

BERLIN LAKE VISIONING MEETING

July 10th, 2017

1:00 – 3:30 PM

Kent State University at Trumbull Campus, 4314 Mahoning Ave, Warren, OH 44483
Classroom Building – Auditorium & Lower Commons

Purpose of Meeting:

- Participants hear and share values and interests related to their future visions of Berlin Lake and the area downstream.
- To identify and discuss areas of particular interest and preferences for potential improvements to the management of Berlin Lake which satisfy all interests to the greatest extent possible.

AGENDA

Welcome & Overview

Session 1 Breakout Groups - Identification of interests to guide future uses of Berlin Lake

- Introductions
- What about Berlin Lake (and the area downstream) is most important to you (and your organization)?
 - What should Berlin Lake be like in 10 years?

Presentation - Overview of Berlin Lake management & future possibilities

- Key components of Berlin Lake use & management
- Potential improvements already seen at other lakes
 - Questions & Answers

Session 2 Breakout Groups – Brainstorm improvements to Berlin Lake to meet interests

- What could be improved and what is working well at the lake and its downstream reach?
- What information might be needed or is available to inform any future plans or changes?

With respect to the following topics:

- 1) Protecting Environmental Quality & Enhancing Public Lands,
- 2) Creating Safe & Memorable Experiences,
- 3) Cultivating Partnerships,
- 4) Leveraging Emerging Technologies.

Recap, Discussion, and Path Forward

- Recap of Breakout Groups
- Plenary Discussion for any remaining discussion items
 - What USACE expects to do next
 - Questions?

Adjourn

NOTES

What about Berlin Lake (and the area downstream) is most important to you (and your organization)?

- Water level
- Wildlife Habitat
- Near shore
- Wildlife conservation
- Limiting disturbance
- Big picture with emphasis on Water Level & Dam Safety impacts
- Water quality
- Pollution abatement
- NPDES
- SWPP Plans
- Water quantity
- Environmental impacts from shoreline erosion
- Taxes & Business revenues for lakefront residences
- Functioning ecosystem
- Recreation opportunities for swimming, fishing & boating
- Consistent water levels
- Recreational access to boat ramps, bike trails, trail heads, etc.
- Water levels
- Hiking trails

What should Berlin Lake be like in 10 years?

- Safe environment
- Sustainable water levels, extended and consistent pool duration (Memorial Day – Labor Day)
- Pool level @ 1024
- Regional coordination with other Beaver River lakes
- Handicap accessible
- Balancing recreation with water quality benefits from the lake
- Water equity
- Increased connectivity, return to original flows & ecosystem
- Re-examined authorized purposes for the lake
- Improved/additional access to other public lands
- Permitting for private docks (restaurants); more courtesy docks
- More restaurants with lake access
- Public beach other than at a campground
- Remove hazards in the lake, mark off hazard areas
- Keep fishing habitats
- Clean Water
- Regular water flows
- Swimming area

- Handicap access
- Updated campground

Protecting Environmental Quality & Enhancing Public Lands

Water Quality

Doing Well

- Overall, water quality is good
- Lots of riparian buffers, protected zones
- Awareness and addressing problems

Potential Improvements/Opportunities

- Pollution sources (Septic)
- City of Alliance, Waste Water Treatment discharge. Past problems with treatment and management, may have been improved by now
- Request – USACE WQ Team share results if WQ monitoring
- Tributary monitoring

Water Quantity

Doing Well

- Lake Milton water level is good
- Maintaining near shore activities
- More equitable outflows (pool drawdown) in recent years (2016) with Berlin, MJ Kirwan, & Mosquito

Potential Improvements/Opportunities

- Increased awareness of low levels, shallow water
- Apply environmental considerations equally (cinder blocks with Christmas trees, but no cinder blocks for repair)
- Extending summer pool “season”; 4 ft drawdown could be OK, but not 6-8 ft drawdown.
- Emerald Ash Borer, Ash trees will be coming down
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Public Lands

Doing Well

- Lots of facilities (archery, dog training)
- Maintaining regulations/standards
- Current efforts to improve hunter safety
- Self-policing boat inspections

