

Saddle Lake



Public Hearing on Assessment Roll & Project Costs

June 5, 2025

Welcome & Introductions

- **Joe Parman** – *Van Buren County Drain Commissioner*
- **Ryan Betts, P.E.** – *Land & Resource Engineering*
- **Mariel Dunn** – *Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC*



Overview

1. Intro to Part 307
2. 2025 Order Updates
3. Saddle Lake Project
4. Project Costs & Assessment Roll
5. Public Comment



Intro to Part 307

Part 307 of Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act allows circuit courts to establish "normal lake levels"

Van Buren Circuit Court established a normal lake level for Saddle Lake in 1931



Intro to Part 307

- The Court also confirmed boundaries of a **special assessment district** to fund maintenance and operation of the normal lake level in 1982
- Under Part 307, special assessments are the funding mechanism for **operation costs, repairs and improvements, updating court orders, etc.**



2025 Order Updates

- Van Buren County Drain Commissioner initiated a project to **replace the lake level control structure** on Saddle Lake
- As part of the project, Drain Commissioner **reviewed the historical lake level orders** and identified updates necessary to be consistent with state law and planned operation of the lake level control structure
- Van Buren County Circuit Court held a **hearing to update the lake level order** on February 4, 2025



2025 Order Update

Following the hearing, Circuit Court entered an amended order that:

- Clarifies the measurement location for the legal lake level
- Updates the survey datum used for the lake level elevation
- Authorizes temporary lake level variations
- Updates special assessment district boundaries



