

Rice Lake 2020-2021 Drawdown Request cancelled

It is with regret that the Rice Lake Area Association (RLAA) announces that the permit for the 2020-2021 drawdown of Rice Lake was denied at the last minute by the Minnesota DNR. The DNR has received reports that the Blanding's Turtle (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blanding%27s_turtle) has been identified as living in the Elm Creek Watershed and needs to be protected. Minnesota statutes require the DNR protect these endangered species.

This does not mean that future drawdowns cannot be conducted. Since we had an early cold spell during the first week of November, turtles and frogs began their hibernation process by digging into the mud for the upcoming winter. Drawing down the water where they potentially are hibernating could expose the lake bottom where they reside to freeze them out, potentially killing them. Drawing down the water before any freeze events occur would allow the turtles and frogs to hibernate in areas where the water level will continue to exist above them, preventing them from being frozen out.

RLAA apologizes for this late notice, but we are at the mercy of the DNR for the drawdown request. For those homeowners who left their docks/lifts in the water anticipating the drawdown would occur this winter, you may want to have them removed for the season, if this is something you would do in a typical non-drawdown winter.

Other planned projects for this winter such as the Channel Dredging/Rip-Rap and Carp Removal are still on the agenda for being done this winter without the drawdown.

It was recommended by the City and DNR that any future drawdowns should occur earlier in the fall (i.e.: late September) in order to avoid circumstances like this year's early freeze. This means we would be reaching out to residents sooner to begin the process for approvals and action in future years.

Cordially,

Rice Lake Area Association Board of Directors

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