

DATE: June 2, 2006,
TO: Rest Lake Dam/Manitowish River Work Group
FROM: Jim Kreitlow
SUBJECT: Minutes of May 12, 2006 meeting

Selected work group members (representing their associations), Xcel Energy, the Town of Manitowish Waters and DNR met on May 12, 2006. Jim Kreitlow called the meeting for the purpose of discussing the draft Rest Lake dam operation proposal.

Discussion centered on the following agenda:

1. Summary of Xcel operation data at Rest Lake Dam.
2. Review of Existing and Proposed operating plan.
3. Outstanding Issues or Questions.
4. Can we reach an agreement?
5. Future Implementation?

I want to thank those who participated.

Participants

1. Jim Kreitlow, WDNR, 107 Sutliff Avenue, Rhinelander, WI. 54501, Kreitj@dnr.state.wi.us 365-8947.
2. John Hansen, Town Chairman, 217 Spider Lake Road, Manitowish Waters, WI. 54545
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3. Helen Townsend, Friends of the Manitowish River, 73 River Access Road, Manitowish Waters, WI. 54545. Bhtownsend@yahoo.com 543-2166.
4. Rob Olson, Xcel Energy, 1414 West Hamilton Avenue, PO Box 8, Eau Claire, WI.
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5. Jack King, Manitowish Waters Lakes Association, PO Box 286, Manitowish Waters WI. 54545.
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6. Harland Klagos, Manitowish Waters Alliance, 40 West Bay Road, Manitowish Waters, WI. 54545.
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7. Greg Holt, Friends of the Manitowish River.
8. Judi Schmidt Arnold, Manitowish Waters Alliance, PO Box 98, Manitowish Waters WI. 54545.
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9. Mary Sinkus, Manitowish Waters Lakes Association, PO Box 458, Manitowish Waters, WI.
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10. Bill Lambrecht, Manitowish Waters Lakes Association, 284 Point O'Pines Road, Manitowish Waters, WI. Tickilamb@yahoo.com
11. Steve Gilbert, WDNR, 8770 County Highway J, Woodruff, WI. 54568 Gilbes@dnr.state.wi.us 358-0229
12. John Bates, Friends of the Manitowish River, 4245 North Highway 47, Mercer WI. 54547. 476-2828.

Summary of Rest Lake Dam Operation (1973-2005 and 1956-1961)

Jim Kreitlow prepared a spreadsheet summarizing dam operation data that was obtained from Xcel energy. This is a useful piece of information that provides trend information on the history of the existing operation, and helps us make informed decisions concerning impacts of future operational changes. This spreadsheet was shared and discussed.

Review of Existing and Proposed Operating Plan

Jim Kreitlow led a discussion covering the proposed operating plan. This proposal sent out prior to the meeting and committee members were able to review. I will summarize the discussions by the seasonal operation period.

Fall Draw down

It was proposed that fall draw down begin in mid September with a target chain elevation of 8'.0" by October 1. Drawdown would then continue with a target elevation of 5'.0" by November 15th. There was general agreement that this OK.

Winter Operation

Maintain a stable reservoir elevation (5'.0") through run of river operation (outflow is equal to inflow).

Spring Re-Fill

At spring thaw (first major run-off event), capture 12 inches (or more) of water for storage. This is likely to occur before 75% of the ice is off of Rest Lake. Existing records show that the chain is already being filled up to 5'.75" prior to refill (ice off). This will help augment flows later in the spring.

Pass 75-150 cfs between May 1 and June 8th. This could be adjusted based on water temperature. Flows greater than 150 cfs should be targeted and passed when the chain is near full, inflows are high or it is wet. If possible avoid major changes in water flow (i.e. 50- 300 cfs in one day) during the May 1-June 8th period.

Summer Operation

From July to September 15 maintain the chain at an elevation between 7'.6" and 8'.6".

Maintain a minimum flow of 50 cfs down stream. This will require that the chain be drawn down during dry conditions until the minimum summer elevation of 7'.6" is reached.

If the summer minimum chain elevation is reached, or in dry years the minimum summer elevation is not reached (through refill), a different minimum flow may be established upon an Xcel initiated consultation with DNR. This should occur prior to the minimum elevation being reached. A new minimum flow or an outflow that best approximates inflow into the chain could be considered upon consultation with DNR. All hydrological and biological conditions should be taken into account during consultation (it is not an automatic decision).

User Group Concerns

John Bates was concerned that there would be no additional winter storage in the chain under the existing proposal. He felt that we should include some additional storage over winter and that we should address what he felt was a pier issue only. John thought that there should be some give and take on both sides and that winter storage would help augment flows in the spring and may reduce the time needed to fill the chain in the spring. The fear of ice damage to shoreline structures is the main objection to a reduced winter drawdown. A trade off discussed at the October 2005 meeting was continuing to allow a full

winter drawdown in exchange for allowing a longer period of time for the chain to fill in the spring. This option is what is included in the draft operating proposal.

There was quite a bit of discussion concerning the summer minimum chain elevation of 7'.6". At the present time the chain elevation is maintained between 8'.4" - 8'.6" in the summer. To maintain this elevation, flows downstream are reduced below the 50 cfs minimum flow. What we are proposing is a 1 foot operating range (7'.6" - 8'.6") between July 1 and September 15. To maintain a 50 cfs minimum flow, the chain would be drawn down to maintain downstream minimum flows. If the 7.6 minimum is reached a different minimum flow would be established upon consultation between Xcel and DNR. John Bates felt that a minimum flow of 50 cfs should be passed at all times. Before the committee could agree to this, they wanted some more information of the potential impacts. I will review the operating records and come up with some information on frequency and impact and report this to the committee.

Future direction

I feel that this was a good meeting and that we are closer at reaching an agreement. I was asked to go back and tweak the proposed operating plan to include changes discussed at this meeting. I was also asked to include information (logic/odds/frequency) of the impacts of the proposed operating changes based on previous operation records. This would help sell the proposal to the local folks if they knew the frequency and impacts of the proposed changes.

After a final draft proposal is developed, John Hansen indicated he would be willing to hold a town meeting. This would need more planning, but would be a way to inform folks and get feedback.

If changes can be implemented in the future, most committee members felt that a 5 year period should pass before we evaluate.

Please let me know if I missed anything.