

# State warns county about leaky dike

By LAUREL WALKER  
Journal Waukesha bureau

Ottawa — Waukesha County must begin the process of repairing the deteriorating dike on School Section Lake or the state could order the 120-acre lake drained.

In a letter to county officials, William D. Sturtevant, assistant state dam safety engineer, said an inspection of the dike in February had found it to be in need of repairs. Brush is growing on the embankments, the dike leaks, and some areas have settled, the inspection found.

Should the 3,320-foot-long earthen dike that created the lake from a glacial depression nearly 50 years ago give way, it would probably flood mostly wetlands, but that would leave residents without a lake and with diminished property values.

The dike's condition is not considered a threat to human life under the state's rating system.

Sturtevant, in a letter May 15, told the county's Park and Planning Commission that it had one year to submit plans and specifications for repairs.

"If plans and specifications are not submitted for the embankment reconstruction, the Department [of

Natural Resources] may issue an order to Waukesha County to drain School Section Lake until all repairs have been completed," Sturtevant wrote.

Walter Tarmann, director of parks and planning, said the issue would be discussed as the department prepares its 1988 budget.

"We don't plan on ignoring it," Tarmann said. But he added that the dike posed a difficult problem for the county.

Repairing the county-owned dike would cost a significant amount of money, yet would directly benefit only about 35 property owners on the lake and 40 more with access but no frontage.

"To spend general tax dollars for something that will benefit primarily people on the lake isn't right," he said.

In 1978, an engineer estimated the cost of rebuilding the dike at \$250,000.

Instead, the county spent \$60,000 to repair a portion of the dike after then County Board Chairman Lloyd G. Owens of Ottawa made a personal appeal.

The lake has a public access, but it  
Please see **Dike**, Next Page

Detail chain may buy