

WISCONSIN DNR EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AND CLARIFIES PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BEFORE CHANGES TO REST LAKE DAM OPERATING ORDER ARE MADE

Dear Friend,

On September 14, the Wisconsin DNR released an Environmental Assessment (EA) announcing that the DNR is considering major changes to the operating order for the Rest Lake Dam. A complete copy of the EA can be found online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/water/basin/upwis/restlakedam/>.

The Manitowish Chain Defense Fund (MCDF) believes the existing order has worked well for over 70 years. **We strongly oppose any changes to the order 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.** We believe the DNR's favored approach would lead exactly to those results.

When the DNR released the EA, the DNR invited the public to comment on the EA by no later than October 31, but the DNR did not indicate whether it would be holding public hearings with regard to its ultimate decision. Since the EA was released, the MCDF has taken action on four important fronts:

- **First**, we have spent a significant amount of money to hire experts who are now working to scrutinize the EA and the USGS report upon which the EA is based, identify any flaws in the EA, and survey 100% of the piers and other shoreline structures that could be affected by the DNR's order. This commitment has depleted our treasury, but it is critical that this work be done. We will submit our experts' conclusions to the DNR when their work is finished.
- **Second**, we have circulated over 600 questionnaires to get public comment on the DNR's proposals. We have received over 150 responses so far, with 99% of the responses being opposed to any changes to the operating order. We will be submitting all responses to the DNR before the deadline for public comment expires.
- **Third, because it is critical for the public to be given a fair opportunity to review and comment on the EA, we have negotiated an agreement with the DNR to extend the deadline for public comment from October 31 to December 31, 2012. We have also secured confirmation that the DNR will conduct public informational meetings and hearings on its proposals in 2013, when all seasonal residents are present, and before it makes any final changes to the operating order.**
- **Finally**, we have created a website at www.manitowishchaindefense.org to keep the public fully informed about all developments in this process.

If the DNR changes the operating order, those changes could affect our community for all generations to come. The DNR has vast resources at its disposal, and the DNR may be intent on changing the order no matter what. Under those circumstances, it is critical that you stay informed and involved! Make sure you study the EA and find out how the DNR's proposals would affect you. Make sure you give comments on the EA to the DNR on time. Make sure you sign up for email alerts at the DNR's website (see address above) so that you will receive notices of any public meetings or hearings that are scheduled in the future. Make sure you provide your email address to ManitowishDefenseFund@gmail.com so that the MCDF can get updates to you in the future. Most importantly, make sure you do not allow the DNR to make decisions affecting you and your community without your input!

The MCDF was formed to ensure that individuals would be able to pool the funds needed to hire experts and lawyers to challenge any DNR proposals that are not in the community's interests. Our sole mission is to strengthen the voice of the people. For years, we have monitored the DNR's activities. Now that the DNR has initiated the review process, however, we are spending five-figure amounts on experts who are working on your behalf, and we know there will be more expenses to come. **In order for the MCDF to continue working for you and the entire community, we need your financial support today. If everyone donates \$1 or more per foot of lake frontage owned, our treasury will be replenished.** By providing financial support to the MCDF in this process, you will strengthen your own voice and the voice of the entire community.

Sincerely, Manitowish Chain Defense Fund Board