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**January 11, 2016**

## **Fishing Regulations Being Waived in Preparation for Drawdown, Dam Replacement at Pecks Pond, Pike County**

**HARRISBURG, PA** - In a bid to best utilize the fishery resource at Pecks Pond, Pike County, fishing regulations are being waived in preparation for a gradual, complete drawdown to permit dam reconstruction at the 408-acre lake in Northeastern Pennsylvania, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn announced today.

Scheduled to begin in September 2016 immediately after the Labor Day holiday weekend, the drawdown is necessary to permit the most economical dam reconstruction methods, ensure safety of workers, and help address aquatic vegetation issues within the lake, which serves as a popular visitor attraction within Delaware State Forest.

"We realize the drawdown may inconvenience some anglers and others, but integrity of the dam work and safety of workers are paramount," said Dunn. "The dam must be rebuilt and its spillway enlarged. Maintaining even a limited pool could compromise the dam during heavy rain, thus the need for a complete drawdown."

To be undertaken and overseen by the state Department of General Services, the Pecks Pond project is expected to cost \$4.6 million.

Built in 1906 for recreational use by the then-Pa. State Forest Commission, the present 7-foot-high dam is 170 feet long and constructed of earth, concrete and stone masonry. It forms a pool of varying depths that has been a traditional ice fishing hot spot when safe ice forms.

"Unfortunately, safe ice fishing conditions have been fleeting amid our on-again, off-again winter and, as a result, the Pa. Fish and Boat Commission and DCNR held off announcing the waiving of fishing regulations at Pecks Pond," Dunn said. "Weather forecasts now point to safe, solid ice likely ahead, and we urge anglers to avail themselves of this expanded fishing opportunity."

The temporary regulations take effect immediately and will remain in place until further notice by the Fish and Boat Commission. Postings and flyers are notifying state forest anglers of these changes, which will remain in effect until the lake is fully drained.

"We have chosen to temporarily lift the regulations in order to reduce the number of fish in the lake in anticipation of a complete drawdown of the lake," said Jason Detar, chief of the commission's Division of Fisheries Management. "Unfortunately, we are unable to conduct a fish salvage at this site. The lake bottom is heavily covered in thick vegetation, which would prevent us from conducting a successful fish salvage operation. Consequently, we want anglers to fish the water and make good use of as many fish as they can before the lake is drawn down."

The drawdown is expected to last one and one-half to two years, and could result in the loss of at least one ice fishing season, possibly two. Meanwhile, a multi-faceted lake management plan will be facilitated enabling the Bureau of Forestry and the Fish and Boat Commission to concentrate on improving lake quality and re-establishing fishing potential.

“It’s important to note both the duration of the drawdown and its timing appropriately prior to freezing may serve as an additional control for the aquatic vegetation growing in Pecks Pond,” said Delaware State Forest District Forester Timothy Dugan. “The exposure of the plants and lake bottom to freezing conditions may limit the expansion of the plants when the lake is refilled.

“Also, the Bureau of Forestry and Pa. Fish and Boat Commission will work together to assess, and possibly improve upon, fish habitat structures within the lake, as well as establish plans to reestablish the fishery once the dam project is complete and the lake returns to a full state.”

The lake is fed by springs, Tarkill and Maple creeks, and unnamed tributaries, many of which host wild brook trout populations. Pecks Pond is home to largemouth bass, perch, bluegills, pickerel and other warm water species. Along its eastern shore, a glacial lake bog -- among the largest in Pennsylvania -- covers about 40 acres. Plants of note found there include carnivorous species, including pitcher plants, sundews and bladderworts. Pecks Pond also draws the petite emerald, a Pennsylvania rare damselfly.

For more information on Delaware and Pennsylvania’s other 19 state forest districts, visit [www.dcnr.pa.gov](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov) and select “Forestry.”

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