

Public information meeting on East Reservoir Dam improvements is May 11

AKRON, OH – The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) will host informational sessions May 11 at its Division of Wildlife district office, 912 Portage Lakes Drive, to update the public on improvements to the East Reservoir Dam in Portage Lakes State Park. Construction is to begin during summer and be completed by the end of 2018.

The project in Coventry Township is part of a series of dam improvements the State of Ohio is completing to ensure public safety and that its Class I high-hazard potential dams meet dam safety requirements. Work previously was completed to upgrade the Tuscarawas Diversion Dam (2014) and West Reservoir Dam (2012), while replacement of the Class II Long Lake Dam floodgates remains underway and will be completed this fall. Following completion of dam improvements at East Reservoir, ODNR will begin improvements sometime next year at the North Reservoir Dam with completion anticipated by the end of 2019.

The dam improvements are funded through the state's capital improvements fund. The East Reservoir Dam project is estimated to cost \$30-\$33 million; Long Lake Dam improvements are expected to total approximately \$3.5 million; North Reservoir dam improvements are estimated at \$23-\$25 million.

In addressing the scope of the East Reservoir Dam improvements, ODNR staff along with its consultant and construction manager at-risk, will provide preliminary information on construction schedules, phases of work, public access and local traffic and how to obtain construction updates. ODNR says that lake water levels will not be impacted by construction, but could be adjusted at any time to address dam safety needs.

ODNR also has said earlier that its scope of work and available funding is focused solely on dam improvements and will not include nonessential amenities such as bicycle paths, walking paths, improved public access and other park-like improvements. Public safety is ODNR's No. 1 priority and its continued dam improvement work at Portage Lakes is to ensure that the state-owned dam structures meet dam safety requirements.

The public information sessions concerning East Reservoir Dam improvements will be held from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. and 7:15 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, May 11 at the ODNR Division of Wildlife, 912 Portage Lakes Dr. The facility is handicap-accessible; parking is limited. Questions, comments and concerns also may be emailed to adelbrocco@murphyepson.com with the firm MurphyEpson, or mailed to the ODNR Division of Engineering at DamRiskReduction@dnr.state.oh.us