

# Gavins

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Becker stated. The “void” was three to four feet deep, but its width could not be determined. That’s where the ground-penetrating radar will assist with figuring out the scope of the problem, Becker said. A repair plan will likely be designed within a month and carried out this summer, he stated. “I don’t think it will require future shutdowns of the spillway,” Becker said, adding that it has probably been approximately 30 years since the dam flows have been reduced to zero. “I think they’ll be able to build cofferdams to de-water whatever area they are working on. We still have cofferdams in the shop from when work like this was done years ago.” A cofferdam is a temporary water-tight enclosure that can be pumped dry to expose the bottom of a body of water.

**SEEING WHAT THE RIVER REVEALS**

Curious onlookers created a steady flow of traffic at the spillway throughout the day. When the *Press & Dakotan* was there, the crowd did not rival those that assembled during last year’s flood. What gave it away? “You couldn’t find a place to park last year,” said Joe Koski, who traveled from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to witness Wednesday’s rare event. He travels to Lewis and Clark Lake several times each summer. “I just wanted to see what the dam looked like when the water dropped down,” Koski said. “It’s interesting to see people walking where there is usually water.” March Filips also wanted to see what it looked like and how

much trash had been removed from below the dam. “The water isn’t low enough yet to see how much trash is out of the bottom,” he noted. Further downstream in Riverside Acres, people also assembled to see what secrets the low water would reveal. “It’s pretty interesting to see what’s down at the bottom of the river and what the flood left,” said Julie Kirchner of Yankton. “I’ve never seen it this low before.” Brian Odens of Yankton is a Mount Marty College student majoring in recreation management and was a seasonal park worker last year. “It’s pretty cool seeing it at the extremes, from last year to this,” he said. Aaron Olson of Yankton lives a short distance from the dam and could appreciate the change a year makes. “Last year, we could feel the rumbling (of the dam) from our place,” he said. “Seeing it now like this, it doesn’t seem possible.”

**A SANDY SITUATION**

The low water levels also offered an opportunity for entities besides the Corps to do some work. The City of Yankton hired a diving company to clear the three feet of sand that has covered its surface water intake pipe on the Missouri River near the Discovery Bridge. The sand has severely cut the intake’s production capacity. The problem developed in March and is being blamed on the realignment of the river channel that has occurred since the 2011 flood. Kyle Goodman, director of Environmental Services, said Wednesday’s low flows unveiled the huge sandbar that now stretches along the north side of

the river from the bend below Sacred Heart Monastery to downstream from the Discovery Bridge. The divers were able to blow the sand off the top of the intake and clear a circle of about six feet around it, he said. In the

past, divers had a difficult time competing with the strong current of the river. However, it is unclear how long Wednesday’s work will last, Goodman said. A survey is still being done to determine if the sandbar will be a

long-term problem or whether it will eventually be pushed downstream. In the meantime, Goodman said work has been completed that will allow temporary pumps to be attached to the intake. They will be able to add ca-

capacity if needed during the summer peak water usage season. Kelly Hertz contributed to this story. You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at [twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage](#)

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