

NEWS AND VIEWS

WISCONSIN FEDERATION OF CONSERVATION CLUBS
411 East Lincoln Avenue
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Les Woerpel

Executive Secretary

Affiliated with

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION



I GIVE MY
PLEDGE AS AN AMERICAN
TO SAVE AND FAITHFULLY TO
DEFEND FROM WASTE THE
NATURAL RESOURCES OF
MY COUNTRY - ITS SOIL
AND MINERALS, ITS
FORESTS, WATERS,
AND WILDLIFE

SPECIAL LITTLE EAU PLEINE RESERVOIR

In discussing the merits of the Little Eau Pleine valley, either flooded or as a Conservation area, over the past several years a question that has come up often has been, "But don't you think that the WVIC has the interest of the people at heart? Don't you think that they are convinced that it is best for the area? Would they want to flood the area if they didn't believe that the people would gain by it?"

Those questions always bothered me, because I felt that people like the Meads of Wisconsin Rapids, who control Consolidated Power and Paper Company, the firm which is really behind the flooding of the Little Eau Pleine, and who have done many wonderful things for the people of the Wisconsin River Valley, wouldn't stoop to taking advantage of the people, even for personal gain. Respect for D. C. Everest has been the highest, and as head of the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company I couldn't see how the people could get anything but a fair shake.

I'm not bothered anymore! I know the answers now! I had thought it was a case of both sides of the reservoir question presenting their story and letting the people decide. The only answer I need now is to the question, "How naive can a man be?"

We never did expect to hear of a man being threatened with being run out of town if he didn't quit opposing the signing of the road agreement, but apparently it has happened. We never did expect anyone to use the Public Service Commission as a billy club much the way a policeman is used in scaring little children, but it appears to us that this was also done, by telling town board members that they would like to get them in front of the Public Service Commission and answer for their stand on the road issues. Neither did we expect to see the right of condemnation, which the WVIC possesses, used against a governmental body, which also possesses the right of condemnation, as was done when town board members were told to either accept the sum offered them for abandoning portions of roads or WVIC would condemn the roads and the towns would be lucky to get a fifth or less of what was being offered. And we never expected WVIC to stand up before a joint meeting of the town boards and tell them, "Everyone who signs (the road agreements) tonight will get a \$5 gold fountain pen.", but it happened.

A referendum in the town of Green Valley was worded as follows: "Do you favor closing the Smoky Hill road, if, by closing it, the Town could receive the sum of \$50,000.00, to be used for public projects throughout the township and for the benefit of the township as a whole, including improvements of existing town roads?" However, an "Explanation" of this offer states "The Town of Green Valley will receive an amount equal to \$50,000.00, which the Town board can then distribute. These are entirely two different things. Actually the referendum was held without a caucus or a town board meeting authorizing the referendum. The vote was yes - 54, No - 62.

WVIC has been just as crude in a 3 page explanation of "Why You Should Support The George Head Reservoir" in which they cited the usual bunk about retention of tax revenues, replacing, where practical, all old and obsolete bridges, building

of cottages and recreational facilities by the public which would add valuable property to tax rolls, people using the recreational facilities would bring in money and spend it in the communities, provide much-needed electrical power which would expand industry, create employment and larger markets for farmers products, and subtract the fire hazard for all time that is now presently in the area.

They don't tell these people that the 40 farms that would be all or partially destroyed are probably paying as much taxes as the whole Utility Tax would be if the farms are destroyed, or that the income from these farms would also be lost to the community, which for 40 farms would amount to over \$200,000 a year, and that this loss couldn't be replaced, unless they expect to do it with the one \$2,000 a year caretaker job that is listed in the costs of the reservoir operations.

Residents of the area know what they can expect in the way of cottages and recreational facilities, because they have the Big Eau Pleine reservoir right across the hill and can see that there are few, if any, worth mentioning, and they know that the Little Eau Pleine will be less suited to cottages and recreational facilities than the Big Eau Pleine because it is shallower and drawdown will affect much more land than on the Big Eau Pleine.

As for expansion of industry in the area these people know that is a pipe-dream. Campaigns have been waged up and down the Wisconsin River Valley to attract industry for years and there was no shortage of power, but industry stayed away. Now we even see the ridiculous spectacle of these cities offering rewards for any industry that individuals may be able to entice to the area. While we would like nothing better than to see the industrial position of the valley improved, we might just as well be realists, and instead of sticking with a lost cause, even when the ship is going down, turn to a cause that has a future in it and a chance of succeeding.