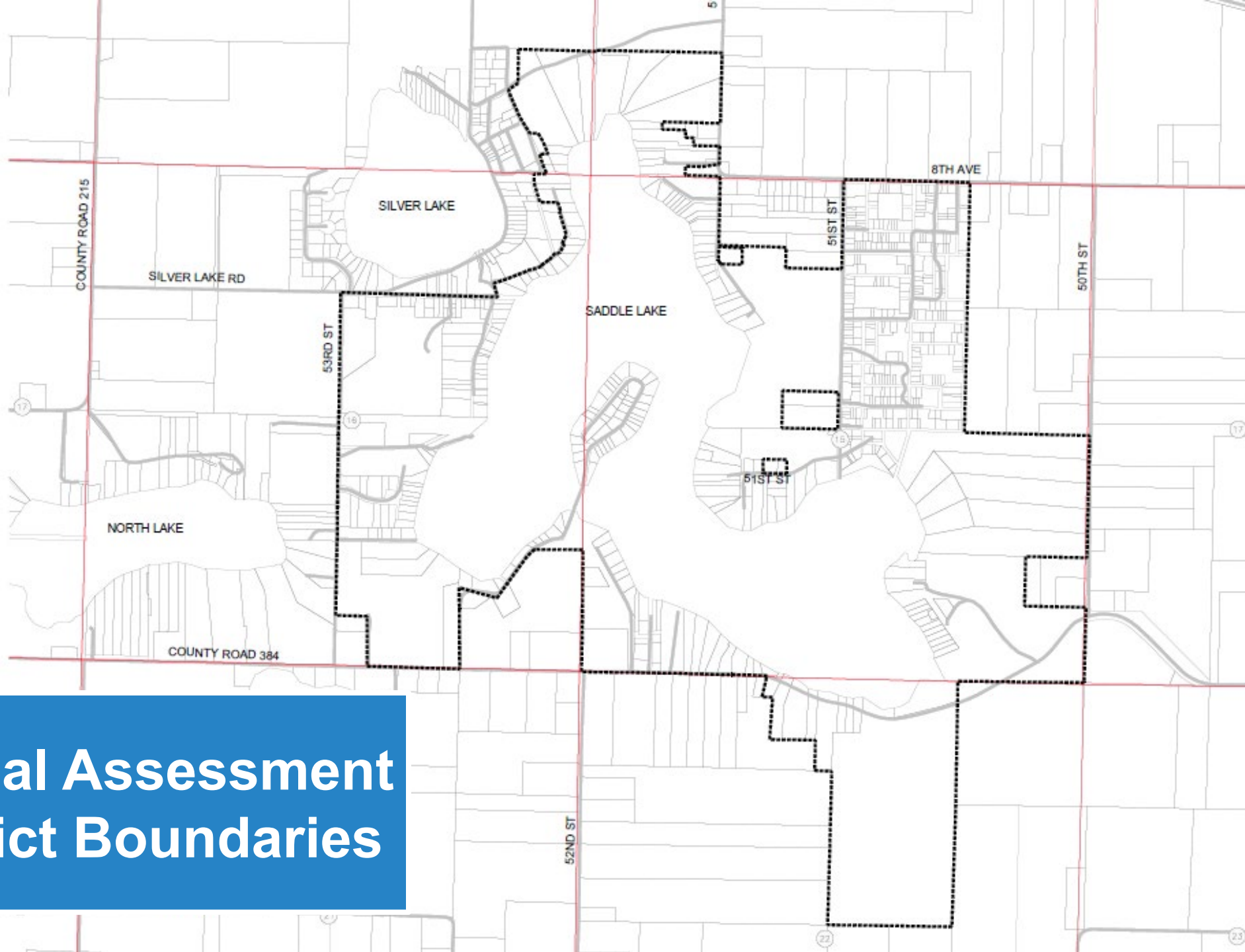
Lake Level Order



Established lake levels

- Summer = 667.55 feet
NAVD88
- Winter = 667.22 feet
NAVD88





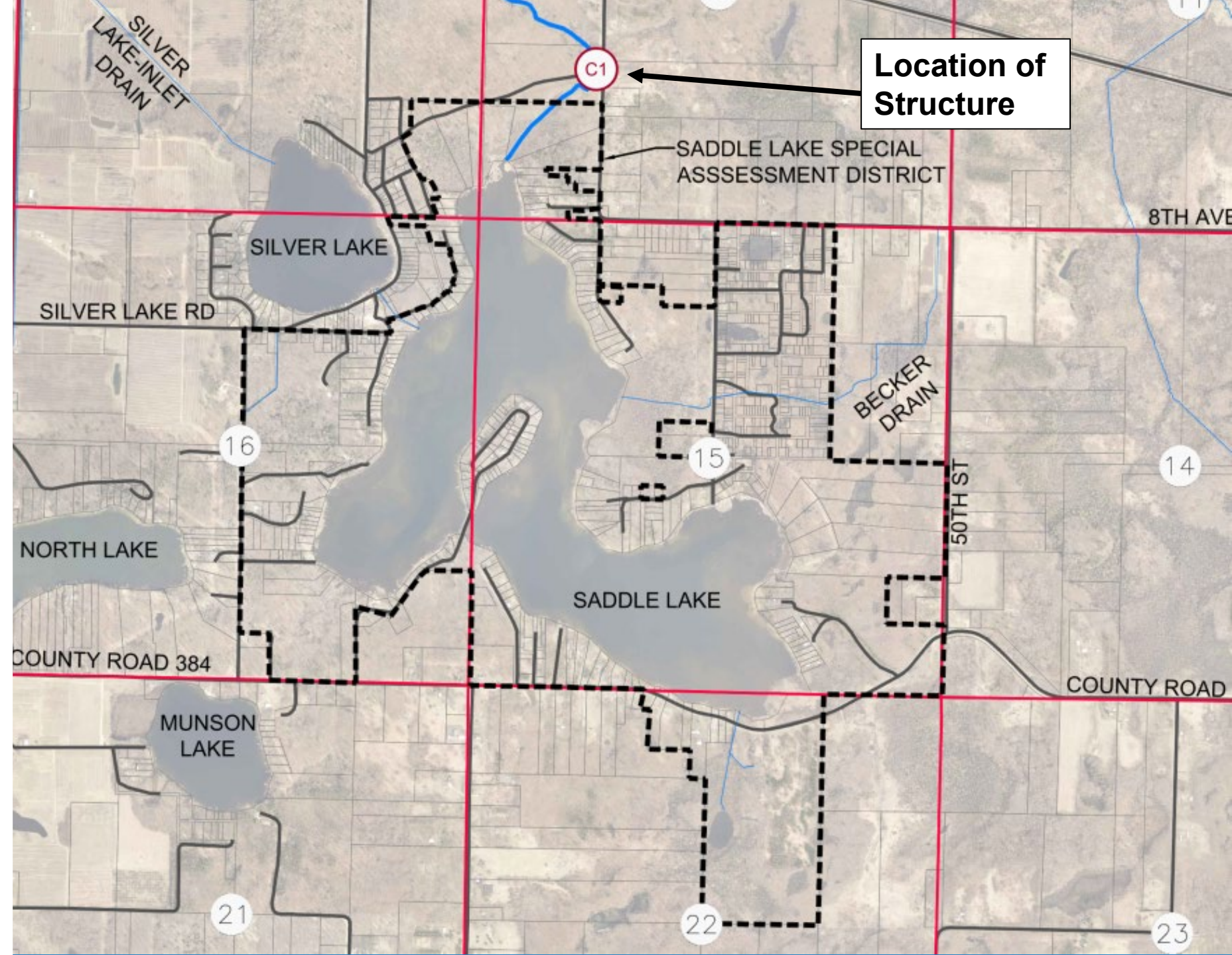
Special Assessment District Boundaries

Lake Level Control Structure

- Low hazard
- Structure is in poor condition
- Replacement is necessary



Lake Level Control Structure

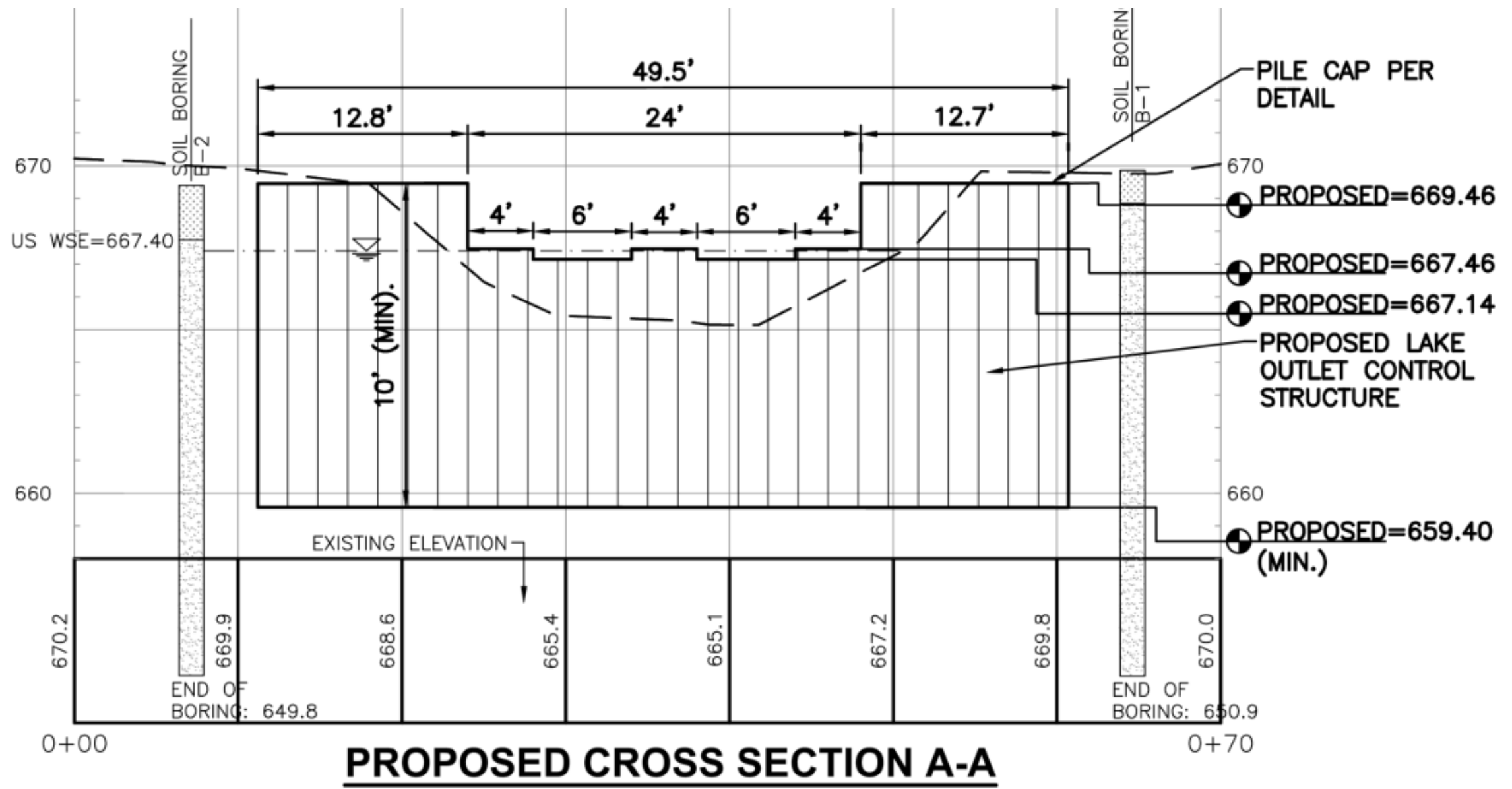


Saddle Lake Project

- Replacement of existing lake level control structure
- ***New structure will:***
 - Match designed crest elevation and spillway widths of existing structure
 - Extend 2 feet deeper into the Barber Creek stream bed, as recommended by geotechnical report
 - Extend 5 feet further into the stream banks to prevent flanking
- No work to be completed from May 1 – June 30, per EGLE permit



Saddle Lake Project Design



Meeting Purpose

Public hearing to review assessment roll and project costs

- Property owners can provide public comment
- Drain Commissioner can recommend approval

NOT the purpose:

- Final approval of assessments (County Board)
