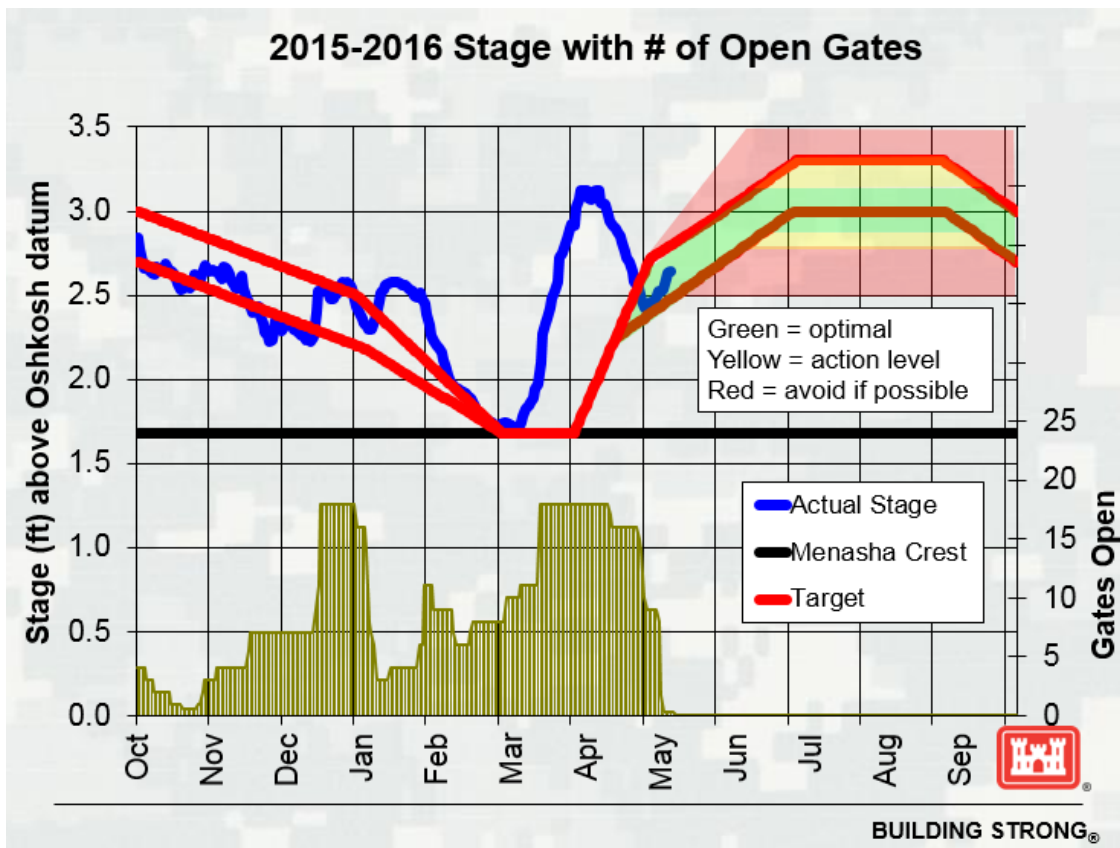




DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DETROIT DISTRICT
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
477 MICHIGAN AVENUE
DETROIT, MI 48226-2550

Dear Lake Winnebago Partner,

The 2015-2016 regulation year has brought some abnormal conditions to the Fox/Wolf/Lake Winnebago Basin. Saturated conditions were in place back in the fall and a rainy December added to the excessive soil moisture. For the first time in over 20 years, all available gates were open in December. Outflows in the Lower Fox River remained well above average through the winter to get the lake level back on target in late February. Then the basin received nearly three times its average monthly rain in March and despite having all available gates open yet again, the level climbed to 3.12 ft on April 2nd. As shown on the graph below, this level is more typical of early June, with a level between 1.75 and 2.00 ft typical of early April.



On our spring refill call held April 5, we discussed a strategy to bring the lake down by keeping outflow elevated. Our primary mission during the spring months is flood risk management and a level above 3.00 feet in early April created a large risk of flooding in the system with the wettest months of the year still to come. We must maintain enough storage during the spring to absorb spring rains and the resulting runoff.

On the April 5th call, an interim target of 2.70 feet by May 1st was announced, but should conditions allow, a lower level was preferred. April turned out to be dryer than average and gates at the Neenah and Menasha dams were gradually closed as inflow to the lake declined. Then on May 2, a second call was held to update stakeholders on current conditions and the strategy heading into the summer months. The level of Lake Winnebago on May 2 was near 2.50 feet. Dry conditions have persisted in the basin and all remaining gates were closed at the Neenah and Menasha dams on Friday, May 6th. Typically, all available gates are open at this time of year.

Currently the level of Lake Winnebago is 2.65 feet, or right in the middle of our “green zone” on our agreed upon water level regulation strategy. We were well above the target level in April, which is why we lowered the lake level so quickly. We established an operating band that we follow to ensure we maintain adequate storage capacity in the lake. We are now in the middle of the operating band and will allow a gradual fill, still maintaining storage for spring rainfall and runoff. The plan moving forward is to allow the lake to rise to the summer target of 3.00 ft by June 1.

As always, you can check our website for current conditions, lake levels and other information related to Lake Winnebago.

<http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/Missions/GreatLakesInformation/LakeWinnebago.aspx>