But they went even farther and told what would happen if they allowed the area to be used for a "public hunting ground". They point out that if it is turned into a hunting reserve, a series of dams would be built which would be highly detrimental to many miles of town roads within the area and would cast a burden upon the town; that the area would be removed from tax rolls; that the establishment of a public hunting ground in the middle of an area which is inherently a farming community is dangerous and highly inconvenient for those people attempting to make a living in the adjacent community; that there would be no pasturing of cattle on the high areas; that the fire hazard would still be present and that it would cost the towns much more to fight the fires and for fire prevention; and once this area has become a public hunting ground, it is lost to the community for any possible further economic development.

Dr. Ira Gabrielson told me that the beauty of the set up on this marsh was that several small dams could be built which would hold back water in the laterals with very little cost and "That they would not interfere with the roads in any way". Very small raises in present water levels would be needed, probably not much higher than normal high water in the area.

ALL PUBLIC HUNTING GROUNDS ARE BUILT IN THE MIDDLE OF AREAS WHICH ARE INHERENTLY A FARMING COMMUNITY, and as far as we know safety regulations set up by the Department have been so successful that in some cases farmers even lease lands to be used in conjunction with these public hunting grounds to get an extra income and because it is safer than without supervision. Actually the hunting now is primarily down in the marsh and its edges. However, the Power Company offers to help develop wildlife values around the reservoir if it is established. Such hunting as would be afforded by such action would be closer to the farms and potentially more dangerous than even at the present. They are highly inconsistent in their haste to assure the hunters that they will help provide hunting for them if the dam is installed and at the same time to tell the farmers that such action is dangerous and inconvenient to their operations.

Farms destroyed

*Reasons for Reservoir **

While WVIC seems to be overly concerned about any additional fire hazard that the Public Hunting Grounds might contribute, they need not be, because fire losses in public hunting grounds are notoriously very light because the areas are supervised and fires just don't get a start. However, the forester at Mosinee told us that unless the reservoir is cleared before it is flooded if it is approved, the resulting tangle of brush and dead trees in the bottomlands were going to be the worst fire hazard anyone in that area has seen, because if a fire does get started after the water is drawn down and the brush and trees are dried up there will be no stopping it because it would be impossible to get fire fighting equipment in over the muck.

If WVIC's evaluation of these questions is no better than the testimony presented by their "expert" they might better leave this subject to the Conservation Department to answer questions as to what can be expected if the area is made a Conservation Area.

Certainly the claim that if the area becomes a public hunting ground it is lost to further possible economic development is the most far fetched of all of their statements, unless one doesn't consider recreational development as in that category. However, most people would have a hard time telling the people of Vilas County that recreational development is not economic development. Up until a short time ago that county, like all of the rest was interested in getting industry to come in, but had no success. However, they decided to develop their recreational possibilities and the county has gone from a marginal, poor county, to one of the more prosperous in these few short years. No one can tell them that isn't economic development.

Even the Power Company Stooges are cut in full force. A Mr. Kotara from Knowlton put articles in the Mosinee and Stevens Point papers ridiculing the conservationists because they let Portage County sell over 1,000 acres of land at a dollar an acre to a private individual. He also called on them to support acquisition of lands in the towns of Marathon County extending north and east of the Range Line road and Dewey Township of Portage County.

Actually this peice of land sold to the private individual has been under consideration for purchase by the Conservation Department several ties already. Several Years ago the Izaak Walton League of Stevens Point hired an engineer to survey the area with a view to utilizing it for a duck area by placing dams in the creek to back up the water. While the Engineer claimed that it would be feasible, the Conservation Department's engineers said that it would not because it would flood land not available to the State and the State would not break their policy of not condemning lands for hunting and fishing purposes. The plan was abandoned at that time.

A couple years ago the Portage County Sportsmen's Club and other s interested the Department in the purchase of this land. At that time the County was selling woodlands, and other land, at public auction, some with valuable timber on it, for as little as \$2 an acre. Although the negotiations seemed to be going along alright, they fell through when the College requested permission to operate as a managing unit on some of the lands. The County Board at that time dedided that no more lands suitable for reforestation would be sold but would be kept for county forests. The plan again for using this land if it had been available was for ducks, this time by the use of several small dams to hold back some of the water.

