

Wisconsin Conservation Department

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INTRA-OFFICE  
MEMORANDUM

Station Oshkosh -----

Date March 9, 1953 .....

TO: Richard Harris

FROM: Tom Wirth

SUBJECT: Fish Lake (in Wautoma) - Waushara County

On Saturday, March 7, 1953, Warden Herb Lemke stopped at this office to notify us and discuss our feelings on a hearing ~~the~~ <sup>in</sup> the near future concerning Fish Lake.

It seems that property owners on Fish Lake would like a one foot board placed on the spillway between Fish and Silver Lakes to attempt to raise the level of Fish Lake.

Herb Lemke stated that in the past a board was placed in the spillway to hold the level of Fish Lake higher during the winter months, but was removed in the Spring to allow northern pike access to Fish Lake to spawn for a short period. Evidently this agreement hadn't worked out well during some years and the northern pikes were not able to reach Fish Lake.

The water supply of Fish Lake is such that the water level during the summer months is below the spillway and the waterway is dry. Fish Lake has an average depth of three feet and a maximum depth of six feet (recon. survey 1949) so that another foot of water would not prevent winter freeze-outs.

It was agreed by R. Heding, H. Lemke, and myself that the department should appose raising the permanent level of the spillway, inasmuch as it would prevent northern pike, and other species access from Silver Lake. From a fish management standpoint it would undoubtedly be best for species in both lakes to have access to each lake year around. The characteristics of 290 acre Fish Lake are very good for the spawning of northern pike, largemouth bass, and panfish, and even though fish are lost due to winter oxygen depletions the access of spawning area should ~~affect~~ <sup>offset</sup> these losses.

Silver Lake has poor spawning grounds for northern pike, and this species has probably been dependant on Fish Lake in past years for spawning and rearing habitat.

The Game Division will probably wish to look into this.

*Tom Wirth*  
Tom Wirth

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July 29, 1949

To the Director  
Wisconsin Conservation Department  
State Office Building  
Madison 2, Wisconsin

Attention: Mr. H. W. J. Cramer, Asst. Director

Dear Mr. Cramer:

In accordance with your request, I have made an investigation of the water connection between Fish Lake and Silver Lake in Waushara County and find the following to be a statement of the facts.

Prior to 1851, the two lakes were separated by a natural sand bar. Surveyors notes show that Fish Lake is normally 18 inches higher than Silver Lake. State Highway 21 now passes between the two lakes and apparently ever since a road passed between these lakes there has been a means for the water to pass from one lake to the other.

When the new highway was put in, the Public Service Commission established a bench mark on Fish Lake. A spill way was built under the highway to maintain the established level of Fish Lake. Due to the low water conditions, the water level is usually below the top of the spillway. At present it is 4 inches below. Provision was made in the dam for planks. Placing and removal of these in Fall and Spring is the subject of much controversy.

Fish Lake is a shallow, marl bottom lake with an average depth of about 10 feet, and an abundance of weed growth. It served as an excellent duck refuge a few years back. Fishing is normally only fair. It serves as a spawning ground for Northern Pike from Silver Lake, which must pass through the culvert and over the dam in question.

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In conclusion, I would venture the opinion that the spillway as established maintains as near as possible a normal water level for Fish Lake. The fishing in Fish Lake is not likely to improve by manual operation of the dam. I do believe that when four lakes are normal and the fish can pass easily from one lake to the other, fishing in both will be substantially better.

If any further details are necessary in this matter, I will make every effort to furnish them.

(cc Mr.) Hadland  
Mr. McCutchin

Very truly yours,  
LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Herb Lemke, Warden  
Box 186, Wautoma

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mjd

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