

News for Immediate Release

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Dam Control Tower Replacement to Require Lake Jean Drawdown at Ricketts Glen State Park

Harrisburg – A gradual, complete drawdown of the 245-acre lake at Ricketts Glen State Park in Northeastern Pennsylvania will be required to permit replacement of a deteriorating dam control tower, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources officials announced today.

“We realize the drawdown may inconvenience some anglers and boaters, but the integrity of the dam and safety of our park visitors is paramount,” said Bureau of State Parks Director David Kemmerer. “The dam control tower must be replaced and that construction work requires excavation of a portion of the dam embankment. Maintaining even a limited pool could compromise the dam during heavy rain, thus the need for complete drawdown.”

This project is part of **Enhance Penn’s Woods** -- a two-year, more than \$200 million initiative launched by Governor Tom Corbett to repair and improve Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests.

Built in 1950, the 26-foot-high dam is reliant on a concrete control tower that discharges through its base while regulating the pool level of Lake Jean, a focal point of the 13,050-acre state park spreading into four counties. Beset by leakage and deterioration, the entire tower system must be replaced.

“The hope is to start this project in spring 2015, with drawdown beginning after ice-out on the lake,” Kemmerer said. “Though dependent on review and bidding processes, construction should last about one year.”

The project is estimated to cost about \$800,000 allocated from the Growing Greener bond fund.

The bureau director stressed construction only would affect certain recreation opportunities involving the lake. The park campground, cabins and trails all will remain open.

Efforts to harvest or salvage fish populations, along with management of the lake’s fishery before, during and after project, will be coordinated with the Pa. Fish and Boat Commission.

“We have chosen to temporarily lift the regulations in order to reduce the number of fish in the lake in anticipation of a fish salvage prior to a complete drawdown of the lake,” said Dave Miko, chief of the commission’s Division of Fisheries Management. “We want anglers to fish the water and make good use of as many fish as they can.”

The temporary regulations take effect immediately and will remain in place until further notice by the Fish and Boat Commission. The commission expects to conduct a fish salvage at the lake in late fall.

Postings and flyers are notifying park anglers of these changes, which will remain in effect until the lake is fully drained. Meanwhile, the Bureau of State Parks and Fish and Boat Commission are addressing how to best salvage and transport remaining fish.

Beset by low pH levels traced to acid deposition and infertile underlying geology, the lake has received biannual lime applications in joint efforts by the bureau and commission to improve its water quality and fish community. The drawdown will facilitate bureau study of other possible future lakebed improvements.

Stocked each year with trout by the commission, Lake Jean also contains a variety of warm-water species according to a commission survey in late May and early June, 2007. Electro-fishing and trap net samples showed populations of brook and brown trout, along with largemouth bass, crappies, bluegills, pickerel, sunfish and other species.

With acreage in Luzerne, Sullivan, Wyoming and Columbia counties, Ricketts Glen parklands envelop Glens Natural Area, a National Natural Landmark recognized for wild, free-flowing waterfalls cascading through rock-strewn clefts and surrounded by old-growth timber. The Falls Trail enables park visitors to glimpse the 22 named waterfalls, the highest being the 94-foot Ganoga Falls.

For more details on Ricketts Glen and Pennsylvania's other 119 state parks, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us (Select "Find a Park").

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