At no time has the Conservation Department been very interested in the lands and it is very doubtfull that the Conservation Commission would have paid anything for them if a price was asked.

Actually the lands involved, while of not very great acreage, are actually poorer game cover than even the poorest of the Little Eau Pleino area. If they were acquired by the Department the funds necessary to developement of the area

would dwarf those necessary per acre to maintain suitable habitat on the Little Eau Pleine, and possibly might be nearly as great for the thousand acres as would be required for maintenance of the whole Eau Pleine.

While I do not know the areas he spoke of on the Marathon County side of the line, I understand that it is similar to those in Portage County, affording some cover for a few ruffed grouse and a few rabbits. However, even this cover is in most cases around the edges and, at least in Portage County, was not available for sale.

It is one thing for Sportsmen to demand that their money be spent for worthwhile, good game habitat, and it is another for them to demand that the Commission throw it down a rat hole on land that is of little use in developing game habitat. A great many requests of this type are made every year. It is one thing to be able to recognize good game habitat and avoid causing the Department additional work and expense making hopeless surveys, and another to think that recommending any old land that isn't being used for purchase by the Department is cooperating with the Department. For this reason, and if Mr. Kitura had looked into the matter further, he should know that his articles make good propaganda for the power company, but little contribution to the game management program of the state.

Another stooge is an editor of the Marshfield News Herald, who wrote under the title of the "Eau Pleine Marvel" probably because he wanted to continue to straddle the fence in public while plugging for the flooding of the reservoir under an assumed, fictitious title.

This literary marvel professed to present both sides of the picture in an unbiased manner, but all references to conservationists or to myself were very caustic to say the least, while references to WVIC were made with a tone of reverence.

Continued references to "Emergency meetings" being called frantically the last minute after the application was in for WVIC to flood the area and his implications that nothing was done until that time are downright falsehoods, but then, he also states that the "News and Views" is published monthly, and if his other information is no more accurate than that not much can be expected of him. We have in our files letters to the Conservation Department dated before 1948, which was about the time that the Little Eau Pleine developed its greatest importance because of loss of other game habitat in the area. Implications that the Conservationists should have been on their toes years ago might even be extended back to 1907 when the power company owners forced through the legislature the right of eminent domain for their interests on the Wisconsin River. It is unfortunate that it takes people a long time to open up their eyes to the destruction of natural resources, sometimes until it is too late. I might add that if many more people who profess to be interested in the welfare of farmers, recreational industry and bankers, bakers and just plain John don't wake up in the near future they are really going to be too late for more than just the Little Eau Pleine.

The Eau Pleine Marvel points out that at the Wausau hearing the farmers had their chance to appear and then quotes Mr. Leonard Ruesch of the Town of Milladore in his epic statement that "We object strongly and almost with a note of repugnance to the floating, standing, twisted, gnarled brush and dead trees and vegetation that will be left if this reservoir is approved. We will have stench and slime crowded to our doors. The trees, brush, grass and lazy streams are beautiful as they are for they are the work of the hand of the Creator." However, he doesn't report that many other farmers wanted to testify but refrained from doing so because the few who went before them were laughed at for their attempts to show the commission what they thought of their home and how really important it was to preserve them as they are.

Thinking back, it appears that the campaign of instilling fear in the hearts of these citizens of the power of the Public Service Commission started right

there and is still continuing with threats that "I would like to get you on the stand before the Public Service Commission".

The "Eau Pleine Marvel" attempts to discredit Dr. Ira Gabrielson by quoting Mr. Schweinler of the Mosinee times when he said, "Mr Gabrielson admits in his letter that he had not attempted to evaluate the economic feasibility to the impoundment proposed by the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company", and goes on to condemn him because "Nothing was said by Gabrielson in connection with the economic advantages that will accrue to the industries that employ people in this area by firming up the Wisconsin River during low-water storage - - - -"

Dr. Gabrielson is a wildlife management expert. He came to Wisconsin at the request of the Attorney General's office for one purpose, that of determining the wildlife values of the area only, and not, as "The Eau Plaine Marvel" states, "He was also to judge its conservation and economic values."

