

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Spillway and dam improvements to take place this fall at Lake George, Loud Thunder Forest Preserve

ILLINOIS CITY, Ill. (August 31, 2018) – A planned drawdown of Lake George, the 167-acre, man-made lake located within the Loud Thunder Forest Preserve, is scheduled to begin after Labor Day to allow for repairs and updates to the dam that will bring it into compliance with State of Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Since the construction of the original dam, multiple improvements have taken place, including the boat ramp, campground and trails below the spillway. These improvements, and the presence of more people, resulted in a reclassification of the dam from Class 3 to Class 1, bringing new requirements through the DNR. The repairs and updates will bring the spillway and dam into compliance.

“Lake George is a great fishery and an asset to the District, Loud Thunder Forest Preserve and residents of the community,” said Jeff Craver, Forest Preserve District director. “Ensuring it is a safe environment for visitors, whether on the lake itself or below, is our number one priority.”

As a result, boat rentals will close for the season on Tuesday, Sept. 4, and will reopen in the spring. The contractor performing the repairs is scheduled to mobilize the area in which the work will be performed on Sept. 10. Upon mobilization two-way traffic on Loud Thunder Road will be open during the construction, but lanes size will scale to 10 ft. wide. The public boat ramp and lake access to fish from Loud Thunder Road will also closed to the public starting Sept. 10 and remain closed until April. Construction on the spillway is expected to occur into December.

Fishing beyond the construction zone will be allowed from the banks while work continues, which will be clearly marked. The drawdown of the lake is expected to be about 20 feet at most, Craver says, and is fed by the Big Branch Creek watershed, once the work is completed the lake should come back to normal levels fairly quickly.

“We are working closely with biologists from the Illinois DNR to ensure proper steps are being taken for the wildlife at Loud Thunder,” Craver added.

Funding for the spillway and dam improvements was approved in September 2017, when the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission approved issuing bonds for the work. Of the total \$4.5 million approved, \$1.9 million will go toward the dam and spillway, while another \$2.1 million will pay for updates to several camping areas. The remainder is budgeted for capitalized interest payments. Currently, well, septic and electrical improvements are still being planned for the campground areas. The campground improvement work will begin in spring 2019.

For more information on Loud Thunder Forest Preserve visit,
<http://www.ricfpd.org/Activities/Camping.aspx>.

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About the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District

The mission of the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District is to maintain and acquire lands and facilities in Rock Island County with the intent to restore, conserve and protect the waters, forests and prairies they contain and the goal to create educational and recreational opportunities for the residents of Rock Island County and beyond.

The Rock Island County Forest Preserve District is governed by the Forest Preserve Commission. Today the Rock Island County Forest Preserve Commission governs six forest preserve areas totaling 2,529 acres. They include Loud Thunder Forest Preserve, Illiniwek Forest Preserve, Niabi Zoo, Indian Bluff Golf Course and Forest Preserve, Dorrance Park and Martin Conservation Area.

For more information about the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District, visit www.RICFPD.org.