



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way · Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
www.dnr.illinois.gov

JB Pritzker, Governor
Colleen Callahan, Director

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CONTACT: Rachel Torbert

OFFICE: (217) 785-3953

CELL: (217) 685-1163

rachel.torbert@illinois.gov

IDNR Announces Planned Improvement Projects at Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park

Park will be closed throughout 2020 while projects are underway

LENA, Ill. – Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park in Stephenson County will be closed in 2020 while a number of improvement projects to the park’s main lake, boat access area, roadways and related facilities are underway, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) announced today.

The IDNR will host a public informational meeting on the projects in July at which project details will be presented and staff will be on hand to answer questions.

The slate of long-awaited projects for Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park follows a study and consultants’ report that included investigation of ongoing water loss from the park’s lake system. The projects planned to be conducted in 2020 will include:

- Draining the main lake, including the elimination of the present undesirable fish population, which has been in decline for many years;
- Repair of the water loss in the main lake, including repairs to the water level control structure and mechanisms;
- De-watering will result in aeration of the lake bed, which will consolidate sediment and reduce nutrient levels which have degraded the lake.
- Removal of silt from the west area of the lake which has collected over more than 60 years.
- Enhancement of Waddams Creek within the park to include riffles and pools to potentially reduce sediment and nutrient loading to the lake from the watershed. The creek project will also have a positive impact on fish habitat and will result in improved angler access for the park’s catchable rainbow trout fishing program.
- Moving and re-constructing the boat ramp and parking area.
- Installation of improved fish habitat in the lake basin prior to re-watering.
- Reconstructing the ADA/accessible fishing pier.
- Full reconstruction and realignment of the park road system.
- Re-watering, restocking and restoration of the fishery.

“Draining of the lake will allow the IDNR Division of Fisheries to rehabilitate a very poor fishery and remove unwanted nuisance fish species at Le-Aqua-Na,” said Rob Miller, regional administrator for the IDNR Division of Fisheries. “Sediment removal will help increase available habitat for future fisheries while helping to improve existing water quality issues within the lake.”

To accomplish the ambitious project schedule, the IDNR plans to close Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park beginning on January 1, 2020, with the closure continuing through the entire year. Working toward the closure, the drawdown of the park’s main lake will begin after the Labor Day holiday weekend this September and continue until complete. A measured de-watering schedule will ensure that aquatic conditions in Waddams Creek below the lake will not be adversely impacted by the lake water released downstream.

The date, time and location of the public informational meeting on the Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park projects will be announced soon.

The IDNR appreciates the patience and understanding of park users as the projects to improve and enhance visitors’ natural resource experience at Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park will be underway in the coming months.

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