FAQs - Lake Zumbro Dam (LZD)

When was the LZD constructed?

The Lake Zumbro Dam was constructed in 1919. Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) will be celebrating the 100 year milestone for the dam in 2019.

How much energy does the LZD generate annually?

Electrical generation has averaged 12,500 megawatt hours (MWh)/year since 2000 – enough electricity for approximately 1,500 homes. In 2016, generation was 16,100 MWh, the highest since 1993.

How tall and wide is the LZD?

The Lake Zumbro Dam is 55 feet high and spans 440 feet.

How does RPU operate the dam?

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regulates dam operations and requires RPU to operate the LZD as Run-Of-The-River. Basically what's flowing into Lake Zumbro is flowing through or over the Lake Zumbro Dam.

How much water can pass through the turbines?

Approximately 590 cubic feet of water per second (cfs) when both turbines are operating at 100%.

How much water goes over the spillway when there is a foot of water?

1,500 cfs

Who regulates and enforces the "No-Wake" status on Lake Zumbro?

No-Wake status is regulated under Olmsted County Ordinance #94-109 and is enforced by the Olmsted County Sherriff. The No-Wake is initiated when lake levels exceed 915.6 Mean Sea Level (MSL) and the No-Wake is lifted when it reaches levels below 915.3 MSL. RPU does not regulate the No-Wake status.

Who monitors the lake level?

Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) monitors the lake level at the Lake Zumbro dam power house. A new lake level is posted every 15 minutes and displayed at https://www.rpu.org/education-environment/lake-zumbro-water-level

How close can I drive my boat to the LZD?

The warning buoys are placed 200 feet in front of the dam. All watercraft is prohibited from going pass the warning buoys towards the dam.

How often is the LZD inspected?

Annually, with a more in-depth inspection performed every 5 years.

Who do I contact if I have questions on the LZD?

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