prices of those six homes averaged almost \$290,000.

Siebers estimates the loss in value for the average lot, if the pond was never refilled, would be about \$24,000.

In Whiting, contracted assessor Todd Pauls of B.A. Pauls and Associates said the village will lower assessments for the 29 taxable lots on the pond. He said property values will be lowered 50 to 60 percent to reflect the

empty pond.

He said that the assessment was based on the status of the pond on Jan. 1, 2012, and at that point the pond looked like it would still be empty in 2013.

Pauls said since the pond would be filled after Jan. 1, 2013, assessments for those property owners wouldn't return to pre-drawdown levels until 2015.

Changing the assessments means taxes will increase for other Whiting residents, though because only a small number of properties were reassessed, Pauls said it would be minor.

"Anytime you take

money off the tax rolls, it has to be made up," Pauls said.

McDill Inland Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District President Jack Negaard said there wasn't much the district could do about the difference in assessments.

Siebers said if the city had lowered the taxes, it likely would have assessed them to similar lots like in the Whitetail Subdivision, meaning the average lot would have been reduced by about \$24,000, meaning a loss in value of \$3,480,000 in property value.

Follow B.C. Kowalski on Twitter: @BCreporter.