

### How can I be certain that funds will be used as intended?

The ballot wording restricts the use of the funds to the “purpose of funding lake and river improvements including, without limitation, dredging, fish restocking, and other work or improvements to restore and otherwise improve Lake Isabella and the Chippewa River, together with all work, services, equipment and related costs necessary or incidental to these improvements.” The funds may not legally be used for any purpose outside of the limited scope detailed above if approved by the voters. “Without limitation” means that the specific list of lake improvements is not exclusive. If you take it out it could be read that dredging and fish stocking are the only two things that could be done, but all funding is limited to lake and river improvements.

### How can I be certain the Village is using the funds approved by the voters?

As a local unit of government, the Village is required to be audited each year. The annual audit report is presented to the Village Council in a public meeting. Additionally, all public disclosures of previous audits and adopted budgets can be accessed on the Village website. The ballot language restricts the use of these funds to lake and river restoration projects ONLY.

### I haven't been following along with the project. How do I get caught up to speed?

The Village's website is your best resource. On the [2023 Election](#) page, you can find all of the materials and newsletters that have been prepared in our effort to inform the community. On the [Meeting Minutes](#) page, you can find copies of the minutes from the joint Lake Restoration Committee as well as recordings of several of those meetings.

[https://lakeisabellami.org/your\\_government/2023\\_election/](https://lakeisabellami.org/your_government/2023_election/)  
For more information, please visit:

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## August 8th Special Election FAQ Information

### When is the election?

August 8th. Polls are open from 7 AM until 8 PM.

### How do I cast my vote?

You can vote in person on the day of the election or beforehand by absentee ballot. To request an absentee ballot, please get in touch with Sherman Township Clerk Denise Livermore.

### What are voters being asked to consider?

The Village of Lake Isabella and the Lake Isabella Property Owners Association are asking residents to consider a dedicated millage for lake and river bottom restoration projects.

### What does lake bottom restoration mean?

The focus of work on this project will be restoring targeted areas around the community back to the original lake and river bottom. The Lake Restoration Committee has identified several targeted areas around the community, totalling over 180,000 cubic yards of material that are the focus of the lake and river bottom restoration efforts.

### How long has the Village Council and LIPOA board been working on this?

The Village and LIPOA began partnering in planning for lake restoration work in the summer of 2021. This work led to the Village including lake restoration alongside the proposal for recreational improvements on last fall's ballot.

After the election, both organizations examined the feedback received after the election and determined that there is an interest in the community for the two organizations to continue to partner and pursue a project that is dedicated to only lake and river restoration. Working together, the two organizations formed a community with additional community members to shape this proposal.

### Does this millage involve a dog park, walking trail, swimming pool, or anything other recreational projects?

No. Unlike the proposal last fall, this proposal is dedicated and limited to only lake and river restoration efforts.

### Who is making the decisions on the project?

Earlier this year, the Village and LIPOA agreed to create a joint Lake Restoration Committee. This Committee has three members of the Village Council, three members of the LIPOA Board of Directors, and three community members at-large. This Committee has been delegated with project oversight and planning authority.

### Why do you need 3 mills to dredge the lake?

The amount of work necessary on the lake and river surpass the current financial abilities of both the Village and LIPOA. The Lake Restoration Committee determined that 3 Mills is the minimum amount necessary to make the project worth pursuing due to the degree of restoration work necessary.

### Why does the lake need to be dredged?

Sediment and siltation are major issues. The most recent large-scale dredging activity occurred in the late 1990s before the Village was incorporated. The overall impact on water quality from continued sediment inflows from upstream and invasive aquatic species, such as Eurasian milfoil and zebra mussels, has reached a tipping point where additional lake management measures are both desired and needed.

### How deep are you going to dig?

In the target areas, the plan is to restore these areas to the original lake bottom. In some areas, this may be only a few inches. In other areas, more than a foot may be needed to reach the original lake bottom.

**Why is this not taken care of with my LIPOA dues and taxes I already pay?**

The Village has a tax cap of 1 mill in its charter, which prevents the Village from raising funds through taxes without a vote of the people. Likewise, the membership dues and lake maintenance fees paid to the Association cover the ongoing expenses for maintaining the parks and lake spray. Without additional dedicated revenue for lake and restoration efforts, neither organization has the resources available through its current revenue to undertake a project of this size.

**What types of community feedback and engagement were considered in this process?**

This proposal builds off of the work done last year around the community improvement bond proposal. Feedback from that effort has played a significant role in shaping this proposal. To begin with, this proposal is limited to just the lake and river; no other recreational projects would be funded if approved. One of the most common things we heard after last fall's election was encouragement from people who shared they didn't vote for the proposal but would vote for a proposal limited to lake and river restoration.