The Public Service Commission was created to determine relative values. It is up to the litigants to present these values as they relate to themselves. They are supposed to have the "Experts" to tell the Commission what those values are. The applicant for a dam should have actual figures showing what can be expected in industrial improvement and additional economic benefits to a community or area. The use of catch phrases such as "Economic Development", "Industrial Development", "Tax Losses", "Economic Gain", etc., should all be itemized and explained. The phrases that these people have been throwing at the public mean nothing except in a speech to impress someone. Gabrielson itemized the wildlife values of the area and pointed out how slight development in the form of small dams would increase those benefits. He itemized the cover types, including trees, which we doubt that the WVIC even knew before his report was published. If the WVIC had done as well we might know what to expect and how badly the water is needed in an impoundment, what gains we could expect and where we would lose. Those are the things that the Public Service Commission needs to know before they can exercise their function of determining who's values are the greatest.

* The Marvel also implies that Dr. Gabrielson was paid by the Wisconsin Conservation Department to make this survey, as was Grange, the WVIC Expert. This is also not true. Dr. Gabrielson's time and efforts were not paid, but voluntary. We hope this fact is kept clear in people's minds.

* And, finally, the constant hammering on the public that it is only going to be a matter of a few days, weeks or months before the Little Eau Pleine reservoir is going to be built, after receiving permission from the Public Service Commission is more propaganda dinned into the ears of the people until they are expected to give up the fight before it is even started. They are all completely without foundation, and we hope, in error. No one will know the outcome until the Public Service Commission passes down their ruling, which probably won't be for a long time yet. Certainly they will not act until the road issues are either settled or WVIC admits that they are unable to settle them. They will not act until the Conservation Commission has had an opportunity to try to purchase the area in accordance with the vote of the Commission. If purchase is impossible, certainly they will not act until the State has had an opportunity to present Dr. Gabrielson's testimony, either through his report or in person, at resumed hearings.

So don't get your boats out yet if you expect to use them on the Little Eau Pleine Reservoir, because it will be a long time before you will be able to do that. WVIC has a lot of hurdles to negotiate before they have any real right to be confident that they have won, unless all those that oppose the project concede victory to the WVIC and withdraw, and I know that isn't going to happen for a long time to come.

Respectfully

Les Woerpel, Ex. Sec.
WFCC

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MARCH 30, 1955

LITTLE EAU PLEINE VALUES: APPARENTLY SOME CONFUSION AND MISINFORMATION EXISTS IN THE MINDS OF SOME AS TO THE VALUES OF A CONSERVATION AREA ON THE LITTLE EAU PLEINE RIVER ON THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHICH HAS BEEN PROPOSED AS A RESERVOIR BY THE WISCONSIN VALLEY IMPROVEMENT COMPANY. THOSE QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ANSWERED AS WELL AS POSSIBLE SO THAT THE RELATIVE VALUES OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AGAINST THE RESERVOIR MAY BE MORE EASILY DETERMINED.

1. IT SEEMS TO BE A COMMON RUMOR THAT THE CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT WOULD TAKE A LARGE BLOCK OF LAND WITH INELEXIBLE BOUNDARIES AND INCLUDING MUCH FARM LAND, BY CONDEMNATION IF NECESSARY, TO MAKE THE CONSERVATION AREA. THE ANSWER TO THAT WAS GIVEN BY MR. ROY TULANE, ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL REPRESENTING THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION, IN A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH ME ON FRIDAY, MARCH 25TH. HIS ANSWER IS "THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION DOES NOT WANT ONE SINGLE ACRE OF FARMABLE LAND FOR THE CONSERVATION AREA". (THOSE ARE DIRECT QUOTES WITH HIS PERMISSION). WHILE MR. TULANE SAID THAT HE CANNOT SPEAK FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION, HE AGREED THAT IT IS REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD CONTINUE TO TRADE AGRICULTURAL LANDS FOR THOSE BETTER SUITED TO WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IF FARMABLE LANDS ARE ACQUIRED FROM THE PRESENT WVIC HOLDINGS IF THE PURCHASE IS COMPLETED BY THE STATE. HE SUGGESTED THAT HE WAS SURE THAT MR. LESTER VOIGT WOULD BE HAPPY TO SUPPLY CONSERVATION PERSONNEL TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH INTERESTED LAND OWNERS OR RESIDENTS OF THE AREA IF THEY WISHED.

