



## Minong Flowage Drawdown Update – March 20, 2022

The consensus from the Minong Flowage Association Board, the Wisconsin DNR, Washburn County Highway Department and Dave Blumer, our consultant from Lakes Education and Planning Services (LEAPS) is the winter conditions have been good for the purposes of maximizing the impact of the drawdown for controlling Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). Cold temperatures, with limited snow amounts needed to create good ice development and deep frost was the case for most of the winter. As of a week ago, 20 to 24 inches of ice existed on area lakes. The success of the drawdown will be determined this summer and early fall when surveys will be conducted to compare the amount of EWM and other aquatic plant growth to the survey results from 2021.

As warmer weather arrives, thoughts will turn to the refill of the flowage. While there is a desire to fill the flowage as early as possible, the refill will not start until ice out has occurred and/or it has been determined that there is no risk of property damage due to shifting sheets of solid ice. Many members and other property owners chose to not remove docks and boat lifts last fall. If the refill started while ice remained on the flowage, there is risk the ice could move and damage property. There also would be the risk of the ice dislodging stumps and logs which as is known from the last drawdown, ends up on shorelines and creates navigational hazards.

The WDNR permit for the drawdown requires that “normal pool elevation” is to be established no later than May 15<sup>th</sup>. It has always been and remains a goal of the MFA to reach normal pool elevation no later than the Wisconsin Fishing Opener if possible.

The MFA board has been coordinating with Washburn County Highway Department regarding the entire drawdown process. MFA volunteers will be monitoring the ice out conditions and will communicate the ice out event to WCHD and the refill will immediately start. The rate of refill will be dependent upon the inflow of water coming down the Totagatic, and the DNR does require a minimum flow amount downstream of the dam to continue during the refill. Return to normal levels could be as quick as two weeks but will be dependent on the weather and river conditions.

Some of you may have noticed some repair activity taking place on the dam in the last few weeks as warmer weather has returned. Brian Danielson, Washburn County Highway Supervisor had his crew go out and perform some minor concrete repair on the 1<sup>st</sup> bay that was worked on in 2019. The very top of the spillway had cracks that couldn't be repaired at the time due to water levels. The drawdown and warm temps made it possible to get the work done now. Crews were applying the last of the patch material last week and will remove insulating blankets this week.

We all are looking forward to the end of winter and being able to return to the water as the drawdown ends.

Regards,

Minong Flowage Association Lake Management Committee