Potential Improvements/Opportunities

- Private partnerships (with acknowledgement that need to make sure regulations are followed)
- Available opportunities need to be communicated (maps, signs, apps)
- Increased awareness of hunting & hunter safety
- Annual meetings (public education) to include water quality issues
- Update (and distribute) park maps and signage at the lake
- Address boat pollution (oil leaks)

- Regional (watershed) planning & operations
- Maximizing recreation opportunities in the region
- 5 year plan for Ash trees & reforestation (with NRCS)
- Opportunities to partner & get the word out
- Fix gates to improve access to recreational facilities
- Create SoP for Repairs, currently too many restrictions

Creating a Safe & Memorable Experience

Doing Well

- Fish habitat
- Best fishing lake
- Just added rescue boat
- Lots of agencies overseeing safety
- Good educational program

Potential Improvements/Opportunities

- Replacing damaged buoys
- Marking water hazards (ex: rock pile during low water)
- Dredging
- Better signage
- Identification of property boundaries – distribute maps to campgrounds, business, etc.
- Repair & open damages ramps (road beds)
- More things to do on the lake – restaurants, ice cream, etc.
- Less restrictions to building
- Connect bike path to regional path
- Water level – more balance with other reservoirs to meet flow requirements (change guidelines from original needs)
- Updated Water Control Manual & Shoreline Management Plan
- More docks
- Better recreation areas for swimming, rope swings, etc.
- Designated areas for certain recreation functions (ex: horse power limit, now wake, etc.)
- Picnic area near dam, upkeep
- Capitalize on other areas of interest – Noah's Lost Ark
- Consistent & predicted water level
- Branding/Marketing plan
- Awareness of community (tri-county) issues
- Brochures – connectivity of Berlin to other water resources for awareness
- Work with State to identify Berlin on Maps (Fishing)
- Campground improvements
- Coordination of efforts - USACE, ODNR, etc. (outlying enforcement agencies)
- Kids/family activities/themes weekends
- Build on education program – working with local schools

Cultivating Partnerships

Potential Improvements/Opportunities

- Mahoning, Stark, Portage Park Systems (Partners)
- Current funding model broken
- Currently not dependable, business depends on water level
- Need private sector partners
- Longer bike trail possibilities
- Other rec (kayak, canoe) rentals
- Park Districts, Safety Briefing with a kid focus
- Berlin Lake Trail (Hike/Bike), provides access
- Handicap access
- Education opportunities (ex: w/ YSU)
- Portage Lakes Wildlife Office at Berlin
- Beach discussion with ODNR
- Grant Opportunities:
 - Berlin Lake Association is a 501(c)
 - ODNR Wildlife grants
 - YSU or Library Grant Writers
 - Youngstown Foundation, Etc.
 - Mahoning County Green Team (recycling)
 - YSU Studies (Environment or Economic Impact Studies)
 - Kent State
 - Wean Foundation
 - Mt Union University
 - Alliance
- Water Study
 - Flow Data
 - Student Intern Project (PAS)
- Downstream Dam Removal/Eco-Enhancement
 - Communities
- White Tails Unlimited
- Ducks Unlimited (Local Office)
 - Habitat/Water Quality
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy
- National Geographic
- Local conservation clubs
- Kayak manufacturers (classes; equipment donated)
- “Paddle Palooza” with ODNR (SUPs)
- Beach must have concessions
- Tax Credits for Staying off/Away from water (Blue Green Algae)

Leveraging Emerging Technologies

Potential Improvements/Opportunities

- Social media for Berlin (Events, photos, news, importance of lake/dam)
- Website has needed info, share personal photos
- Partnering with other organizations to share existing technology

- Mylakeinfo.com – Add App, expand to other projects
- Monitor water quality at tributaries
- Learning area for kids
- Geocaching
- Online only campsite reservations (wouldn't work for last minute)
- Wind power generation
- Wifi access at campground
- Share recycling resources
- Hiking app
- Apps like Pokemon Go
- Copy National Park Anniversary Photo Activity (share the experience)
- Cameras for wildlife
- Berlin App w/ maps, gas stations, land marks, food, campsite, private property, dam, phone number for emergency, activities (for projects & businesses)
- Mark private property
- Share history of area
- Life jacket loaner program
- Plaques for wildlife, fish
- First aid stations
- Rental apps
- Pass for boat launching



