

## **Forest Service Evaluation of a Potential Fish Passage Project at the Round Lake Dam**

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest is in the very early stages of developing a conceptual design for a potential fish passage project at the Round Lake Dam. While we recognize there is a need to provide fish passage and downstream minimum flows in the South Fork of the Flambeau River at the Round Lake Dam, at the present time we are not sure exactly what that may look like or how it may work. We are in the process of gathering data and developing a proposed action. Once a proposed action is developed, members of the Pike Lake Chain Association as well as any other member of the public will have the opportunity to comment. The Forest will then use those comments to modify the proposed action or develop other alternatives to accomplish our objectives.

### **Water level**

The steel sheet pile weir just upstream of the historic logging dam controls the water level in the Pike Lake Chain. This weir was designed by the Forest to not be adjustable and not allow changes in water level of the Chain. The lake water level elevation (top of the sheet pile weir) was approved by the WDNR April 5<sup>th</sup> 1971. Under this approval there is no requirement for a minimum outflow from the Pike Lake Chain to the South Fork Flambeau River.

The Forest Service is presently gathering water level and flow data to aid in the design of a fish passage system. The fish passage would most likely involve modification of the sheet pile weir and or construction of a new structure to control water level in the Pike Lake Chain. It is important to note that any new structure that is constructed would need to be permitted by the WDNR and also meet current State dam requirements including minimum downstream flows. Release of the minimum flow to the South Fork Flambeau River will provide large benefits to aquatic species in the River and thus aquatic species in the Pike Lake Chain due to fish passage. The fish passage and or minimum flow structures would most likely be static and not adjustable. Releasing minimum flows may have impacts to the water level in the Chain mainly during times of drought. It is important to consider how lower or higher water levels may affect your use of the Chain and or the South Fork Flambeau River and comment on that when the Forest Service develops the initial proposal.