

April 2023 Public Works Report

Roads

- April began with the crew doing as much pre-emptive snow removal and ditch clearing as possible, including Cty. H. Throughout 4/5-4/7, a storm system of wind and ice caused multiple trees to come down, a morning power outage for parts of the south end, and boat cancellations.
- On 4/10 the big melt began, and it was not gradual. While the warm sunny days felt very nice, (I believe it was nearly 70 degrees on the afternoon of 4/12) the effects of uncontrollable snowmelt were felt on the island roads. 4/11 resulted in multiple slush clogged culverts and ditches, which led to water over roadways causing washouts. 4/12 resulted in two culvert washouts leading to full road closures, one on North Shore Road and one on Schoolhouse Road.
- On 4/14 the crew replaced two culverts – one preemptively which had begun to wash away on North Shore Road, and the complete washout on Schoolhouse Road, so that no properties on the north end would be cut off.
- 4/16 - 4/17 brought a large, wet, blizzard, which made snow removal on the already messed up roads even messier. The rainy days afterwards postponed the culvert replacement which was planned on North Shore - south of the Benjamin Blvd. intersection. This double culvert was replaced on 4/24 with two 18" plastic smooth bore pipes.
- Before the final weekend of April, which was forecasted with significant rain, the crew obtained hauling permits from Ashland Cty. Hwy and patched the worst gravel road washouts, along with band-aiding future culvert replacements with filter cloth and gravel patching.

Parks

- The 2023 Parks crew will begin the week of May 15th and they will be very busy, as we do what we can do to get the downtown ready for the Marathon weekend and impending summer season.
- I hope to open public bathrooms and Big Bay Town Park's shower building as soon as possible, but the cold nights are delaying those plans.

Misc./Admin.

- Welcome Michael Haben to the MRF – Michael will be driving Woodstock, the 2004 International hook lift truck, as well as helping the road crew out with many tasks. Michael brings a career of experience in driving and operating, along with all aspects of Public Works, and we're happy to have him on the crew.
- Through this month's weather events and sustained road damage, I think it's important to note that many people in the neighboring WI counties (and the U.P.) suffered far more damage which will take much longer to repair or recover from. Mud and potholes are annoying, but fixable as soon as the weather allows, and no resident of the island was ever stranded on a dead-end road.

Happy Spring!

Respectfully submitted, Ben Schram, Public Works Director