

Letter from the Chairperson

I would like to share the information that was sent to those whom made inquiries to Representative Ballweg's office on the lake Level.

Hello,

I wanted to thank you for reaching out to our office regarding the change in water level on Buffalo Lake. I sent an inquiry to the DNR regarding the procedure for changing the water level, and this is what they said:

"Parties interested in petitioning the Department of Natural Resources for a modification of water levels on Buffalo Lake can start that process by submitting a letter to the Department. The letter should include specifics as to what is desired in the way of water level or flow to enable the Department to properly evaluate the request. Eventually, the petitioners would need to submit an application and \$500 review fee, but the Department would review the initial request to ensure the agency would move forward with formal review of a petition before requiring an application and fee. The aforementioned letter should be sent to:

*Jeff Schure – DNR Water Management Specialist
3911 Fish Hatchery Rd
Fitchburg, WI 53711-5367
Jeff.Schure@Wisconsin.gov*

Items that would potentially be evaluated in a submittal may include, but not limited to, include the following:

- Flowage easements*
- Navigation and its incidents*
- Scenic beauty*
- Fish spawning ground and habitat*
- Wildlife habitat*
- Wetland areas*
- Pollution sources*
- Ice and water erosion potential*
- Flooding potential and easement requirements*
- Flow requirements to maintain water quality*
- Off-shore slopes*
- Dam structural and hydraulic adequacy if levels are raised*
- Agricultural or irrigation diversions and other downstream beneficial users of water*
- Wild rice and other aquatic vegetation*
- Economics*

As part of the petition evaluation, relevant items from the above list may be evaluated by Department resource experts and factored into the review of water elevations and flows. Further, the Department would publicly notice and may hold a public informational

meeting on any proposed changes to the Montello Dam's operating order prior to issuing a decision.

Petitioners should be aware that once a water level order is opened for potential modification, the Department must balance all of the interests related to lake levels. Further, as we have discussed, the process is typically lengthy. DNR would anticipate in this circumstance that an effort to change the operating order and water levels on Buffalo Lake will be contentious given the variety of interests".

We will continue to keep you updated as we receive information. Thanks to Representative Ballweg and her staff for following through with everyone's concerns.

Joe Dion