



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

JOHN R. KASICH, GOVERNOR

JAMES ZEHRINGER, DIRECTOR

April 13, 2015

Dear Buckeye Lake Resident:

There has been a lot of attention focused on the Buckeye Lake community after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a report raising concerns about the structural integrity of the 183-year-old dam. Keeping the public informed about the latest information regarding the safety-related measures being taken is a priority for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

The Corps report highlights immediate steps the state can take to reduce the risk of dam failure, one of which was to drain the lake. However, Ohio Governor John Kasich has indicated that the state will instead maintain the water level at winter pool, until the new dam is in place. This will alleviate some of the pressure on the dam and reduce the risk of a dam failure. As rainfall continues, ODNR will use the lake drains to assist in keeping winter pool levels. Buckeye Lake's average depth is 6-8 feet in summer and 3-5 feet in winter depending on the area. While I know this lower lake level will have various adverse impacts on the community, unfortunately it is necessary for the safety of the dam and the thousands of people who live downstream.

In light of the report, no additional construction of residences and other structures such as wall systems, patios, swimming pools, sidewalks and utilities will be allowed on the dam without a permit. Likewise, no docks, boatlifts or other such equipment will be permitted into the dam without the express approval of the Director of ODNR. The intention is to preserve the remaining structural integrity of the dam and prevent further erosion. Additional guidance will be provided in regards to dock removal in anticipation of the dam being replaced.

Lakeside landowners not located on the Buckeye Lake Dam who intend to install seawall protection or replace an existing seawall are required to first file a permit application with the ODNR Division of Parks and Recreation. Installation and/or replacement of seawall structures will not be allowed without first obtaining the required ODNR permit. Applications are available online at: parks.ohiodnr.gov.

ODNR will allow dock owners not located on the dam to use their existing docks during the 2015 season. ODNR will waive the previously-required fee. However, state-owned docks will not be available for lease this year at Buckeye Lake due to the water level remaining at winter pool. For those residents who may be interested in boating elsewhere, ODNR will assist in locating additional dock lease opportunities at other Ohio State Park lakes. Please contact the ODNR Division of Parks and Recreation at 614-265-6561 for more information.

ODNR will take every reasonable measure available to safeguard the dam, protect public safety and minimize adverse impacts while the dam is being replaced. We understand many concerned citizens will have questions and concerns about this notification and the path ahead. ODNR will regularly release information about this subject online at engineering.ohiodnr.gov/buckeyelake. If you have a question or comment, we welcome your emails to us at DamRiskReduction@dnr.state.oh.us. We will respond to all emails as quickly as possible.

Finally, you may see safety related drills throughout the community in the coming weeks and months, which are being planned by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and the county EMAs. These drills are designed to help local officials and residents plan and prepare in the event of a lake-related emergency.

I appreciate your understanding of the importance of this work and your patience as ODNR seeks to preserve Buckeye Lake for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Obermiller".

Gary Obermiller
Chief, Division of Parks and Recreation