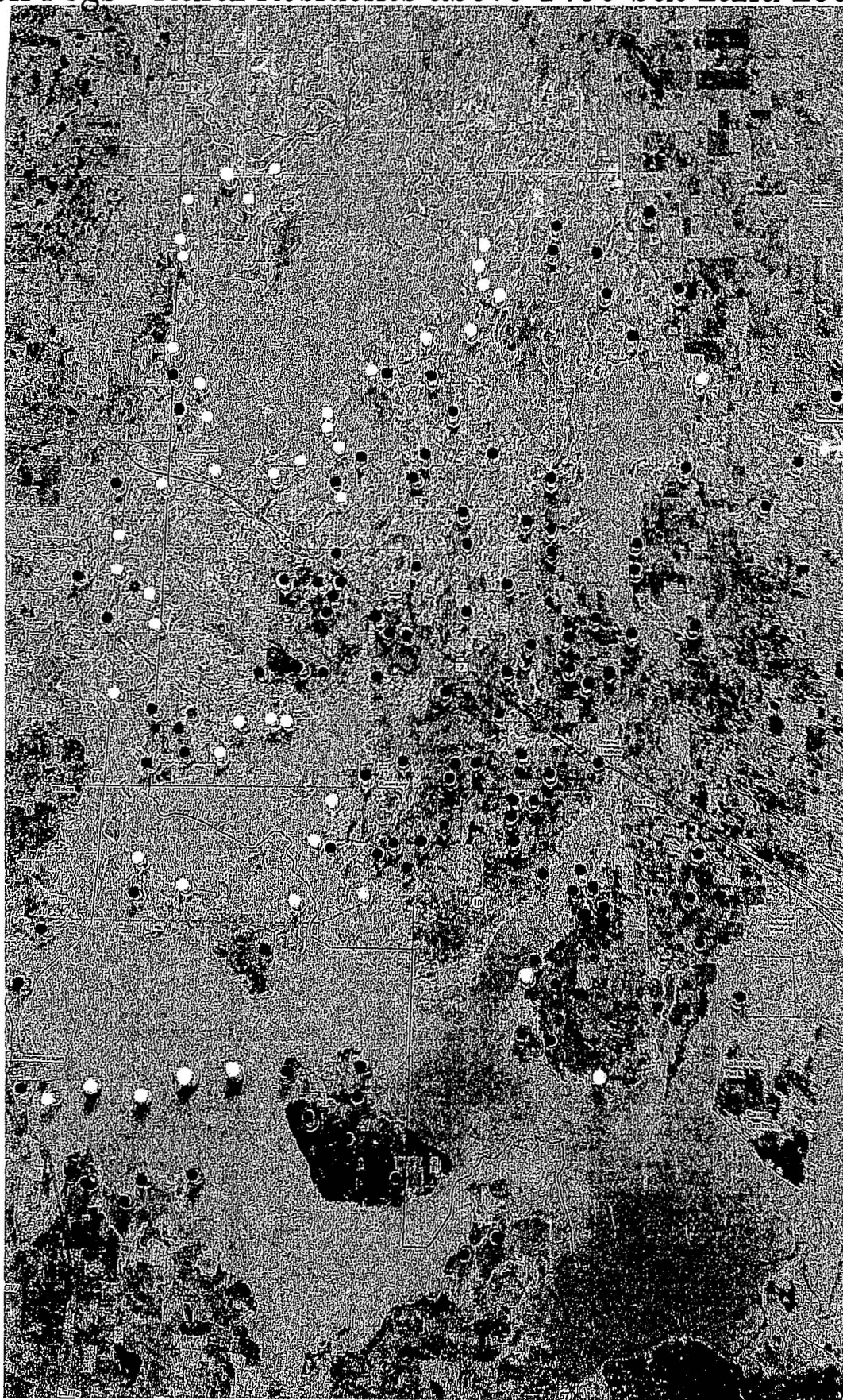


Devils Lake Basin West Side at Elevation of 1456
Black Pegs - Rural Residents above 1460 but Land Locked



White Pegs - Rural Residents who have already lost the water battle
Blue Pegs - Country Cemeteries Under Water or Land Locked

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is Joe Belford, and I am a Commissioner from Ramsey County and have worked at the Devils Lake Coordinator of the state's Downstream Awareness Program for 15 years. I have been deeply involved with Devils Lake flooding issues since the current flooding cycle began in 1993. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of the Water Commission's budget, and their work, which are vital for the survival of my county and my region in North Dakota.

As you are no doubt aware, the Devils Lake flood is the longest duration and one of the most expensive floods in the history of North Dakota, having started in 1993, and continuing through today, with infrastructure spending rapidly approaching a billion dollars.

In 1992, we in the basin were seriously concerned about drought. Quickly, we became aware of the problems that long-term flooding presented. The lake has now risen by nearly 30 feet, and is projected to far outstrip the record elevation in 2011. We're told there is even a 1% chance that the lake will rise high enough to spill into the Sheyenne River this year.

As the lake has risen, it has covered over 150,000 acres of pasture and cropland; not only devastating the landowners who made their living from the land, but placing a huge financial burden on the city and county governments that depended on their property taxes and purchases of goods to allow them to provide the services expected of them.

Beyond a purely economic impact, the effect on so many good people, who have worked hard their entire lives to improve their land and holdings, only to see them swallowed up by the seemingly unstoppable advance of the lake cannot be overstated. The stress that these folks are under is hard to imagine, and I am not exaggerating when I say that some have suffered an early grave from facing such impossible problems.

Even if a person's land is not flooded, road after road has either been flooded or battered by relentless waves. While the efforts of state and federal entities have succeeded in elevating the highest traffic roads again and again; there are perhaps hundreds of miles of rural roads that could not be raised, turning trips that used to take 10 minutes, into one or two hour journeys over treacherous paths. Some people drive their children to school every day, because they fear that the buses might slide off of the road.

