



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DCNR to Withdraw Permit Application for Dam at Ryerson Station State Park in Greene County

Will Hold Community Meeting in September to Develop New Plan for Park Features

Greene County, PA – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today announced that monitoring shows continued ground movement around the dam at Ryerson Station State Park in Greene County, resulting in the department withdrawing its permit application to rebuild the structure.

“Greene County lost a significant recreational resource when the lake was drawn down, and we know many residents and community members will be disappointed that replacement of the dam is currently not possible with an unstable foundation,” Dunn said. “Today we are beginning a conversation with the local Duke Lake Task Force and the community about what features are possible at the park to restore opportunities for local residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors.”

DCNR submitted a permit application to rebuild the dam to the Department of Environmental Protection in May 2012.

Additional monitoring in the area of the dam was conducted as part of the due diligence in the permitting process. DCNR contracted for a third-party analysis of the dam project and received a report in February 2015.

To ensure maximum safety for the community, regulations require that dam sites be stable. Specifically, Pennsylvania dam safety regulations require that “The foundation of a dam or reservoir must be stable under all probable conditions.” Due to ongoing ground movement, which could last for years or even decades, the present site is unsuitable.

“An important priority continues to be ensuring the safety of residents living downstream of the dam, which is what makes it impossible based on the ground movement to build the structure at this time,” Dunn said during a news conference at the park, attended by legislators, local officials and members of the task force -- a group of local community members dedicated to the lake’s restoration.

“We do think it is possible, with community input, to create a plan for the park that will include exciting new recreational water uses and opportunities to have fun and enjoy nature,” Dunn said.

Some options may include stream restoration with fish habitat and fishing access; wetlands with boardwalk trails; natural playgrounds; and the creation of low-level whitewater boating opportunities.

“We acknowledge that the process that brings us to today has taken a long time, and want to reassure the community that although the lake as they remember it is not currently able to be restored, DCNR is committed to a new plan for the park that still gives them a chance to cool off, enjoy nature and drop a line in the water,” Dunn said.

Dunn noted officials met this morning with members of the task force, and are scheduling a session to begin to create a plan for the park in September.

Duke Lake was drawn down in July 2005 for safety reasons after inspections of the dam uncovered cracks and water seepage.

In April 2013, DCNR and CONSOL Energy, Inc., settled a lawsuit related to the impact of longwall mining in the area on the dam.

“As part of the settlement, the commonwealth does have funds available for Ryerson Station State Park to enable us to make significant improvements,” Dunn said.

The 1,164-acre Ryerson Station State Park opened in 1967.

The park has a swimming pool; rustic camping and camping cottages; environmental education programs in the summer; is open for hunting; and provides lots of winter activities.

Since the dam was breached, DCNR has made improvements to the trails, and overnight accommodations including campsite improvements and camping cottages.

For more information about Ryerson Station State Park visit the DCNR website at www.dcnr.state.pa.us and choose “Find a Park.”

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