



Dear River or Lake Resident,

The water quality in Little Rock Lake which is connected to the Sartell Pool of the Mississippi River has been designated as impaired by the State of Minnesota. A body of water is considered “impaired” if it fails to meet one or more water quality standards.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is proposing to lower the water level in Little Rock Lake and the Sartell Pool of the Mississippi River to improve the water quality in those bodies. Lowering the water level is also called a “drawdown.”

Drawdowns have shown to improve water quality by stabilizing shoreline, removing excess nutrients, and encouraging beneficial plant growth. Drawdowns also improve habitat for fish and wildlife.

The drawdown on Little Rock Lake and the Sartell Pool is proposed for the second week of July 2017 through the end of August 2017. The drawdown could effect some recreation on the Mississippi River and in Little Rock Lake.

Please see the enclosed information regarding facts about the drawdown. We are also interested in learning about your opinion on the drawdown so we encourage you to complete and return the enclosed survey. Or if you would rather take the survey online, it can be found here: <http://goo.gl/forms/V7RDYMupilhm0thf1>

Thank you for your time,  
Eric R. Altena  
MNDNR Fisheries Manager- Little Falls

## Sartell Pool-Little Rock Lake Drawdown FACT SHEET

### Benefits of drawdowns

- Improve water quality
  - o Excess nutrients can be removed from the water column
  - o Water clarity can improve when excess nutrients removed
- Stabilize shoreline erosion
  - o Erosion can be slowed or stopped with stabilizing vegetation
  - o Loose sediment along shorelines can be consolidated
  - o Less erosion will decrease turbidity and improve water clarity
  - o Vegetation can help minimize wave action
- Improve habitat for fish and wildlife
  - o Improved water quality will help fish populations
  - o New plant growth can provide cover for fish and wildlife
- Improved waterfront property values because improved water quality leads to better recreation, improved aesthetics, and more enjoyment of the waterbody.



Algae bloom on Little Rock Lake



Mississippi River Pool 8, two separate drawdowns in 2001 and 2002

- Drawdowns are relatively inexpensive and have been used many times in Minnesota and across the country to improve water quality.
- Continued reservoir management builds a more tolerant shoreline. There may be some consideration of future drawdowns (once every 7-10 years) if results are favorable.



### Concerns about drawdowns

- Water recreation like fishing and boating can be limited due to lower water levels during the drawdown
- The timing of the proposed drawdown (July-August) is necessary to capitalize on the best period for plant growth
- New vegetation may grow in areas that did not previously hold vegetation (Note: the DNR Aquatic Plant Management Program can help permitted control of certain types of plants)
- Transportation between water bodies may be limited or unavailable during the drawdown (like on Harris Channel)
- During the drawdown bare lake or river bottom will be exposed and could cause unpleasant smells and undesirable views of the waterbody.
- Alternatives to drawdowns, like building a new coffer dam or actual concrete dam could cost hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars to design and build.



Plant growth (that processes nutrients) during a drawdown

Additional information can be found online at [www.mndnr.gov/sartell-drawdown](http://www.mndnr.gov/sartell-drawdown)

Questions and concerns can be directed to:

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