An additional area of engagement has been the composition of the joint Lake Restoration Committee. In addition to members from the Village Council and LIPOA Board of Directors, three community members at-large are serving on this Committee. The Committee has held several meetings this spring which were well-attended and live-streamed for those who could not attend in person. Feedback at those meetings gave the committee sound input from community members on priorities and concerns that needed to be addressed.

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After the election, both organizations examined the feedback received after the election and determined that there is an interest in the community for the two organizations to continue to partner and pursue a project that is dedicated to lake and river restoration. Through the work of the joint Lake Restoration Com-

mittee earlier this year, the conceptual lake restoration plan created in 2021 has been refined and expanded to include specific areas and quantities.

**What is the estimated tax increase for my house?**

Residents are being asked to consider a dedicated millage of up to 3 mills for up to 12 years. 1 Mill of property taxes is equal to \$1 for every \$1,000 of taxable value on your property. For example, if your property has a taxable value of \$75,000, your annual tax increase would be a maximum of \$225.

**Are there any government grants available?**

Unfortunately, no, the limited grant funding through the State of Michigan Waterways Program is limited to harbors and public boating access sites managed by local units of government. The boating access sites on Lake Isabella are privately owned by the LIPOA and are not eligible for funding through this program.

**The management of the lake has always been under the care of the LIPOA. Why is the Village getting involved in these areas now?**

When it comes to the lake, the Village and LIPOA are partnering specifically on the lake and river bottom restoration project due to the Village's ability to raise funds through a millage proposal. The scope of work needed to address multiple areas of the lake and river requires funding only achievable through voters.

**Are you going to fix the boat launches?**

Ensuring that all three launches are functional is a priority.

**Will this make our lake public?**

According to the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, Lake Isabella is considered public water, but it has no public access points. Only members of LIPOA may use the boat launch sites. The public can only access the lake by canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding or boating upriver. Approving the millage will not change the restrictive nature of the LIPOA parks. Only members of LIPOA may use the parks.

**How have the target areas been identified?**

In late 2021, the Village partnered with LIPOA to develop the Chippewa River & Lake Isabella Restoration Proposal. This plan was the product of several months of discussion between the two organizations focused on the need to address the lake's long-term health, which is our community's biggest asset. The selection of targeted areas balances both the environmental impact on the lake and river as well as the overall enjoyment of the lake and river.

**Where can I find a map of the target areas?**

Maps of the target areas can be viewed at both the Village and LIPOA office. In addition to visiting the office to view the map, the 2023 Election page on the Village's website has a copy of the same map on display at both offices.

**Is this something that will need to be done every year?**

In reality, restoration work will be necessary every year for the foreseeable future. This is due to several factors, foremost is trying to do work during draw-down to minimize any impact on the lake during the summer. Once the major restoration work has been completed through this project, additional maintenance work will be necessary on an on-going basis to maintain the lake and river once restored.

**How long will the project take?**

Based on the scope of the project, restoration efforts could take up to twelve years. The wording of the proposal allows the millage to be reduced or retired early if work is completed before the twelve-year period or costs do not reach that threshold.

**Can the work be done in the winter during the drawdown?**

Yes! The vast majority of the work planned is for during the winter drawdown. By lowering the level of the lake, the restoration efforts can be largely done with conventional earth-moving equipment rather than more expensive hydraulic dredging equipment.

**How will this affect water clarity during the summer?**

It is anticipated that over time water clarity will show gradual improvement. As much sediment is removed from the lake bottom, this should reduce the amount of material that can float freely into the lake. Howev-

er, the Chippewa River is a largely surface-fed river. Inflows from upstream creeks and agricultural operations will bring sediment and organic material into the lake with each spring melt and large rain event.

**Will any portion of the lake be shut down during the summer?**

Only one target area is currently being considered for hydraulic dredging. That area is the river channel near Riviera Park. This area of the river is largely unusable in its current state, and any work done there during the summer should have a minimal impact on the current use of the area.

**Why aren't you dredging in front of my house?**

Crafting a project of this size and scope requires balancing available funding and the most pressing areas of need. The Lake Restoration Committee has focused on several areas representing the community's greatest needs.

**Will there be an odor around the lake when the dredging takes place?**

There is the potential for areas around the target areas to experience an odor during drawdown when work is occurring. This odor is the same as these areas experienced during the current draw-down due to muck. Muck is the popular and scientific term for materials found on the bottom of areas that have held water for some time. The odor is due to the disturbance and decomposition of organic materials.

**Will this help or hurt marine life habitat?**

Restoring the lake bottom to its original depths in numerous areas around the lake and river is believed to have a positive impact on marine life habitat. Doing the bulk of work during the winter drawdown will minimize the negative impact on fish and aquatic life as the bottomlands will be exposed rather than submersed during the restoration work. The ballot wording includes the ability to use funds for fish restocking if necessary to ensure the long-term health of the lake's fisheries.

**Polls are open from 7AM until 8PM on Tuesday, August 8th at the Sherman Township Hall**