



Upper Peninsula Power Company

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Water Levels to Be Lowered at UPPCO Hydro Reservoirs

Marquette – Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) will be lowering water levels at its hydroelectric reservoirs as part of efforts to prepare for the coming spring runoff. The annual drawdowns are part of license requirements for the reservoirs that are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Drawdowns of water levels at UPPCO's Victoria and Bond Falls reservoirs will begin this month. The company's Prickett Hydro Dam reservoir drawdown is slated to start in February. UPPCO's Lake Gogebic reservoir is expected to be lowered between now and the end of February. Bond Falls and Victoria are located on the Ontonagon River in Ontonagon County. Lake Gogebic can be found in Gogebic County in the western Upper Peninsula. Prickett is located on the Sturgeon River in Baraga County of the central U.P.

"It is an annual operating practice for UPPCO to draw down water levels," said Jim Melchiori, supervisor of regional generation for Upper Peninsula Power Company. "We lower the reservoir to make room for the anticipation of melting snow and spring precipitation."

Melchiori warned that lowering water levels may cause "bridging," a condition in which lower water levels leave a space, under the ice. He said that increased water flows in the rivers associated with hydro facilities may deteriorate the ice from the underside, resulting in unsafe ice conditions. Stressing that these areas may not be that easy to identify, Melchiori urged the public to be extremely careful around all reservoirs, lakes and associated rivers this time of year.

UPPCO expects its reservoirs to begin returning to their normal water levels in April depending on the rate of snow melt and spring precipitation conditions.