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Willamette Basin Faces Widespread Impacts from Detroit Lake Drawdown

Detroit, Oregon – The planned drawdown of Detroit Lake is raising serious concerns throughout the Willamette Basin as communities, industries, and ecosystems brace for widespread consequences. This drawdown, intended to address critical infrastructure and safety needs, may trigger far-reaching impacts on water quality, storage, and the surrounding community.

All reservoirs within the basin are anticipated to experience reduced storage capacity, heightening risks to drinking water supplies, agricultural irrigation, and wildfire response resources during peak fire season. These reductions could exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, leaving residents and essential industries struggling to adapt.

The local recreational economy, a vital component of the region's financial health, is also under threat. Campgrounds, marinas, and small businesses—many of which are still recovering from the devastating 2020 wildfires—are bracing for significant losses in tourism and revenue. For many, Detroit Lake is a cornerstone of their operations, and the projected drop in water levels could deter visitors during the critical summer months.

Environmental impacts from past reservoir drawdowns serve as cautionary tales. The drawdown of Green Peter Reservoir, for instance, led to wells running dry, water treatment plants struggling to handle turbidity, and catastrophic losses in aquatic populations, including the total collapse of Kokanee fish stocks. Similar outcomes at Detroit Lake could have lasting effects on local ecosystems and the livelihoods that depend on them.

“This isn't just about Detroit Lake,” said Denny Nielsen, Detroit City Council Member, “it's about the entire Willamette Basin. The ripple effects from this drawdown could impact families, farmers, and firefighters across the region. We need to work together to find sustainable solutions.”

Local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders are being urged to make their voices heard and collaborate on proactive measures to minimize the impacts of the drawdown. Upcoming public meetings and forums will provide opportunities for community input and discussion of potential solutions.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Tracie Evenson at Detroit Lake Foundation Lake Level Committee Leader via email detroitlakeconservancy@gmail.com. Learn more and consider donating to the Water Committee as they aim to improve education to the public about the importance of keeping Detroit Lake at normal levels throughout the year. <https://www.detroitlakefoundation.org/save-our-lake>

About Detroit Lake Foundation:

The mission of the Detroit Lake Foundation is to enhance the quality of life for residents and establish a sustainable economic recovery to ensure that the city thrives for current and future

generations. They are actively educating the public about the potential drawdown of Detroit Lake in Oregon. They provide up-to-date information on water levels, reasons for drawdowns, and their implications for the community and environment. They also collaborate with local authorities and environmental organizations to disseminate accurate information through newsletters, social media, and their official website. By engaging with residents and stakeholders, the Foundation aims to raise awareness and promote informed decision-making regarding the lake's management.

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