

Rock-Koshkonong Lake District

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State Supreme Court Accepts Lake District Case *Board of Commissioners Credit Rock County's Dillon Decision for Continuing Legal Challenge*

EDGERTON— Wisconsin's largest lake district and the state agency with responsibility to regulate navigatable waters are heading to the final stop on their long-standing legal dispute. The Wisconsin Supreme Court has accepted a petition filed by the Rock- Koshkonong Lake District (RKLD) to hear their appeal of operating orders mandated by the WI DNR.

"The state supreme court accepts only one of every ten cases so their granting our appeal speaks to the statewide significance of this dispute," said Brian Christianson, Lake District Chairman. "This ratifies our opinion that DNR ignored facts and misapplied their authority."

Christianson said at issue is the DNR's operating order that keeps Lake Koshkonong at an artificial low level. "Our request to amend the DNR orders will improve safety, navigation, fishing and wetland restoration on Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River," said Christianson.

Christianson says Mother Nature is to blame when the lake reaches high levels and recent flood conditions, but DNR is to blame when the lake drops to low levels. "Mother Nature has been winning lately and some have forgotten 2004 through 2007 when RKLD was prohibited from closing Dam gates at Indianford to stem the draining of the lake," said Christianson. "We simply want an amended order that stabilizes lake levels and eliminates the DNR mandated winter drawdown."

"Government can be a bully sometimes," said Christianson. "Individual property owners usually give-up fighting with the DNR because the legal fees climb too high. Our homeowners within the RKLD voted to finish what we started."

Christianson added that the RKLD's 2011 Annual Meeting of property taxpayers supported a budget for FY 2012 that included legal fees should the Supreme Court accept the case.

According to WI Department of Revenue projections, the assessed property value within the boundary of the Lake District totals more than \$500 million.

"RKLD homeowners provide Rock and Jefferson counties with a significant tax base, not to mention providing the state with gas and sales tax and other tourism revenues," said Christianson. "This is a win-win; for the ecology and recreation opportunities as well protecting our investment in our homes and the local tax base."

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