THE CONCLUSION I REACH FROM THESE FACTS IS THAT FARMERS WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO IMPROVE THEIR LAND HOLDINGS BY TRADING WITH THE DEPARTMENT WHERE SUCH A TRADE WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO BOTH PARTIES. IN ADDITION, IT WOULD PROBABLY ADD FARMABLE LAND TO PRODUCTION OF THE AREA TO HELP INCREASE THE ECONOMIC WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE.

THE CHANCE OF INCREASING INCOME FROM THE AREAS AS A RESULT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA WILL ALSO BE PRESENT IF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR RAISING WILDLIFE FOOD FOR OUTRIGHT SALE OR ON SHARES WITH THE DEPARTMENT IN OTHER CONSERVATION AREAS IS ANY INDICATION. THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SOME SUCH PROGRAM WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE PLANS FOR THIS AREA.

2. SOME CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED ABOUT DECREASING LAND VALUES IF THE DEPARTMENT ACQUIRES IT FOR MANAGEMENT. THE ANSWERS TO QUESTION 1 INDICATE AN INCREASE IN LAND VALUES. HOWEVER, A MORE SURE INDICATION OF WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED IS GIVEN BY EXAMINING OTHER CONSERVATION AREAS OF THE STATE. ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, EVERY SUCH MANAGEMENT AREA HAS INCREASED THE VALUES OF THE LANDS SURROUNDING IT. THE MOST PHENOMINAL, OF COURSE, BEING THE HORIZON MARSH, WHERE LAND VALUES HAVE GONE WAY OUT OF SIGHT BECAUSE OF THE DUCK AND GOOSE VALUES OF THE AREA. AS A MAJOR MANAGEMENT PROJECT OF THE LITTLE EAU PLEINE WOULD BE FOR DUCKS AND GEESE, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT VALUES HERE WILL ALSO RISE.

3. HOW ABOUT THE LOSS OF TAXES IF THE STATE ACQUIRES THESE LANDS? FIRST, THERE ARE BILLS IN THE LEGISLATURE RIGHT NOW, THAT ARE VIEWED FAVORABLY BY THE LEGISLATORS, TO REQUIRE THE STATE TO PAY TAXES ON ANY LANDS IT OWNS. BUT EVEN WITHOUT THIS RELIEF IT APPEARS THAT THE QUESTION HAS BEEN EXPANDED WAY BEYOND ITS

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REASONABLE EXPECTED EFFECT. IF THE AREA IS FLOODED ABOUT 40 OR MORE FARMS WILL BE PARTIALLY OR COMPLETELY DESTROYED. THOSE FARMS PRODUCE A PRETTY HEALTHY TAX BASE AT THE PRESENT TIME AND THAT BASE WILL BE BADLY DISTURBED IF THE FARMS GO OUT OF PRODUCTION AND THE LANDS ARE TAXED ON THE BASIS OF THE UTILITY TAX. IN ADDITION THE TOTAL INCOME FROM THE FARMS WILL BE LOST TO THE TOWNSHIPS. YOU CAN'T LOSE THE INCOME FROM 40 FARMS WITHOUT A TREMENDOUS EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY OF THE REST OF THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA. IN EFFECT, THEY WILL HAVE TO MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE IN THE ECONOMY OR REDUCE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING. I KNOW OF NO WAY OF MAKING UP THE DIFFERENCE THAT 40 FARMS WOULD MAKE. FROM INFORMATION GIVEN ME BY FARMERS OF THE AREA IT APPEARS THAT THE TAXES PRODUCED BY THE FARMS, AT LEAST IN ONE TOWNSHIP, WOULD BE GREATER THAN THE UTILITY TAX RETURN IF IT IS FLOODED, IN ADDITION TO THE LOSS OF INCOME FROM CLOSE TO 20 FARMS IN THAT TOWNSHIP. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE AVERAGE INCOME OF FARMS IN THAT AREA IS, BUT RESIDENTS OF THE AREA CAN ARRIVE AT A USABLE FIGURE BY MULTIPLYING THEIR OWN INCOME BY THE NUMBER OF FARMS IN THEIR TOWNSHIP. THOSE REVENUES WILL BE LOST TO THE TOWNSHIP IF THE AREA IS FLOODED.

