

DATE: Friday, Sept. 14, 2012

CONTACT: Jon Simonsen, DNR environmental review coordinator, (715) 365-8916

SUBJECT: Rest Lake Dam Environmental Assessment Available for Public Review, Comment

Manitowish Waters, WI – The Department of Natural Resources is proposing to issue a new operating order to Xcel Energy for operation of the Rest Lake Dam located on County Trunk Highway “W” in the Town of Manitowish Waters, Vilas County. This dam controls water levels on a chain of ten natural lakes and river channels known as the Manitowish Chain of Lakes. Downstream, the Manitowish River flows for about 15 miles where it enters the Flambeau River.

The purpose of this new order would be to specify certain water levels on the Chain and river flows downstream. Changes in levels and flows are needed to better balance and protect natural resource as well as public use interests in the system.

Before a decision can be made on the new operating order, an Environmental Assessment (EA) must be completed. The purpose of the EA is to provide a factual disclosure of alternatives considered and anticipated environmental impacts. The EA does not provide any permitting decisions or approvals on the project. However, this analysis will be used to guide the Department’s decision on a new operating order.

The Department has prepared a draft EA and made a preliminary decision that an environmental impact statement will not be required. Copies of the draft EA can be obtained from Jon Simonsen, DNR Environmental Review Coordinator, DNR Service Center, 107 Sutliff Avenue, Rhineland, WI 54501, 715/365-8916, or by e-mail at: jonathan.simonsen@wisconsin.gov. A copy of the EA can also be viewed on-line at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/water/basin/upwis/restlakedam>.

Comments on the draft EA are welcome and should be focused on issues related to the clarity, accuracy, and level of detail of information presented in the analysis. Comments should be received by Mr. Simonsen no later than 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 31, 2012. Comments may be submitted verbally, electronically, or in hard copy written form.