



Bayfield County Administrator

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There is a Lock on the Lock!

The historic Middle Eau Claire Lock and Dam in the Town of Barnes is down for repairs.

The Miniature lock and dam between Middle Eau Claire and Lower Eau Claire Lakes is padlocked and unavailable for boat traffic due to downstream seepage. The DNR recommended that the lock structure not be used until the source of the seepage and repair can be made. The lock and dam in Barnes is located along and under South Shore Road and the recently reconstructed bridge.

Historians noted that the hand-operated lock and dam was built in the 1930s as part of the New Deal program. Completed in 1939, it's the gates and valves are comparable to big river locks except in size. This lock structure is operated by hand, by opening and closing valves. The lock itself is about six feet wide and thirty feet long, capable of lowering two fourteen-foot fishing boats at the same time. When operating the structure is quick to operate and saves a harried boater the time to empty their boat and portage across the road.

The structure was last renovated in 2015. The structure is locked as the DNR is concerned that continued utilization could compromise the dam structure. Analysis is underway now by Cooper Engineering to determine the source and cause of the leakage and recommend how to repair.

Thank you to the Friends of the Middle Eau Claire Lakes and Jean Hedren for text and photos.

Questions: Contact Bayfield County at 715 373-6181



Sincerely,

Mark Abeles-Allison,
County Administrator