

Fallon County Lake Enhancements Survey Results

Fallon County recently conducted an informal survey to gather input on possible enhancements to Baker Lake which could put the finishing touches on the clean up and dredging project. The results of the survey, along with public comment received during public meetings, cost considerations, and other public input received will drive the decisions on what is ultimately implemented.

The fully tabulated survey results are available at falloncounty.net on the home page.

To “rank” the projects, a hybrid weighted average has been used which seems to give the most sensible overall results based upon the tabulations. Below is a quick summary of the projects, how they ranked, and as appropriate, factors that are being considered as the Commission moves forward. Some of the proposed improvements require federal permitting and would be contingent upon that as well.

1. **New Beach Improvement at Iron Horse Park** which is estimated to cost \$30,000 and involves construction of a new beach area and installation of new sand in the small bay at Iron Horse. Factors in the final decision include availability and cost of appropriate quality sand as well as sustainability/maintenance of the beach given the prevailing winds.
2. **Existing Beach Improvement at Triangle Park** which is estimated to cost \$60,000 and involves installation of new sand throughout the existing beach area and other minor improvements. Availability and cost of appropriate quality sand is a factor in the final decision.
3. **Concrete Boat Ramp at Triangle Park** estimated at \$52,000 includes extension to new bottom depths and widening by 15 feet as well as removal of the old boat ramp. The ramp must be extended to the new depth to function properly.
4. **Lake Aeration** which is estimated loosely in a range from \$50,000 to \$250,000 depending on the type of aeration installed. This proposed improvement is most likely to be the most debated for the following reasons. The benefits include mitigation of algae and other surface growth during the summer months which not only means a cleaner lake, but also fewer insects and less odor. In addition, if installed for year around use the aeration should ensure fish survival through winter alleviating the need for restocking. The down side and it is a down side that will weigh heavily on the decision is that if aeration is utilized during winter months areas of “soft” ice will, in all likelihood, be present. The risk of “soft” ice is obviously breakthrough and loss of property or loss of life, which is unacceptable.
- 5-8. The **Fishing Docks** all ranked in this group and included the Iron Horse North Dock which ranked slightly ahead of the Permanent Iron Horse North Dock, the 2nd Iron Horse Park Dock with a secondary question about what type of dock (results 58% fishing/42%boat), and the South Fishing Dock. Factors to be considered include whether to do a permanent or removable dock on the North side of Iron Horse given the close vote and other factors, installing a boat dock vs a fishing dock by the new beach area given the popularity of the idea of the new beach, and the final decision on the type of docks to utilize.
9. The **Fish Cleaning Station** which included a fish grinder and other amenities at an estimated cost of \$60,000.

10 & 11. The **Granite Rock and Sandstone Rock** for fish habitat ranked at the bottom of the survey. The factors in determining the use of the rock will include cost and availability, permitting, and final decisions on fishing dock locations.

The Commission will continue to evaluate these proposed projects as well as entertain new ideas. An additional public meeting will be scheduled during the summer to gather additional input. Thank you to all who have given input.

