

# TOWN OF DRAPER

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Land, Water & Forest Resources Committee  
Bruce Paulsen, Chair  
Cc: Tim Seidl, Jay Kozlowski

September 7, 2021

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of concerned citizens of the Town of Draper, the town board is asking you to consider building a coffer dam to retain the water in Loretta Lake in lieu of a drawdown for the upcoming Brunet River dam repair project slated for spring/summer 2022.

News of the pending drawdown as part of the dam rehabilitation project has generated numerous questions and concerns from residents who live on the lake and feel they will be adversely affected. We invited Tim Seidl to our August 9 board meeting to discuss the plan for the project and answer citizen questions. We are grateful for Tim's patient and knowledgeable presentation- as he answered questions for over an hour, one of the issues raised was the coffer dam alternative. Tim explained the pros and cons to us and the citizens present were very interested in pursuing it as an alternative. To date we have gathered 41 signatures in support of a coffer dam.

We understand that a drawdown is less expensive and faster, and is currently the intended approach to the project. However, we are asking you to consider the following arguments in support of the coffer dam alternative.

Many long-time residents recall a drawdown in the year 2000. They lost use of the lake for the duration of the project, and say it took many years for the lake's fish population to recover.

The loss of use of lakefront property for an entire season is a substantial one- it represents a year of memories and family bonding lost for an estimated 68 residents and their families. With the current Covid situation, people are already missing out on family get togethers and traditions- drawing down the lake will harm those families by depriving them of precious vacation time- memories and family traditions.

The fishery and recreation aspect is also important- Loretta Lake is at the heart of the Loretta-Draper community and is one of two lakes we rely on for tourism and recreation. There are 2 boat landings on Loretta Lake. Drawing down the Lake for a summer will affect numerous recreational users and tourists, and the businesses that rely on them during a time when our economy is extremely fragile and pushed to the limits of survival.

There is also a safety concern: the Loretta Lake dry hydrant is the main source of water for the Fire Departments in the Town of Draper. The second dry hydrant located at Turner Rd. downstream from the dam is unreliable and hard to draft from. It may become unusable as a result of changing the downstream water flow during the dam repair. Should there be a fire during high fire danger, when this

project is expected to take place, there is no easy or reliable water source to draft from, putting our entire community which is already remote and underserved by emergency services at risk.

For all of these reasons, we ask you to please consider the alternative of installing a coffer dam and retaining the water in Loretta Lake in 2022.

If, for whatever reason, you deem this to be impossible, then we are requesting that the drawdown be used as an opportunity to undertake improvements to the lake. It is currently a shallow lake with a silty muck substrate, harboring anaerobic bacteria which is converting atmospheric mercury to methyl mercury and causing it to build up in the fish. Loretta Lake has been identified as an area of concern for this reason. Lily pads and cattails have built up as the silt bed has increased and are choking out residents' shorelines and the boat landings- some of these could be removed to improve navigation and overall health of the lake.

Other possible improvements would include dredging, removal of accumulated silt and muck, installing rock beds for fish breeding, creating berms and shoreline/transitional plantings to decrease silting of the lake bed, and improvements to the boat landings. The Fire Department is interested in installing a second dry hydrant on the Dam Rd boat landing site. All of these ideas require DNR involvement and approval: we are working quickly to get input from DNR and fishery experts on these ideas.

We are asking that the County consider joining local efforts to improve the future health of Loretta Lake in the event that a drawdown occurs. This may mean working out a delay in the plan to allow for the necessary DNR approvals and funding for some of these undertakings. Ultimately everyone will benefit from a cleaner, healthier lake and the residents who would lose their season of use will benefit in the long run. Either way, we ask you to please consider these alternatives and include us in the planning and decision making for this important asset to our township.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter- the Town of Draper appreciates your interest in our environment and community and we hope that you will take notice of this situation and opportunity to work with our residents for the best possible outcome for the Lake.

Sincerely,  
The Draper Town Board