

## BEPCO PRESS RELEASE

The Big Eau Pleine Citizens Organization (BEPCO) is taking action:

The Big Eau Pleine Citizens Organization (BEPCO) is filing a request with The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), to address BEPCO's recommended adjustments to the current Wisconsin Valley Improvement Corporation (WVIC) operating procedures in regard to the Big Eau Pleine Reservoir. It is BEPCO's recommendation to adjust the maximum winter water draw-down levels that have contributed to the numerous, and now devastating, fish kills occurring on the reservoir. The option to undertake this action is contained in the July, 1996 License for Project P-2113-000 granted to WVIC which indicates: The Commission, FERC, "retained the authority" to order adjustments in the operating scenario and reserved the "right to modify the minimum allowable water elevation".

By maintaining a higher water level during/throughout the seasons, and most critically in the winter, it will help to reduce the fish kills. More water will help dilute the pollution, coming from run-off, and make the use of the diffuser aeration system more efficient. It will also reduce the possibility of fish being stranded in potholes. Note: This will not end fish kills, the lack of "dissolved oxygen" is still the overriding problem, but BEPCO feels this is an action that can be done now to help. The operation of the aerator by WVIC must be continued as agreed to in the Final Environmental Impact Statement FERC/EIS-0089F, June 1996.

BEPCO is recommending this action be immediately implemented, temporarily, until this and other issues can be fully addressed in the upcoming scheduled 2011 operational review.

BEPCO is also requesting that a resurvey of the Big Eau Pleine be completed.

Based on available information, the original licensing information in regard to the "size" and "storage capacity of the reservoir" is based on a 1969 Wisconsin DNR lake mapping survey. BEPCO believes this map was already out of date during the 1996 relicensing and that continued silting and scrubbing of the shoreline and "islands" over the years has the reservoir being "filled in", reducing the "usable storage capacity". This should also initiate changes to the operating plan.

BEPCO members are outraged at the estimated 70 to 80 percent fish kill over this winter and hope to gather additional support from others who value this unique resource. Environmental, Sportsman groups and elected officials are being contacted for their support.