

Thornapple River Special Assessment District No. 1

History and Facts

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past president and SAD workgroup member

Identified Needs Summary

- **Safety improvements**
- **Aquatic weed management**
- **Silt and sediment management**

Safety Improvements

- **Debris removal**
 - Spring rains flush large volume of objects downstream, including huge trees and debris
 - Vessels have struck submerged objects, thrown passengers into water, sustained serious injuries
 - Local fire departments have made multiple kayak/tuber rescues related to debris
- **Channel markers**
 - Proper placement helps to prevent accidents

Safety Improvements

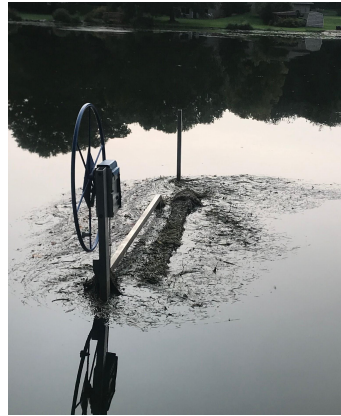


Aquatic Weed Management

- **Invasive species**

- Growth has exploded in last decade
- Muck has increased from decomposing weeds
- Engines damaged from clogged intakes
- Navigation is restricted in some areas
- Swimming areas overtaken by weeds
- Cut weeds float downstream and cause issues

Aquatic Weed Management



Silt and Sediment Management

- **Depths**

- Deepest spot in 1994 = 28 feet
- Deepest spot in 2019 = 20 feet (same location)

- **Bayous**

- Numerous bayous have nearly filled in

- **Creeks**

- Capture of silt and sediment at creek outflows would improve situation in the river

Public Act 188 of 1954

- PA 188 contains provisions to make public improvements
- *Sections 41.721 through 41.738 are applicable*
 - **41.722 Sec. 2 (1) (l)** The eradication or control of aquatic weeds and plants
 - **41.722 Sec. 2 (1) (n)** The construction, improvement, and maintenance of a lake, pond, river, stream, lagoon, or other body of water or of an improvement to the body of water.
 - **41.723 Sec. 3**
 - **Identifies important aspects of the petition and overall approval process, including the required thresholds to move forward**

Petition Language

We, the undersigned, representing the record owners of more than (51%) percent of the total parcels abutting the Thornapple River hereby petition the Cascade Township Board to create a special assessment district for the purpose of river management, aquatic vegetation control and related services to improve the Thornapple River.

The proposed special assessment district is legally described as follows: Each owner of land abutting Thornapple River will be assessed for one (1) unit per parcel. The special assessment is for an estimated amount of \$300 per year, per assessment unit share for an initial period of 15 Years. Budgets for subsequent years shall be determined during the last year of the assessment and will be subject to public hearing. We the petitioners understand that the improvement shall be conducted in accordance with the plans for the same to be prepared, reviewed, and approved by the township board, and the costs thereof, including expenses connected with engineering, planning, and legal costs will be assessed against each parcel of land within said proposed district.

Timeline

- **2014**
 - Association consults legal counsel on SAD process
- **March 2015**
 - Association votes to start SAD process
- **May 2015**
 - Township approves SAD petition language
- **2016 - 2019**
 - Detailed signature gathering effort
- **October 2019**
 - Validated SAD petition signatures submitted

Communications since 2015

- **In-Person Meetings**
 - 6 meetings open to all lot owners
 - Township presented at 2020 virtual meeting
- **Direct mail**
 - 6 newsletters sent to all lot owners
- **Email**
 - 12+ messages sent to lot owners on file
- **Association website and Facebook page**
 - Numerous posts to both resources