

Update on the Rest Lake WEPA Analysis

July 14, 2008

What is the intent of the WEPA analysis?

The Department of Natural Resources believes that the current operating order of the dam needs to be modified to protect the public water resources upstream and downstream of the dam. We also need to ensure safety through protection of life, health, and property when examining operations of a dam. The decision on a new operating order cannot be made until an appropriate environmental analysis is completed under the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA). These rules are in place to make sure that the Department considers a range of alternatives, objectively describes the anticipated environmental impacts, and provides an opportunity for public input on the analysis before making any permit decisions.

What kind of information is being collected for the analysis?

Department staff have reviewed all the information that has been collected as well as the public comments that have been received. There are certain issues that have been identified through this internal review process that we believe need more information and data for the WEPA analysis. One area that was identified, for example, was to get a better understanding of wetland hydrology and function to determine if certain wetlands are affected by current or alternative dam operations both on the chain of lakes and on the Manitowish River.

When will the analysis be ready for public review?

Because of the number of seasonal residents in the Manitowish area, we have committed to releasing the WEPA analysis for public comment during the summer months. Since some of the issues that we are currently investigating will not be complete until after August, we have decided not to release the environmental document for public review and comment this year.

Public comments are still welcome.

We still encourage people to send their comments and observations on the chain or river. Comments should be sent to:

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