



## State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Jim Doyle, Governor  
Scott Hassett, Secretary  
John Gozdziwski, Regional Director

Northern Region Headquarters  
810 W. Maple Street  
Spooner, Wisconsin 54801  
Telephone 715-635-2101  
FAX 715-635-4105  
TTY Access via relay - 711

June 1, 2007

«AddressBlock»

Subject: Environment Analysis – Rest Lake Dam in Manitowish Waters

«GreetingLine»

Secretary Scott Hassett has asked that I update all of the citizens and stakeholder groups who have inquired about the Manitowish Chain of Lakes and the Rest Lake Dam. The Secretary and Todd Ambs, Water Division Administrator, are keenly interested in the project and will be following the progress toward resolving the concerns that citizens have raised.

On November 27, 2006, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) held a meeting with stakeholder groups in an attempt to reach a compromise between competing interests related to operation of the Rest Lake Dam in Manitowish Waters. A proposal was drafted based on input received from several stakeholders and sent out for review. During the negotiation process, we heard from many of you about the social, economic, and environmental impacts of changing the operation of the dam. We also heard diverging view points from both up-stream and down-stream user groups about how the dam should be operated. At that time, we were not able to reach a compromise that all the stakeholders could agree to. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our next steps in the process.

The DNR intends to pursue issuing a new order to Excel Energy for operation of levels and flows at the Rest Lake Dam. This action requires the DNR to follow the environmental analysis process outlined under the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA). The WEPA process will begin this summer and requires the DNR to gather relevant environmental information, evaluate a range of feasible alternatives, and identify anticipated impacts on the human environment. An important part of this procedure is to gather public input on issues that will need to be considered in the environmental document. We recognize the controversial nature of this issue and will make sure that ample time is allowed for public comment and review during the summer months. I will notify you of the date and time of our initial public input meeting. The information collected at this meeting will help guide the issues that will need to be analyzed.

Once we have gathered public input on the issues, staff will begin drafting the WEPA document over the course of the winter months. This document will likely be available for public review early in the summer of 2008. The DNR will not make a decision or issue a revised operating order until the entire environmental analysis process is complete. Enclosed for your reference is our guide on the role of WEPA in our decision-making to help you prepare to participate in this process.

If you have questions about the WEPA process, you may contact Jon Simonsen, Environmental Analysis and Review Specialist, at (715) 365-8916. If you have questions related to the current or past operation of the dam, you may contact Tom Bashaw, Basin Supervisor, at (715) 365-8973. I appreciate your interest in this project and will notify you when the public input meeting dates have been determined.

Sincerely



John Gozdziński  
Northern Region Director

Enclosure

cc: Secretary Hassett  
Todd Ambs, Water Division Administrator  
Michael Fitzpatrick, Attorney  
Senator Roger Breske  
Representative Dan Meyer  
Representative Joe Parisi  
Representative Scott Gunderson