

On behalf of the Barnes County Commission we want to thank you for asking us for the counties perspective on the Devils lake issue.

In our opinion Devils Lake needs to be stabilized as much as possible through maximizing the west end pumping station or some other type of a structural solution to control the discharge year around if need be. Best case scenario would be if they would filter the water before pumping it into the Sheyenne River. We feel water from the east end should not even be considered. Even though millions of dollars have been committed to a reverse osmosis water treatment facility for VC, we do not know the possible negative affects the higher sulfates will have on the life in the river, Lake Ashtabula and all of the livestock that drink from these bodies of water and reverse osmosis systems are expensive to operate and the citizens of VC will have to bear that expense until the end of time, even after DL gets under control.

We do feel that finding and knowing the elevation where things must be done is a critical piece of the puzzle and needs to be obtained. It seems we have a lot of numbers and elevations but I would ask that the federal government try and pin point this information for all of us.

Concurrent planning also needs to take place with the armoring of the Tolna Coulee to prevent a natural and uncontrolled release.

From some of the information I have obtained if 600 cfs were to be released it would take of 1.2 ft. That with evaporation of 2.5 ft per year we will take of only 3.7 ft in a year's time which is just a little over the amount of water being drained in a year's time so we would only be equalizing with this scenario. With the increase flow into the Sheyenne River also comes a serious issue with river bank erosion. Right now we have many places in Barnes County that the river bank is becoming dangerously close to homes and farm stead's that have been in the valley for generations. Pasture and farm land is being lost each year. Additional water moving will expedite that erosion we fear and could cause a near disastrous situation for the county.

Upper basin retention does continue to need to be studied. However, I do not think federal or local government can reasonably expect private landowners to bear the expense of retaining water that was legally drained without being compensated for doing so. Taking of private property for public use is an uncomfortable process but may be one that needs to be looked at.

The Barnes County Commission requested State Health conduct a comprehensive study earlier this year. To the best of my knowledge this has not been done. We feel this needs to be done by and out of state non-partial firm.

As we work to try and solve the problems in the Devils Lake basin we ask that you keep the potential problems that this creates for down stream communities in the fore front of all decision made.

A common thread between everyone one would be a God send but I do not see this happening. That is why things are not getting done. We need to come together and find that common thread.

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