



[Subscribe](#) [Contact Us](#) [Submission Forms](#)

**Welcome to the site!**  
 Login or Signup below.

---

[Login](#) | [Signup](#)

75°  
Overcast



[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Opinion](#) [Community](#) [Classifieds](#) [Weather](#) [Multimedia](#) [Our Publications](#) [Library](#)

[Home](#) [Milton Courier](#)

# DNR hosts revised draft water level order public hearing

[Story](#) [Comments](#)

[Print](#) [Font Size:](#)

[Recommend 3](#) [Tweet](#) [G+1](#) [0](#)

[Share](#)

Posted: Wednesday, June 28, 2017 11:53 am | Updated: 12:23 pm, Wed Jun 28, 2017.

By [Kim McDarison](#) Correspondent | [0 comments](#)

Some 30 residents gathering in the Edgerton High School Performing Arts Center, 200 Elm High Drive, were given a presentation last Thursday by DNR Water Division Administrator Russ Rasmussen.

The presentation preceded an opportunity to make comments about a revised Lake Koshkonong draft summer water level order, the first phase of which is due to go into effect July 1.

Other DNR officials in attendance included: Environmental Analysis Team Supervisor and discussion moderator Michael Thompson, Dam Safety and Floodplain Section Chief Meg Galloway and Dam Safety Engineer Rob Davis.

The order, which was initially drafted last year after six litigating groups negotiated an agreement ending a 13-year struggle, will go into effect in two phases and will ultimately raise the Lake Koshkonong maximum summer water level by 5 inches over a two-year period, with phase two taking effect in 2019.



Kim McDarison photo

## DNR Water Division

DNR Water Division Administrator Russ Rasmussen addresses a group of about 30 area residents during a revised Lake Koshkonong draft water level order public hearing held last week in Edgerton.

[Buy this photo](#)

During his presentation, Rasmussen described the order as having four parts:

- Indianford Dam operation and maintenance.
- Lake Koshkonong increased summer maximum water levels.
- Wetlands evaluation.
- A long-term comprehensive plan.

The BIGGER the bank,  
*the smaller the customer.*  
 Try a better Bank.

[www.fcbmilton.com](#)

## Calendar

June 2017						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
today's events		browse		submit		

### Dam operation

The order addresses submerged wicket gate maintenance and operation at the Indianford Dam, used to regulate water flow and otherwise impound the lake. It stipulates that the Rock-Koshkonong Lake District (RKLD), the entity accepting Rock County's ownership conveyance of the dam in 2004, "provide (DNR) staff access to the wicket gate operations inside the powerhouse to confirm wicket gate settings within one hour of the department's request," as well as "exhibit to the department a direct view of the wicket gates to allow a determination that they are operating properly on a bi-annual basis."

Citing dam operation as a "concern" and operation of the wicket gates as a "bone of contention," Rasmussen noted that historically the wicket gates "have been in various states of functionality."

"They go down 13 feet and it is sometimes really tough to tell what the accurate assessment is. So one of the things we have asked for is consideration of replacing those wicket gates with slide gates," Rasmussen said, noting that replacing the gates came with both advantages and disadvantages, citing visibility and cost, respectively.

Some of the cost of replacing the gates might be mitigated with the costs associated with keeping protective trash racks clean, he said, noting that the suggested alternative, slide gates, would not have racks and their associated maintenance costs. Further, he said, RKLD has been looking into grant opportunities for replacing the gates that could cover up to half of the replacement cost.

### Water levels

Rasmussen noted that the summer maximum water level would be allowed to rise by 2.6 inches beginning July 1, and stay in effect until Sept. 28. The maximum summer water level would rise again by 2.4 inches on June 15, 2019, and stay in effect Sept. 28.

Rasmussen explained how he and DNR analysts arrived at the new summer maximum water levels. He cited a chart showing average water levels annually between the years of 1965 and 2002, which was entered into evidence, he said, as part of the 2013 Supreme Court case.

