

Cranberry Eagle
Paula Grubbs, February 4, 2015

Glade Run Lake restoration project is approved

MIDDLESEX TWP — The plop of a fishing line landing in a restored Glade Run Lake could be heard by the summer of 2017. Jerry Woomer, a project manager at the state Fish and Boat Commission, and Glade Run Lake Conservancy President Siggy Pehel, said bids will be sought in mid-March to repair the lake's faulty dam. The lake was drained in 2011 for safety reasons because the dam was structurally insufficient.

Woomer said the state Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have approved drawings for the dam repair and refilling of the lake. That approval allowed the project to move to the bid phase, he said. He said the state Department of General Services will handle the bidding process. Bids would likely be awarded in mid-April.

"That'll tell us how much it's going to cost," Woomer said. The project has been estimated at \$4.3 million.

Woomer said while bids for lakes that were drained in Center and Lancaster counties came in significantly less than the projected construction cost, the construction needed at Glade Run Lake is a little different from those other two lakes.

"My gut feeling is it will come in a little under (projected cost)," Woomer said. "We're always hopeful it will come in under bid."

He said work to repair the dam likely will begin in mid-June. After the construction is done, it likely will take six to eight months for the streams and tributaries around the 52-acre dam to refill it. Woomer said the lake will be allowed to refill at a rate of 2 feet per week so engineers can check for dam seepage and other possible problems as the water rises. He said if rainy weather causes the dam to fill to a level above 2 feet, it will be drained so the methodical process can continue properly.

"We can't put in too much at one time," Woomer said.

Pehel said changes to the lake in the new plans include the digging of five channels that will each be 10 feet deep and 20 feet wide. The goal is to add an extra 2,200 feet of space for water to increase the fish population by up to 35 percent once the dam is refilled.

"Fish live in deep water," Pehel said.

Eric Levis, Fish and Boat Commission spokesman, said the lake could be ready for boating and kayaking by the late summer of 2016, but will not be stocked with fish until the opening day of fishing season in the early spring of 2017. He explained that the commission follows a five-year plan to rebuild a restored lake's fish population. He said hatchery-raised trout will be the first fish to enter the lake, in 2017, and forage fish will follow. But he said fishing will be permitted as the five-year plan proceeds.

Pehel said the conservancy is working on upgrades as well to provide the public with a better experience at the lake once it is refilled. He said he and other conservancy members also are working to create two islands in the lake where osprey nests will be placed atop utility-type poles. Pehel said rock from the old dam will be used to create fish habitats throughout the lake, and eventually wooden structures will be dropped in the lake for the same purpose.

HRG engineers are working with the conservancy on a project to resurface the lake's jetty and add a 25- to 30-foot dock that is accessible to those in wheelchairs, so people with disabilities can fish in deep water.

He said a 3-foot-wide walkway will lead to the jetty, which will be expanded to 5 feet wide. Accessible parking near the boat ramp will be increased by 30 percent, and a new turnaround is planned near the boat launch, Pehel said.

He hopes the habitat and jetty projects can both begin in mid-June. Pehel said the projects, estimated to cost about \$100,000, will be funded through grants as well as funds raised by the conservancy.

Woomer praised the efforts of the conservancy to have the lake restored.

"The conservancy worked really, really hard on this," Woomer said. "I don't think we'd be at the stage we are without them,"

Former Gov. Tom Corbett in April 2014 agreed to provide \$2 million in funding to repair the lake, and the Fish and Boat Commission agreed to provide another \$2 million. The funding was the result of the conservancy officials' relentless pressure on state legislators in and around the region to push Corbett for funding.

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