

DNR PLANS TO CHANGE THE REST LAKE DAM OPERATING ORDER - LEARN HOW IT COULD AFFECT YOU AND MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

On September 14, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources released an Environmental Assessment (EA) in which *the DNR announced specific plans to make major changes to the operating order for the Rest Lake Dam*. The following explains how the dam is currently operated and how the DNR's new approach would affect lake levels at the dam and in the Manitowish Chain:

• *Current Operations:* (1) Summer water levels are kept between an 8'4" minimum and 8'6" maximum. (2) The winter drawdown lowers the water level to 5'0" by November 1. (3) The spring refill begins after 75% of the ice is gone, usually around April 20. (4) Year round, the dam is controlled to reach and maintain summer water levels as much as possible.

• *Under the DNR's Proposal:* (1) Summer water levels would fluctuate between a 7'0" minimum and 8'6" maximum. (2) The winter drawdown would be eliminated and/or significantly reduced, so that winter levels would never go below 7'6". (3) Year round, the dam would be controlled to maintain increased flows as much as possible, and flows would not be restricted unless and until levels in the Chain drop to 7'0".

You can find a detailed discussion of all options being considered by the DNR at pages 51-75 of the EA, which has been published online at <http://dnr.wi.tzov/water/basin/upvvis/restlakedam/>.

Any citizen interested in commenting on the DNR's proposal must submit their comments to the DNR by no later than 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 31, 2012. Comments can be emailed to jonathan.simonsen@wisconsin.gov, or mailed to Jon Simonsen, Environmental Review Coordinator, 107 Sutlilt Ave., Rhinelander, WI 54501.

The Manitowish Chain Defense Fund (MCDF) believes the existing order has worked well for more than 70 years and that no changes are necessary. *The MCDF strongly opposes any changes that would result in lower summer water levels and/or ice damage to existing shoreline structures such as piers, boat lifts, boathouses, seawalls, and riprap.* Because the MCDF believes the DNR's proposal would result in both, the MCDF has hired experts to scrutinize the DNR's proposal.

The DNR has not changed the Rest Lake Dam operating order for more than 70 years. *Whatever the DNR decides today could affect your property for decades to come. Because this issue is so important, the MCDF urges you to take a few minutes to complete and return the enclosed letter to tell us how the DNR's proposal will affect you.* How will lower summer water levels affect your ability to enjoy the lakes? How much water do you need to get your boat in the lake and navigate the Chain? At what water level does access and navigation become a problem? In the winter, will higher water levels damage your pier, boat lift, boathouse, riprap, or seawall? What will those damages cost? Will you be able to protect your shoreline structures from ice damage? If so, what will it cost you to protect your property? With all the changes being made, how will your property value be affected? Please complete the questionnaire and tell us.

The MCDF will be sharing your letter with the DNR before the end of the comment period. Because this issue is so important, the MCDF strongly urges you to send a copy of your letter to the DNR and your elected officials, so that they will know how this proposal will affect you. We have printed the contact information below. Do not make the mistake of sitting on the sidelines as this major decision is being made. Instead, take 15 minutes to complete the enclosed letter and make your voice heard!

*Sincerely,
Manitowish Chain Defense Fund Board*

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Office of Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702
Govgeneral@wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Attn: Ms. Cathy Stepp
101 S. Webster Street
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921
DNRSecretary@Wisconsin.gov

Senator Jim Holperin
Room 126 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882
Sen.Holperin@legis.wisconsin.gov

Representative Dan Meyer
Room 320 East
State Capitol
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708
Rep.Meyer@legis.Wisconsin.gov

United States Senator Ron Johnson
386 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

United States Senator Herb Kohl
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

United States Representative Reid Ribble
1513 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle and/or fill in all applicable blanks below. Please be sure your answers are truthful, clear, complete, and legible. PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO **Brennan Steil, S.C., 1 E. Milwaukee St., Janesville, Wisconsin, 53545**. Please also feel free to distribute copies of your completed questionnaire to your elected representative(s) and whomever else you see fit. Thank you!

TO: John Simonson, Wisconsin DNR c/o Manitowish Chain Defense Fund

RE: Comment on Wisconsin DNR's proposed change to operating order for the Rest Lake Dam

FROM: Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

I (own/lease) property on ("Rest/Stone/Fawn/Clear/Spider/Island/Manitowish/Little Star/Wild Rice/Alder) Lake of the Manitowish Chain at the mailing address of _____

I have (owned/leased) this property for _____ years. My property has lake frontage totaling _____ feet.

Piers: Over the time I have owned my property, I have invested at least \$_____ on installing and/or maintaining pier(s) on my property. My pier(s) (is/are) _____ feet long. When water in the Chain reaches the normal summer water level of 8'6" on the Rest Lake Dam gauge, the deep end of my pier(s) reaches water that is _____ feet deep. In order for me to safely dock a boat at the pier(s) and access the Manitowish Chain from my property, the water level of the Manitowish Chain needs to be at least _____ feet at the Rest Lake Dam gauge. When the water level falls below that, I have the following problems navigating on the Manitowish Chain (**describe any and all problems you may experience**): _____

Boat lifts and boathouses: Over the time I have owned my property, I have invested at least \$_____ on installing and maintaining boat lift(s) and boathouses on my property.

Shoreline protection structures (check boxes and fill in applicable blanks): Over the time I have owned my property, I have invested at least \$_____ on installing and/or maintaining the following shoreline protection structures on my property:

_____ feet of seawall which is constructed out of _____.

_____ feet of rock riprap.

Other: _____

Investments in structures and potential ice damage: Presently, I take the following action(s) to protect my (piers/boat lift(s)/boathouse(s)/shoreline protection structures) from ice damage in the winter (**please describe all steps you take, why you take those steps, and what the steps cost each year; or, if you take no action, please state that and explain why you take no action**): _____

Commentary on DNR's proposed changes to the Rest Lake Dam Operating order. I understand the DNR is proposing to modify the operating order for the Rest Lake Dam such that (1) summer water levels would fluctuate between a 7'0" minimum and 8'6" maximum, (2) the traditional winter drawdown would be eliminated and/or significantly reduced, so that winter levels would never go below 7'6" in the winter, and (3) summer flows over the dam would not be restricted unless and until levels in the Chain drop to 7'0". With regard to that proposal, I offer the following comments to the DNR (**check each applicable box and provide any explanation for your answer**):

_____ Overall, I (**support/oppose**) the DNR's proposed changes to the Rest Lake Dam operating order because: _____

_____ If the summer water level on the Chain is allowed to fall below the 8'4" to 8'6" range that historically has predominated on the Chain, I will experience the following problems and costs (**describe any problems you will have with navigability and your enjoyment of the Chain; if your problems will be worse at lower water levels, please indicate the types of problems you will have at each water level**): _____

_____ If the winter water level is kept at _____ or higher, I will be forced to take the following actions in order to protect my structures from potential ice damage (**please fill in the blank to identify the water level at which you will have problems with ice damage, describe the problems you would have with ice damage, describe the steps you would take to try to prevent ice damage, state the estimated cost of taking those steps, and state whether you believe those steps would be successful**): _____

_____ I offer the following additional comments for the DNR to consider: _____

Signed: _____
Print Name: _____
Date: _____