

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**Nebraska Department of Natural Resources**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 22, 2007, 7:00 p.m. CT**

**CONTACT**

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## **Champion Lake Dam Temporarily Drained, Public Safety Priority Concern**

(Lincoln, Neb.) The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has ordered that Champion Lake be temporarily drained to prevent further damage to the Champion Lake Dam and to safeguard life and property. Due to the significant rains and resulting flooding last week in Frenchman Creek, the dam at Champion Lake sustained heavy damage. The DNR is responsible for ensuring the safety of the state's dams.

Director of the DNR, Ann Bleed stated, "We are aware that this recreation area is a favorite local fishing spot and we want to help the citizens of the state enjoy our natural resource areas. Our concern is to keep our natural resources safe and sustainable for people to enjoy. This safety aspect was being threatened by the flooding in the area. We are working with the Game and Parks Commission, the owner of the facility, to rehabilitate the dam. We greatly appreciate the support of the community."

The Champion Lake Dam is an aged dam built to provide water for a flour mill. Under state law, in times of emergency, the DNR must do whatever is necessary to ensure the safety of people and property below the dam. It was only after inspections and consultation with experts, including the dam safety engineers and Deputy Director Brian Dunnigan of the Department of Natural Resources, that DNR concluded the most prudent action to take to preserve the dam under these circumstances is to ensure that maximum space behind the dam is available to safely store potential flood water and prevent further damage.

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