Using numbers representing mean sea levels (MSL), Rasmussen said that the order provides the 2.6-inch increase in July by raising the current MSL from 776.33 feet to 776.55. In 2019, the MSL will rise again, by 2.4 inches, to 776.75 feet, providing there are no adverse impacts brought to the area wetlands by the initial 2.6-inch increase.

An MSL of 776.75 feet was chosen because using the 1965-2002 average water level chart, the number represents the statistical median, which, he said, was the best way "to set a mark based on a list of averages."

### Wetland evaluation

"It's a possibility that if we find these higher levels are having a significant adverse effect then we would consider lowering them back down. I don't want to speculate what that might be," Rasmussen said.

Using a walk-through survey completed last week as well as a 98-page analysis created in 2005, a baseline evaluation developed around current conditions of Lake Koshkonong's wetlands was established. The evaluation would be used to monitor the health of the wetlands, with that process continuing every two years for the next 10 years, Rasmussen said. If it's determined that damage was occurring to the wetlands after the summer water level is raised this year, further plans to raise summer water levels would be suspended, he said.

### Comprehensive plan

Rasmussen talked about a cycle of litigation that occurs every 30-40 years, he said, as the resource, which he described as a dynamic system, changes. To better manage the resource, he said the order called for a collaborative effort made by all those who use the lake. He cited a study created in 2012 by Montgomery and Associates in conjunction with the DNR and the US Corps of Army Engineers as a good starting place.

"The idea here is that we get together and talk about a plan for the resource," Rasmussen said. Thus avoiding starting a new cycle of litigation in 30-40 years, he added. "We're trying to get off this treadmill."

### Comments

After the presentation, those in attendance were invited to speak.



Milton Courier  
4,083 likes

Liked Sign Up

You and 18 other friends like this

One resident said he was confused by the idea that raising the water level would endanger the wetlands. "Seems to me that would improve the wetlands by making them wet," he said.

Rasmussen responded by describing varying plant groups within the wetlands and their ability to thrive in changing levels of water.

Another resident spoke about two studies, each commissioned by different organizations, which, he said, seemed to offer contradicting findings as they related to home values and economic impacts.

Rasmussen noted that while several studies focused on home values, each offered what he described as "limited data." He noted that all studies were considered and described the proposed solution as "a compromise."

"It is extremely disappointing that the DNR has focused so much effort and attention on claimed wetland impacts and so little on navigation, property values and the economic impact of Lake Koshkonong's water level," said RKLD board member Steve Proud, adding that the proposed summer increased water level did not go far enough.

"I have been on this lake for 73 years," said Fort Atkinson resident Susan Yates. "I am part owner of over 240 acres. At the proposed water levels I will not be able to use at least 30 percent of my property. It will be under water."

Milton resident Audrey Gilland said DNR officials should look at other things besides lake depth. "We need to clean up the sewers," she said.

Recommend 3    Tweet    G+1 < 0    Share

Discuss    Print

Posted in Milton Courier, Government, Local on *Wednesday, June 28, 2017 11:53 am.* *Updated: 12:23 pm.*

### Similar Stories

- Madison Avenue to close at noon on July 4
- Ziegler joins Chordhawks
- Freedom Fest is July 1
- Labor law changes for ages 16, 17
- New principal named at West

### Most Read

- Obituary: Brandon Scott Matthias
- Oh, Howe honorable
- Obituary: Mike Lane
- Obituary: Richard Donald Pribbenow
- Teacher retires after 35 years

## Rules of Conduct

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1 Keep it Clean.</b><br/>Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually-oriented language.</p> <p><b>2 Don't Threaten or Abuse.</b><br/>Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated. AND PLEASE TURN OFF CAPS LOCK.</p> <p><b>3 Be Truthful.</b><br/>Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.</p> | <p><b>4 Be Nice.</b><br/>No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.</p> <p><b>5 Be Proactive.</b><br/>Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.</p> <p><b>6 Share with Us.</b><br/>We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.</p> |
|--|---|