



Lake Tomah drawdown and restoration to begin September 8

News Release Published: August 5, 2009 by the [West Central Region](#)

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TOMAH – The state Department of Natural Resources is urging Lake Tomah residents to prepare for lower water levels. The long-planned drawdown of the urban impoundment is scheduled to begin Tuesday, Sept. 8.

Boats moored near docks may become stranded as water levels drop. Lake residents are being asked to remove their boats from the lake before it begins to recede.

The drawdown begins the process of restoring aquatic vegetation and healthy game fish populations to what is now a carp-infested lake nearly devoid of native plant life.

After drawdown, a chemical treatment (rotenone) will eliminate any remaining fish. Lowering the lake level by several feet will reduce water volume and concentrate the remaining fish to increase the effectiveness of the treatment. This past February, the DNR removed size and bag limits on game fish so fishermen could harvest as many fish as possible before the treatment.

The drawdown will take about three weeks. Treatment is scheduled to begin Monday, Oct. 5, and continue through that Friday, depending on weather. During treatment no one will be allowed to use the lake for any purpose. Pets should not be allowed to drink from the lake during treatment.

After treatment, Lake Tomah will be refilled to a level 3 feet below normal where it will be held over winter and into the spring. This will consolidate exposed sediments, allow vegetation to take root and facilitate habitat improvement projects.

DNR fisheries staff will begin stocking game fish this fall and continue stocking in the spring, restoring populations of northern pike, largemouth bass, bluegill and black crappie. New size and bag limits will allow these game fish to re-establish sustainable populations.

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