

## DNR says it won't negotiate North Lake compromise

### DNR threatens "economic sanctions"

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North Lake - The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has refused to enter into "good-faith negotiations" with the North Lake Management District (NLMD) in an effort to resolve the decades-long dispute over a public boat launch on North Lake.

Instead, the department has threatened to seek economic sanctions against a group of North Lake residents and the lake management district for making what the department terms "frivolous" legal arguments and claims during a contested case hearing on the project.

A lawyer for the North Lake residents has accused the DNR of trying to coerce the citizens and the officials of the lake management district into dropping legal actions against the agency.

"Your motion constitutes a threat that citizens must abandon their rights under law or face severe financial penalties," wrote William C. Gleisner III, lawyer for the Reddelien Road Neighborhood Association (RRNA). Gleisner suggested the state agency might be in danger of violating federal civil rights law.

Don Gallo, an attorney for the NLMD, offered "good-faith negotiations" in his response to a letter from DNR attorney Megan E. Correll that warned that the DNR would seek economic sanctions against the NLMD if the district persisted.

Correll responded to Gallo that her initial letter "was not intended as any type of offer to commence negotiations between the DNR Secretary's office and NLMD. I apologize for any confusion that resulted in your misinterpretation of this letter."

DNR Deputy Secretary Matt Moroney, in response to emails from Lake Country Publications, noted that a recent Wisconsin Court of Appeals decision upheld the department's decision-making process in selecting a site for the boat launch.

Meanwhile, state Rep. Chris Kapenga said he plans to meet with top-ranking DNR officials next month in an effort to seek an out-of-court compromise to the dispute. "I am getting very frustrated. At a time when the state budget is tight, there are better ways to spend money than this," he said.

The proposal to construct a road, parking lot and boat access ramp for about 20 vehicles and boat trailers on the western shore of the lake, off Reddelien Road, appears to have been tied into legal and bureaucratic knots with two contested administrative hearings, a county circuit court decision and the possibility of a federal suit. The NLMD wants the boat launch on the east side of the lake near Highway 83 in the North Lake business district.