



WATERFORD VILLAGE

Village of Waterford
123 North River Street
Waterford WI 53185

February 5, 2015

Tanya Lourigan, P.E.
Water Management Engineer
Fitchburg Service Center
3911 Fish Hatchery Road
Fitchburg, 53711

Nathan Zoch
Dam Safety Engineer
Waukesha Service Center
141 NW Bartstow, RM 180
Waukesha, WI 53188

Dear Ms. Lourigan & Mr. Zoch:

The Village Board is concerned about communications and the availability of public information provided to Village officials and the public relative to permits requested by the Racine County Drainage District. The Board is requesting your assistance in ensuring that the Board, Committees, users and riparian owners are well informed of the changes being requested. While the District has made attempts to provide agendas and minutes regarding their meetings to the public via their webpage through the Racine County website and to the Village via e-mail, the site is not routinely updated with current agendas and approved minutes. In January 2015 the Village learned that the District was holding a special meeting on Friday, January 16, but did not receive notice of the meeting. After communicating with the District, the Village was informed that meeting notices were only provided if the Waterford Drainage District was listed on the agenda. The impact of the Norway Dover District and dredging of the Wind Lake Canal, while not located in the Village, impacts the Village and the recreational utilization of the Fox River for the public and riparian owners. This was communicated to the District but is being shared with you in this letter to demonstrate our efforts to stay informed. As the DNR is the agency that receives these permit requests directly from the District, the Village is asking for your assistance in informing the public on these items in a timely manner.

To date the Village has received limited information on a permit submitted by the Racine County Drainage District – Norway Dover that proposes changing the operational procedures for the Rochester Dam. We are interested in learning what the proposed changes are and when the public will receive information on the impact of these changes and be afforded the opportunity to comment on the permit requests. Are we able to obtain copies of the permits requested? What is the process for reviewing the permit application and the DNR's anticipated timeline?

The Village recently reviewed the Water Control Structure Stability Report dated August 2014 in which the importance of conducting reviews for permits was noted for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review. The majority of the report provides technical calculations for the dam. What can a layman interpret from this report? What other documents are reviewed in the process of the (EIS)?

The Village would like to request that our community and any neighboring community receive notice of any public comments session and that riparian owners along the Fox River and any associated drainage canal be notified individually of the permits being requested with an opportunity to comment. The Village would like to offer our municipal facilities to you as a convenient location to hold any public meetings required for the permit requests.

The Village has been informed that the District also requested a permit for the 2014/2015 year that resulted in the drawdown of the Fox River from October 15, 2014 through April 2015 that was separate and distinct from the operational permit for the Rochester Dam. Apparently the District will not be moving forward with dredging of the Wind Lake Canal which was the primary reason for the draw down. Can the public provide input on this request and future requests for annual drawdowns? If so, when and how will people be notified of the opportunity to comment prior to the draw down being approved? Residents have placed complaints that no work will now be done and the water resource will have been taken away for a 6-7 month period of the year. Is the Drainage District required to adhere to any permitting requirements that ensure their work proceeds within the draw down period requested? Should we anticipate an additional draw down request for 2015/2016?

In light of the District's interest in maintaining a low water level in the Fox River, the Village desires to share with you the efforts we have taken to make this natural resource more accessible, available and promoted as a destination within Racine County. The Village sees the Fox River as gem with multiple facets -- recreation, nature and wildlife, farming, economic development, and fishing and is concerned that the water resource will be significantly diminished in the future.

- In 2013/2014 the Village of Waterford hired an engineering firm to assist the Plan Commission in the development of the Riverfront Redevelopment & Ten Club Park Plan, see attachment. The plan seeks to utilize available Village-owned land along the Fox River as an economic development tool, providing welcoming infrastructure surrounding our downtown area and provide greater access to the river for residents and visitors.
- In 2014 the Village completed a pilot project along the shoreline in Whitford Park, a streambank stabilization project with natural planting buffer behind the new rip rap permitted along the shoreline. The Village desires to be an example of positive riparian restoration along the Fox River.
- In 2014 the Village applied for and received Stewardship Grant funding for a multi-jurisdictional collaborative project between the Village of Waterford and Racine County for the construction of four (4) canoe/kayak launches above and below the Waterford and Rochester Dam. These launches will be constructed in summer of 2015.
- In 2014 *Real Racine* (Racine County's Convention and Visitor's Bureau) completed a new strategic plan which included the marketing of the Fox River Water Trail, a trail for canoe/kayak enthusiasts extending the entire stretch of the Fox River in Racine County. Efforts to begin marketing this great resource are just underway, the first step is in the *Real Racine's* visitors guide for 2015 which recently hit the streets: [http://www.bluetoad.com/publication/?i=242781#{"issue_id":242781,"page":4,"view":"archiveBrowser"}](http://www.bluetoad.com/publication/?i=242781#{) The recognition of this resource was brought to their attention by the Village of Waterford.
- In 2014 Village officials met with the Southeastern Wisconsin Fox River Commission to discuss the potential of creating a National Water Trail along the Fox River. The Fox River Commission has engaged counterparts from the Rock River to present more information on how we proceed with the development of a National Fox River Water Trail, receiving the designation from Secretary of the Interior and the National Parks Service at the Annual Fox River Summit to be held on March 20, 2015. The summit is a collaborative between the SEWFRC and its Illinois counterpart. The Village is eager to learn about this process, as it

provides opportunity for greater visibility and marketing of the Fox River Resource. See article located at http://www.sewfrc.org/downloads/WNR_FoxRiverSummit.pdf

- In 2015 the Village solicited proposals for the preliminary and final design of prioritized improvements of the Ten Club Park & River Redevelopment Plan for implementation prior to the reconstruction of WisDOT STH 83-20 project in 2018.

As you can see, the Village has taken important steps and made significant financial investments in the Fox River over the last few years. The Village President would like to invite you to attend an upcoming Village Board meeting to explain the impacts from the permits submitted by the District and inform the Board on how we can expect to receive information regarding any permit requests in the future. We look forward to learning from you as to how the Village and interested parties can receive information and provide comment prior to decisions affecting this valuable resource. Please contact me directly at 262-534-7912 or rewald@waterfordwi.org.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Ewald
Administrator

Cc: Village Board
Public Works & Utilities Committee
Plan Commission