4. HOW MUCH UTILITY TAX CAN THE TOWNSHIPS EXPECT? THERE ARE NO READY FIGURES TO USE TO ARRIVE AT THIS FIGURE. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH THE ANSWERS ARE ONLY AN INDICATION OF AN APPROXIMATE SPLIT, GOING BACK TO THE TESTIMONY OF MR. THIELE, ENGINEER ON THE RESERVOIR PROJECT, WE CAN GIVE SOME FIGURES. WE KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT ACCURATE, BUT ONLY BECAUSE THE FIGURES GIVEN IN THE TESTIMONY IS NOT COMPLETE, SO THEY ARE ONLY USED AS AN INDICATION OF APPROXIMATE DIVISION OF TAX REVENUES AND ARE NOT TO BE USED AS ACTUAL FIGURES.

MR. THIELE STATED THAT THE EXPECTED UTILITY TAX WOULD BE \$70,000 BASED ON A COST OF PROPERTY FIGURE OF \$2,820,000. THIS FIGURE IS APPARENTLY ARRIVED AT, ACCORDING TO MR. THIELE'S TESTIMONY, BY TAKING THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT, WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE ABOUT \$5,905,000, AND SUBTRACTING THE COST OF THE HIGHWAY ELEVATIONS AND CLEARING OF LANDS. BY ADDING UP HIS FIGURES ON THE COST OF DIKES, DAM, BRIDGES, PUMPHOUSES, GATES, PIERS, PUMPS AND MOTORS, BREAKERS, ENGINEERING AND CANAL CONTROL WE GET A FIGURE OF \$2,320,200. ALTHOUGH HE DIDN'T SAY THAT THE COST OF PURCHASING LANDS AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS WOULD BE THE DIFFERENCE, WE ARE ASSUMING THIS, BECAUSE WE HAVE NO OTHER COURSE AT PRESENT FROM HIS FIGURES AND WE GET AN ANSWER OF \$499,800. AS MR. THIELE TESTIFIED THAT THE TAX RATE FOR THE UTILITY TAX IS 2.4 MILLS THAT GIVES THE TOWNSHIPS AWAY FROM THE DAM SITE A TOTAL TAX OF AROUND \$11,995, THIS TO BE DIVIDED BETWEEN AT LEAST 4 TOWNSHIPS, AS THE DAM SITE AND DIKES WILL BE PRINCIPALLY IN TWO TOWNSHIPS OUT OF THE TOTAL OF 6. THOSE TOWNSHIPS WITH THE DAM AND DIKE INSTALLATIONS WOULD PROBABLY RECEIVE SOME WHERE IN THE VICINITY OF \$55,000 DIVIDED ACCORDING TO COST IN THE TOWNSHIPS. WE WANT TO WARN AGAIN THAT THESE FIGURES ARE NOT NECESSARILY ACCURATE BECAUSE OF INCOMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF MR. THIELE'S FIGURES AND ARE NOT TO BE QUOTED AS THE ACTUAL FIGURES THAT CAN BE EXPECTED, BUT ONLY THE APPROXIMATE BREAKDOWN OF TAX DIVISIONS.

5. WHAT WILL BE THE PROBABLE COURSE IF THE TOWNSHIPS DO NOT SIGN THE ROAD AGREEMENTS? ACTUALLY THE TOWNS ONLY HOLD OVER THE WISCONSIN VALLEY IMPROVEMENT COMPANY IS THEIR RIGHT OF EMINENT DOMAIN BECAUSE OF THE ROADS. ONCE THAT RIGHT IS SIGNED AWAY THEY HAVE NO OTHER RIGHTS EXCEPT TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMISSION AS INDIVIDUALS WITH OTHER CITIZENS OF WISCONSIN. IF THE AGREEMENTS ARE NOT SIGNED THE ONLY RECOURSE THAT WVIO HAS IS TO TAKE THE MATTER BACK TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION FOR DETERMINATION. HOWEVER, IT WILL THEN BE THEIR DUTY TO PROVE TO THE COMMISSION THAT FLOODING WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE PUBLIC RIGHTS IN THESE ROADS, A VERY HARD THING TO DO.

