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# A sliver of optimism for new dam

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It has been more than seven years since the state drained the 62-acre Duke Lake at Ryerson Station State Park because of damage to the dam believed to have been caused by underground mining.

Recently, we learned Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has completed a design for a new dam at the site and applied for a permit for the project to the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Seven years seems like a long time and many people may be wondering if anything will ever be done to restore the lake. We wonder about that too.

DCNR officials have always said the department is committed to building a new dam at Ryerson. They just haven't said when that might happen or if they have a timetable for the project.

We don't know the circumstances that could affect the timing of the project. We do know money is tight, especially at the state level. The DEP earlier estimated the costs of replacing the dam in excess of \$20 million.

In addition to stating its commitment to the project, the DCNR has said restoration of the lake is not contingent on the outcome of litigation regarding damage to the dam.

The DEP concluded the damage was caused by longwall mining by Consol Energy's Bailey Mine. That determination is now being litigated before the state's Environmental Hearing Board and is proceeding at a very slow pace.

A recent case status report on the hearing board's online web site, however, may offer reason for a bit of optimism. The June 29 filing noted Consol and DCNR are discussing a possible resolution to the case.

We'll have to wait and see. But one way or another, either through negotiations or through DCNR's efforts, it would nice to see something done soon.

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