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# Duke Lake marks its fifth year of being dry

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This week will mark the fifth anniversary of the draining of Duke Lake at Ryerson State Park.

That's right, five years.

That's one anniversary that we won't celebrate.

At the current rate at which things are moving forward with the rebuilding of the dam , it may be another five years before that lake is open for public use again.

Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection reported the cause of the damage to the dam, that forced the draining of the lake, was caused by longwall mining by Consol Energy's Bailey Mine.

DCNR has filed a lawsuit against Consol seeking \$58 million, but has denied a number of requests, including those of this newspaper, to view its report. Because of that, at this time, we are forced to accept DCNR's word that Bailey Mine was responsible.

It does, however, make you wonder exactly what the DCNR is afraid the public will find when/if the reports are ever released.

Consol has, of course, disagreed with that assessment and has appealed the decision to the state Environmental Hearing Board.

The losers in this high-stakes game of political posturing continue to be local taxpayers and outdoors enthusiasts. While the future of Duke Lake is haggled about in court, the weeds continue to grow in what was once a lake bed.

And, not surprisingly, every month that goes by without a resolution to what actually occurred at Duke Lake, the more the price tag to fix it goes up.

\* While late July and August aren't exactly known as great times to go fishing, word has it that smallmouth bass fishing has been very good in the Youghiogheny River of late.

In addition, anglers are also catching an occasional trout in the river, while the tailrace is, as always, still producing trout.

If it is trout you seek, Dunlap Lake just west of Uniontown continues to produce.

Minnows and night crawlers continue to get good results on the Monongahela River. The locks and dams have been good spots for catfish, walleye, sauger and different varieties of bass.

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