

## **Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority (GLUA) Sewer Update Spring 2024**

### **Increasing Need for the Sewer**

- Now, forever chemicals along with unhealthy levels of nutrients and pathogens from human waste are being detected, which has caused the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to add rainbow smelt from Higgins Lake to its fish consumption warnings (see <https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse/about/news/2023/01/12/michigan-releases-new-fish-consumption-guidelines-for-rainbow-smelt-and-carp-caught-in-various-lakes>).
- Excessive levels of nutrients from septic systems are increasing noxious weed/algae growth (biomass) in the Lake, which MDNR Fisheries Management reports threatens the survival of deep, cold-water fish due to oxygen depletion. The MDNR has expressed support for the proposed sewer system because of the adverse impact of septic systems on the lake environment.
- Documented high nitrate contamination in the drinking wells continues to increase, which has serious health risks (see <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/waterquality/nitrate.html>).

### **Pre-Construction Steps Accomplished**

- A potential site for the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) was identified early 2021.
- Results of a Geotechnical Investigation and Preliminary Wetland and Threatened & Endangered Species Habitat evaluation confirmed the appropriateness of the site for the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP).
- GLUA has begun extensive Hydrogeological Investigation of the site needed to submit an application to The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) for the necessary groundwater discharge permit. Once the permit is secured, GLUA will purchase the property from MDNR.
- In March 2024, GLUA passed a resolution authorizing a LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) Aerial Survey of the proposed sewer service area to provide information engineers need to generate detailed plans.

### **Project Financing Steps Accomplished**

- Lyon and Gerrish Townships followed the procedure outlined in Michigan P.A. 188 to establish a special assessment district (SAD) to help fund the project.
- The SAD was finalized in Summer 2023 after all requirements of P.A. 188 were satisfied, including obtaining petitions in favor of the SAD of more than 50% in Lyon Township.
- Next steps will be the allocation of costs via the creation of a Special Assessment Roll.
- In the meantime, GLUA is actively working to secure other sources of public and private funding to reduce the cost of the project for individual property owners.
- A group of volunteers and consultants with years of professional experience securing grants and funding has been formed. Several grant applications have already been filed.

### **Broad Support for the Project**

In addition to property owners, the project is supported by the Central Michigan District Health Department, MDNR, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, and the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association. GLUA has also established successful relationships with state and federal agencies and officials.

It has been over five years since the project was first discussed. Projects like this often take years in the planning stages to ensure best practices with regard to system plans, construction techniques, and affordability. We anticipate construction to occur over a four-to-five-year period starting in 2026.

We appreciate everyone's support in this much needed centralized sewer system. It's the right thing to do. It's about our health, safety, and welfare of our community. It's about our future. It's also very exciting to know our citizens support this improvement and it's ok to discuss this great possibility with friends and neighbors.

For more information, visit our new website at [www.glua.org](http://www.glua.org). or by using the QR code.



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Respectfully, Gerrish-Lyon Utility Authority, GLUA.  
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