

AGRED Press Release  
(8/8/2014)

As many in the community are aware, International Paper's decreased presence in the area left Lake Erling's future in question for many years. At the January 2013 Arkansas Game & Fish Commission Board of Directors meeting, it was apparent to International Paper that they and the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission were not going to come to an agreement where AGFC would acquire Lake Erling. At that point, International Paper told AGFC they would pursue other potential owners. On November 1, 2013, American Gamebird Research Education and Development Foundation (AGRED), a non-profit corporation, entered into an agreement with International Paper Co. transferring ownership of Lake Erling to AGRED.

One of AGRED's primary goals is to secure the future of the lake for generations to come. In order to achieve that goal, significant maintenance and upkeep will be required. The costs to maintain Lake Erling and its dam are estimated to be \$145,000.00 per year. Despite these costs, failure to maintain the lake and its dam are not an option. AGRED is willing to pay a significant share of that cost. However, after careful thought, AGRED believes that a yearly easement fee for land-owner access and a permitting system for people who have built or are building docks, piers, boathouses and other structures on AGRED's property is the best and most fair method to raise a portion of the funds necessary to cover the cost of maintenance.

The proposed yearly charge for easements will be a minimum of \$25 and a maximum of \$50, and the yearly charge for dock permits, with easement costs included, will range from \$100 to \$500 (depending on dock size). Any yearly increase in these rates will be linked to the Consumer Price Index or a rate of inflation calculated on previous years national indices. AGRED believes these charges to be very fair, considering the benefits those around the lake enjoy. All of the money raised through the easements and permits will be spent on continued maintenance of Lake Erling. While the funds collected through these easements and permits are important for the lake's future, they will account for *less than half* of the overall cost of the lake's yearly maintenance. AGRED will remain responsible for the rest.

Recently, the lake was lowered over three feet so that repairs to caulking on a panel could be made. Today, the gates are once again closed. However, these repairs were not the first and will not be the last to be made. While those around the lake have not historically been asked to contribute to its upkeep, that simply cannot continue. Similar to association fees paid for the betterment of developed communities, AGRED believes a fair, but minimal contribution from everyone around the lake to be the best way to take care of something that everyone benefits from.

Understandably, many around the lake are concerned about its future. To date, AGRED has held a community meeting in an attempt to provide information and answer questions for interested community members. AGRED has also provided frequent updates through newsletters. AGRED will soon launch a Facebook page so that accurate and helpful information will be available at all times to those interested. AGRED wants its vision and plan to be absolutely clear for those that want to know.

During the month of July AGRED offered free, guided site visits of Lake Erling spillway, water control structure and dam, AGRED is offering to extend these visits thru the month of August so that interested community members can see for themselves some of the maintenance

required to preserve the lake and keep these structures in compliance with state and federal regulations.

AGRED's directors have worked tirelessly throughout this process without pay. They have done so in order to secure a better, brighter future for Lake Erling, and they look forward to sharing that future with everyone around the lake. To date, there have been many proactive individuals that have already paid for their easements and permits for their structures. They understand the goal and what it takes to achieve it. AGRED thanks these individuals for helping to pull the wagon. AGRED's goal of preserving the lake depends largely on everyone around the lake pulling the wagon rather than riding in it.

For more information, visit our our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/theagredfoundation](http://www.facebook.com/theagredfoundation), or contact our office by e-mail at [theagredfoundation.tech@gmail.com](mailto:theagredfoundation.tech@gmail.com) or by phone at (318) 455-5124.

Thank you,

The American Gamebird Research, Education and Development Foundation.