

Department of Natural Resources Responds to County Commission Requests

Last week, the Monroe County Commission received a letter from Frank Jezioro, the Director of the WV Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Jezioro's letter was a response to a letter the County Commission recently sent to the Governor concerning improvements to Moncove Lake State Park.

Acting on complaints from campers and visitors to the lake, the County Commission asked the Governor to appropriate funding to develop additional camping sites at the lake and to appropriate the necessary funds to heat the water in the park's swimming pool. Individuals have complained that park officials must turn away campers, especially on holiday weekends, when all camping sites are full and the water in the pool is so cold that users can't even enjoy the pool.

"We have something special here in Moncove Lake," said Joyce Pritt, President of the County Commission, "if we are turning campers away because all camping sites are full and the Department of Natural Resources has adequate land to develop additional sites, then that's what we need to do". "Our own residents as well as visitors from outside of the county are willing to come to Moncove Lake and spend their money, we certainly don't need to be sending them home or forcing them to go to another campground", said Pritt.

In Mr. Jezioro's letter, he said the Department of Natural Resources has spent significant funds at Moncove Lake in the past ten years in the form of capital improvements. He said they have built the swimming pool, a new bathhouse and rehabilitated the dam.

In reference to the County Commission's request to develop additional camping sites, Jezioro said the campground was only full four nights last summer, with an overall occupancy rate of 31% to 45%. He said based on these numbers, he felt priority should be given to extending electric service the existing lots that presently don't have electricity rather than developing additional lots. He said the proposal to develop new camping sites is more problematic than one would think but he would ask the Parks Engineering Section to develop some preliminary costs and site feasibility assessments. Mr. Jezioro said he would also have the Engineering Section to prepare cost figures on heating the pool.

Jezioro offered to have the Parks District Administrator meet with the County Commission to discuss this matter further. Commissioners asked the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Administrator and request the Administrator to provide the County Commission with the occupancy rates for the park for the past five years.