

Renovation to Start this Spring at Burchard Lake

A major renovation project is set to begin this spring at a popular southeast Nebraska fishing destination. The Game and Parks Commission plans to make repairs to the dam, as well as make other upgrades, at Burchard Lake in Pawnee County. Officials detailed the project during a meeting Wednesday evening in Tecumseh.

The main purpose of the project involves repairing a leak to the outlet structure in the dam, which was built in 1959, and had a life expectancy of 50 years. Tony Barada with the Game and Parks Commission says the structure was repaired once, when a leak was discovered in the early 1980s, and those repairs have allowed the life of the structure to be extended to its full life expectancy.

(play audio :41)

Barada says the Burchard Lake project has been on the drawing board for several years, and has been prioritized for this year.

Similar projects in the past have required lakes to be almost completely drained and the fish to be killed. But as Burchard Lake is one of the better fisheries in the area, Barada says they don't plan to completely drain the lake. (play audio :20)

Improvements that will be made include installing a new boat ramp, jetties, a handicap-accessible fishing pier, and improving angler access along the shoreline, in addition to making improvements to the fish habitat in exposed areas of the lakebed.

The Game and Parks Commission will get bids out for the project soon, and Barada says the timeline calls for the lake level to be drawn down this spring, with work to be completed in about a year. Barada says the nature of the work, with a lot of heavy construction equipment, will require the lake to be closed. (play audio :26)

Funds for the restoration project are coming from the Game and Parks Commission, through fees anglers pay for fishing licenses.. (play audio :30)

While Burchard Lake will be closed during the renovation project, Barada says other nearby lakes are available for anglers, including Mayberry Lake, Verdon Lake, Rockford Lake, and Kirkman's Cove Recreation Area.