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# Gazette Editorial: Our Views: Will feedback end Lake Koshkonong dispute?

November 6, 2015

Rock Koshkonong Lake District

News and Updates, RKLD News

From Janesville Gazette – November 5, 2015

There’s no truth to the rumor that the dispute over Lake Koshkonong water levels is as old as the Indianford Dam that creates this Rock River flowage.

Arguments pit neighbor against neighbor and have been raging more than 25 years—far longer than a court case that began in 2005. They might be nearing an end, however.

We hope so.

As The Gazette reported last Sunday, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has been gathering feedback from lakefront property owners since February. The DNR received 400 comments, and 76 percent favor raising the lake by 7.2 inches in summer.

Rock-Koshkonong Lake District leaders have been pushing that increase for years. The district filed suit to persuade the DNR to see its side. The case went to the state Supreme Court in summer 2013. The court ruled that the DNR was wrong to use the state constitution’s public trust doctrine to protect private non-navigable wetlands—those above the ordinary high-water mark—that are next to navigable waters.

That July, a Rock County judge, consistent with that ruling, ordered the DNR to consider not just effects on ecology but also economic impacts of higher water.

It’s understandable that some residents argue that raising summer levels that much will increase wave-creating boat traffic and risk erosion to their property. Concern about wildlife and habitat is also reasonable, given that the 27 miles of shoreline include more than 12,000 acres of wetlands. Higher water could swamp the wetlands.



Lakeside homeowners Jim and Dana Dietmeyer point out how low Lake Koshkonong is around the pier behind their home in Fort Atkinson. The couple are among the many people along the lake who favor raising the lake’s level 7.2 inches in the summer. – See more at: Photo Credit to Anthony Wahl

## Old RKLD Blog

### Please Note:

We’re moved all RKLD news to this website, but older Chairman Blogs can be found [here](#).

## Upcoming Events

**6:00 pm** Rock Koshkonong Lake District Meeting @ Tallgrass Restoration  
<http://rkld.org/calendar-2/action-one-day-exact-date-12-10-2015/>  
 instance\_id=50

all-day Save the Date! Bark River Hatchery Dinner @ Anchor Inn  
[http://rkld.org/event/bark-river-hatchery-dinner/?instance\\_id=48](http://rkld.org/event/bark-river-hatchery-dinner/?instance_id=48)

[View Calendar](http://rkld.org/calendar-2/) → (http://rkld.org/calendar-2/)



## RKLD News

- [Gazette Editorial: Our Views: Will feedback end Lake Koshkonong dispute?](#)
- [Most comments to DNR show](#)

Koshkonong, at 10,500 acres, is Wisconsin's sixth-largest lake. It's twice as large as Geneva Lake, which lies 30 miles to the southeast in Walworth County. Crystal-clear Geneva was created during Wisconsin's last glacial period 10,000 years ago. Its average depth is 63 feet. In contrast, Koshkonong's average depth is just 7 feet. The water lacks clarity, like the river that feeds it. That risks damage to motors when boaters can't see rocks just below the surface.

A photo that ran with Sunday's story illustrated well the effects of low water. It showed Steven Lehmann's 200-foot pier with a sizable stretch of rock and grass before it even reached the water. Lehmann believes raising the water even 4 or 5 inches would negate the need for half his pier.

Many residents wonder why they pay high property taxes for land on a lake they seldom can enjoy in summer.

That concerns businesses, particularly in Neville, that cater to lake users. When residents stay away because of low water rather than risk damage to their boats, it hinders commerce.

Given that the vast majority of people taking time to comment complained about low water, the DNR must seriously consider their concerns.

The DNR should do more than just solicit the feedback and shelve it. Perhaps a compromise, raising the water 4 or 5 inches, would balance the concerns of recreational boaters, businesses and environmentalists and finally put to rest this long-running battle.

- See more at:

[http://www.gazettextra.com/20151105/our\\_views\\_will\\_feedback\\_end\\_lake\\_koshkonong\\_dispute#sthash.Mc3XDMu8.dpuf](http://www.gazettextra.com/20151105/our_views_will_feedback_end_lake_koshkonong_dispute#sthash.Mc3XDMu8.dpuf)

[support for raising water on Lake Koshkonong](#)  
[Jellystone Condominium Association Letter to DNR](#)  
[Lake to drop 8.5 inches to meet DNR Winter Drawdown mandate](#)  
[On November 1st, DNR mandates the lake level be at 775.39](#)

 **WI DNR News**

[Wisconsin continues to provide for excellent snowy owl viewing opportunities](#) November 10, 2015  
[DNR surface water grant deadlines approaching](#) November 10, 2015  
[Pocket Ranger mobile application reaches 150,000 downloads](#) November 10, 2015

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Gazette Editorial: Our Views: Will feedback end Lake Koshkonong dispute?

Most comments to DNR show support for raising water on Lake Koshkonong

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[Visitor Information](#)

**Lake Koshkonong Weather**

**Upcoming Events**

  
**6:00 pm** Rock Koshkonong Lake District Me... @ Tallgrass Restoration ([http://rkld.org/event/rock-koshkonong-lake-district-meeting-6/?instance\\_id=50](http://rkld.org/event/rock-koshkonong-lake-district-meeting-6/?instance_id=50))

Jellystone Condominium  
Association Letter to DNR



**EDGERTON**  
**59°**  
**Mostly Cloudy**  
High: 59° Low: 44°  
Wind: SSE 13 mph  
Humidity: 59%  
Visibility: 10  
Sunrise: 6:41 am  
Sunset: 4:37 pm

all-day Save the Date!  
Bark River Hatchery... @  
Anchor Inn  
([http://rkld.org/event/bark-river-hatchery-dinner/?instance\\_id=48](http://rkld.org/event/bark-river-hatchery-dinner/?instance_id=48))

Wednesday



High : **59°**  
Low: 44°

Thursday



High : **49°**  
Low: 35°

[View Calendar](http://rkld.org/calendar-2/) → (<http://rkld.org/calendar-2/>)



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