



City officials envision new life for carp-infested Lake Tomah

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Contact(s): Jordan Weeks, DNR fisheries biologist, La Crosse, (608) 785-9002

TOMAH – Officials are embarking on an ambitious, two-year project to restore one of Tomah's most treasured assets – the 251-acre lake that defines the city's west side.

Lake Tomah is in bad shape. Its turbid waters are beset with excessive algae blooms each summer. There is little in the way of aquatic vegetation. The fishery is dominated by carp, an invasive, bottom-rooting species that is a major contributor to these poor habitat conditions.

In 2008 city officials completed a lake management plan, working in cooperation with the state Department of Natural Resources and the Monroe County Land Conservation Department.

The city intends to partially draw down water levels from September through August 2010 and to treat the lake with rotenone in October to eradicate the carp. During the drawdown, the city plans to dredge a previously excavated sediment trap and to use riprap to armor eroding islands and shoreline.

In mid to late February, under the plan, the DNR will temporarily remove all fish size and bag limits on Lake Tomah, allowing anglers an increased opportunity to harvest fish that will otherwise be destroyed during the chemical treatment. In spring 2010 the lake will be restocked. New size and bag limits will allow various species of game fish to re-establish sustainable populations.

The proposed project is not anticipated to result in significant adverse environmental effects. The DNR has made a preliminary determination that an environmental impact statement will not be required. Copies of the environmental assessment that led to the preliminary determination can be viewed at city hall or obtained from the DNR contact person listed below.

Public comments are welcome and should be received by the DNR no later than 4:30 p.m. Feb. 9. Comments can be directed to senior fisheries biologist Jordan Weeks at 3550 Mormon Coulee Road, La Crosse, WI 54601, by phone at (608) 785-9002 or e-mail at

Jordan.Weeks@wisconsin.gov.

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