- Determine properties to be assessed (Circuit Court)
- Discuss lake level or other lake issues



Lake Level Assessment

- Total amount assessed: ***\$254,000***
- Proposed assessment period: ***7 years***
- Final assessment roll is ***subject to County Board approval***



Lake Level Assessment

Computation of costs includes:

- Engineering Services
- Published Notices/Mailings
- Financing Costs
- Legal Services
- Assessment Hearing
- Appeal Costs (if any)
- Permit Fees (EGLE)
- Lake Level Structure Replacement
- Lake Level Structure Monitoring Fees



Assessment Methodology

- Direct access parcels = 1
- Indirect access parcels = 0.5
- Limited access – Saddle Lake Subdivision parcels = 0.25
- Public boat launch = 5



Assessment Methodology

At-large assessments for public use

- Van Buren County = 2%
- Columbia Township = 2%

County and Township will pay for any parcels in district in addition to at-large assessment



Assessment Methodology

State of Michigan

- Public boat launch parcel
- Estimated assessment:
 - Total assessment: \$3554.52
 - Annual assessment: \$507.79 (+ interest)





Estimated Assessment Summary

Average direct access parcel:

- Total assessment: \$710.90
- Annual assessment: \$101.56 (+ interest)





Estimated Assessment Summary

Average indirect access parcel:

- Total assessment: \$355.45
- Annual assessment: \$50.78
(+ interest)





Estimated Assessment Summary

Average limited access – Saddle Lake Subdivision parcel:

- Total assessment: \$177.73
- Annual assessment: \$25.39 (+ interest)



Appeals

- **15-day appeal period** after assessment roll is approved by County Board (set for June 24, 2025)
- Appeal to “**a court of competent jurisdiction**”
- Review **MCL 324.30714(4)** for information re: appeals
- ***To appeal, you must have submitted a written objection or signed-in on the attendance sheet***



Public Comment

- Please **submit a comment card** to speak
- You will **only be allowed to speak once** and cannot use someone else's opportunity to speak
- When your name is called, please raise your hand
- You are **limited to 3 minutes** to share your public comment