IN ANY EVENT, IF THE CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT'S AND COMMISSION'S ACTION IN ADVISING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TRY TO PURCHASE THE AREA IS ANY INDICATION, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE HEARING WILL BE RESUMED ANYWAY TO HEAR TESTIMONY WHICH WAS GATHERED RELATIVE TO THE WILDLIFE VALUES OF THE AREA BY DR. IRA GABRIELSON OF THE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE. NEITHER LANDOWNERS OR TOWN OFFICERS NEED FEAR

FURTHER HEARINGS BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION AS THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION IS ACTUALLY ACTING IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PUBLIC. IT IS THEIR JOB TO DETERMINE PUBLIC VALUES INVOLVED AND TO SEE THAT THEY ARE DEFENDED AND NOT DESTROYED WITHOUT PROPER COMPENSATION. IT IS THEIR JOB TO DENY PETITIONS SUCH AS THAT OF THE WVIC IF THE CASE MADE FOR THE PROJECT IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO INDICATE THAT IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE.

THERE IS NO COMPELSION ON THE PART OF THE TOWN OFFICERS TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE WVIC REPRESENTATIVES. IT IS A MATTER OF THE TOWN BOARDS WISHES. IF THEY AGREE THAT THE FLOODING IS THE BEST COURSE THEN THEY SHOULD MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT WITH WVIC. IF THEY BELIEVE THAT IT IS NOT THE BEST COURSE THEY SHOULD MAINTAIN THEIR RIGHT OF EMINENT DOMAIN BY REFUSING TO SIGN ROAD AGREEMENTS SO THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER THE SITUATION.

WE HOPE THAT THESE ATTEMPTS AT ANSWERING SOME OF THE QUESTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN RAISED ACCOMPLISHES ITS PURPOSE. IF THE EXPLANATIONS GIVEN HERE ARE SUBJECT TO QUESTION BECAUSE THEY ARE OUR PERSONAL OPINIONS WE URGE THAT THESE SAME QUESTIONS BE ASKED OF QUALIFIED PERSONS SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW THE CORRECT ANSWERS. CERTAINLY THE WVIC SHOULD BE ABLE TO FURNISH FIGURES ON THE EXPECTED RETURN TO THE TOWNSHIPS IN TAXES, BROKEN DOWN BY TOWNSHIPS, IF THEY ARE NOT ASHAMED OF THE SMALL AMOUNT THAT SOME TOWNS WILL RECEIVE. CERTAINLY THE CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN THEIR COURSE IF PURCHASE BY THEM IS ACCOMPLISHED SO THAT THERE NEED BE NO SPECULATION OR WILD RUMORS ON WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED.

WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE PARAMOUNT INTEREST OF THE LANDOWNERS IS THEIR OWN IMMEDIATE WELFARE AND THAT OF THEIR NEIGHBORS IN THIS CASE, WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRECARIOUS POSITION OF THE DUCK POPULATIONS AND THE WETLAND LOSSES IN OUR STATE. THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, THROUGH MR. ERNEST SWIFT, HAS POINTED OUT THAT UNLESS SOMETHING IS DONE IMMEDIATELY TO SAVE SOME OF THESE WETLANDS THE FUTURE OF THE DUCK FLIGHTS IS VERY PRECARIOUS. IN THE APRIL "FIELD AND STREAM" HAROLD TITUS, FORMER MICHIGAN CONSERVATIONIST, POINTS OUT IN "TOMORROW IS TOO LATE" THAT UNLESS WE PRESERVE OUR WETLANDS NOW WE WILL NOT ONLY LOSE OUR DUCK FLIGHTS BUT WILL HAVE A HARD TIME PROVIDING WATER FOR SURROUNDING LANDS WITHIN A VERY SHORT TIME. THESE VALUES ARE ALSO IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF SUCH AREAS AS THE LITTLE EAU PLEINE. RESERVOIRS DO NOT MAKE GOOD STORAGE BASINS FOR THE LAND, ONLY TO PUT WATER BACK INTO THE RIVERS.

AS WE QUOTED IN OUR OTHER ARTICLE ON THE LITTLE EAU PLEINE, "GOD BLESS AMERICA, - BUT LETS SAVE SOME OF IT!"

LES WOERPEL, EX. SEC.
VFCC.