

This is a general review of the virtual meeting held on June 1, 2021 between the Department of Natural Resources, Senator Ballweg, Representative Dallman, and the Lake District.

1) Gates at Montello Dam

1)a- Contracting with a local entity: Discussions were if the district would start taking reading and making adjusts, or another entity. The district stated that we did investigate the possibility, the district board voted not to pursue the idea due to liability. The question was asked of the county, and the county has not had any discussions regarding this and that it would have to start in committee and move forward through the process to the county board. One item associated to this concept was payment. This could be an issue because the current funding for this task is not able to be transferred to a contracted labor situation. There are many items that would have to be worked through to move this concept along.

1)b- Revisit the level order interpretation. The DNR reported that the current lake order is in good standing. This is the order that must be followed. There were several reports by DNR representatives that the dam was reconstructed to the correct specifications and in line with the order of 1976. Additionally, there was a report given that there were no hydraulic effects from the highway "D" causeway reconstruction. This was the same with respect to lake development.

1)c- Temporary stay. The DNR stated with the given situation, a temporary stay would probably not be considered because of the standing order. They also stated that any studies or information gathering could be done under existing conditions.

1)d- The increase to 8.8 inches each May 20th or possible date change either earlier or later. This would have to be done with a petition submitted to the DNR. This is the proper way that an existing water level order could be reopened, reevaluated, and action be taken. This district has submitted a petition to the DNR requesting that the water level adjustment date be changed to April 1st of each year and that the summer level be allowed to go to a maximum of 8.8 inches verse the current maximum of 8.5 inches. For information the current water level change in the fall is October 1st. The question was asked about time frame to complete the process. The answer is based on how much information has to be collected, analyzed, and circulated prior to the formal hearing. Of recent petitions to the DNR, the shortest was slightly over a year and the longest be approximately 7 years. We believe that it will be greater than 1 year.

1)e- Measurement devices upstream. The DNR reported that there were two level measurement gauges upstream. The first is on a column of the HWY "D" bridge in Packwaukee and the second is on a column of the HWY "O" bridge in the Town of Buffalo.

2) Fishery

The status of the fishery since the draw down. The DNR reported that a fish study was performed in 2015 but the results were not immediately available at the meeting.

Winter fish kill. The DNR stated that they had not received any reports of a winter kill on Buffalo Lake. They did state that there is some winter kill typical as not all fish may migrate to deeper water and the depth of Buffalo Lake.

Conclusion: It is our opinion, based on all the information presented throughout the meeting that the correct way to move forward is the petition which the district has filed and to work alongside the DNR to move the process forward.

I would like to express the district's thanks for all the DNR departments and individuals represented at the meeting. In addition, thank you to Senator Ballweg and her staff for making the meeting possible and for taking the time to listen to all the information. We would also thank Representative Dallman for his participation.