As you can imagine, the stress of living under such difficult conditions with no sign of relief for so many years, has taken its toll. Unfortunately, many people have found this stress too much, and have given up home and land, and left our region, and sometimes our state, likely never to return.

And while people in the basin have had to learn to live with the reality and hardships of the situation, those living downstream are only now becoming aware of the implications of this flood, and the potential damages an increasingly likely catastrophic overflow presents to their homes and livelihood.

Despite the grim picture I have just painted, our situation would have been far, far worse, if it were not for the efforts of the Water Commission, and many other agencies. Since the beginning of this catastrophe, the Devils Lake region has relied heavily on the Commission's help and guidance. Whether it is their work on the outlets, the levee that protects Devils Lake, watershed planning efforts, or any of the countless other ways that they provide us with assistance, the Commission has often been all that lies between despair and hope.

Because of the efforts of the Commission, I strongly urge you to continue your support of their activities and provide funding commensurate with the challenges that we all face.

Thank you.

Agricultural Economic Impact of Devils Lake Area Flooding in 2011

This analysis quantifies the extent of lost agricultural production in the Devils Lake Basin due to rising water levels in Devils Lake and Stump Lake and the surrounding area. Non-agricultural losses or additional expenditures are not included in this analysis. The potential production that will not be produced in 2011 represents lost income to area producers as well as the region's economy. The total impact of this loss to the region is further increased in the form of indirect losses as this money is not available to be spent in other economic sectors of the economy.

Production data for the most recent five-year period, as reported by North Dakota Agricultural Statistics Service, were used in this analysis. Lost income due to increased water levels in the Devils Lake basin was assumed to be the value of the crop production that could have been produced on this acreage if it had been available to plant in 2011. Therefore, this acreage will not contribute to the economic activity in the region in 2011.

Acreage and yield data for 14 major crops grown in Benson and Ramsey counties for the years 2005 through 2009 were summarized. Average yields for the region are shown in Table 1. These yields were weighted based on the production from each county. The average percentage of acreage devoted to each crop is shown in Table 2. This crop mix is based on the sum of all acres produced over this 5-year period.

Table 1. Weighted Average Yields for Benson and Ramsey Counties, 2005-2009.

Crop	Average Yield/Acre
Barley	59.4
Corn Grain	97.9
Alfalfa Hay	1.9
Other Hay	1.7
Winter Wheat	49.2
Durum	35.4
Spring Wheat	38.2
Canola	1408.5
Flaxseed	18.2
Soybeans	27.7
Oil Sunflowers	1403.9
Conf Sunflowers	1234.5
Edible Beans	14.1
Dry Edible Peas	18.0

Table 2. Major Crops Grown in Benson and Ramsey Counties, 2005-2009.

Crop	Percent of Total Acre
Barley	13.0%
Corn Grain	9.5%
Alfalfa Hay	2.1%
Other Hay	3.5%
Winter Wheat	3.3%
Durum	1.0%
Spring Wheat	28.1%
Canola	6.9%
Flaxseed	1.7%
Soybeans	17.2%
Oil Sunflowers	2.5%
Conf Sunflowers	1.8%
Edible Beans	8.5%
Dry Edible Peas	1.0%

The current estimate of inundated area is 163,450 acres for 2011. This acreage data is from The Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resources Board's website. The 163,450 acres represents the acreage inundated as the lake level has risen from 1422.9 feet in 1993 to a forecasted level of 1455.0 feet above sea level in 2011. Potential lost production per year is summarized in Table 3. This table includes the average acreage of each crop, the estimated market price, and the total value for each crop. The estimated value of production that could have been produced on this acreage for 2011 is \$52,757,993. This is an estimate of the direct loss that will incur in 2011.

Table 3. Potential Lost Production per Year in the Devils Lake Basin with 163,450 Acres of Cropland Inundated.

Crop	Average Yield	Average Acreage	Estimated Price	Value Per Year
Barley	59.4	21,321	4.50	5,696,335
Corn Grain	97.9	15,487	5.00	7,584,470
Alfalfa Hay	1.9	3,427	65.00	425,201
Other Hay	1.7	5,786	45.00	431,803
Winter Wheat	49.2	5,449	7.50	2,009,731
Durum	35.4	1,622	8.50	487,364
Spring Wheat	38.2	45,917	8.50	14,914,236
Canola	1408.5	11,235	0.220	3,481,445
Flaxseed	18.2	2,760	13.00	653,204
Soybeans	27.7	28,053	12.00	9,319,860
Oil Sunflowers	1403.9	4,041	0.240	1,361,571
Conf				
Sunflowers	1234.5	2,954	0.330	1,203,384
Edible Beans	14.1	13,823	25.00	4,877,513
Dry Edible Peas	18.0	1,575	11.00	311,875
Market Value of Lost Production				\$52,757,993

Total Economic Loss

The market value of the potential production that will not be produced represents the direct loss to the region's economy. Additional losses accrue in the form of indirect loss throughout the economy. The indirect impact is the economic activity created by the spending and re-spending of the direct impacts.

Total impact on business activity in the region from both direct and indirect losses is estimated at \$194,419,000. The major losses are \$57.6 million to the crop sector, \$50.9 million to the households sector (personal income), and \$42.9 million to the retail trade sector. The remainder of the \$194.4 million loss is distributed among several other sectors of the economy.

This loss of business activity ultimately is reflected in lost jobs in the region. Employment loss is estimated at 1,150 jobs for the region.

These estimates were prepared by Dwight Aakre and Randal Coon, Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics, and Bill Hodous Ramsey County Extension Agent, North Dakota State University. February 2011.