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## News Release

### ENTERGY TO FILL LAKES

Lakes Hamilton and Catherine will begin to return to normal summertime levels beginning Feb. 22. In November, Lake Hamilton was drawn down nine feet, and Lake Catherine was drawn down five feet. In accordance with an agreement between Entergy and the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, both lakes will be refilled by March 15 so as to not to interfere with this spring's fish spawn.

The annual winter drawdowns serve many purposes one of which is to allow property owners to perform certain permitted shoreline construction and maintenance. Normal winter drawdowns are from three to five feet. "The additional drawdown of Lake Hamilton is part of Entergy's Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan. Exposing more of the lakebed in Lake Hamilton, where aquatic weeds were really becoming a problem, should help reduce the amount of nuisance vegetation next summer. The degree of success, though, depends on the number of consecutive days of sub-freezing temperatures that occur while the lakebed is exposed," said Douglas Sikes, manager of Entergy's hydro operations. "This year's drawdown on Lake Hamilton is the first of two consecutive nine-foot drawdowns announced last fall as part of its revised Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan."

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The spring refill of Lake Hamilton will occur in two phases. Phase 1 will begin Feb. 22 and end Feb. 28, raising the lake 4.5 feet. Phase 2 will begin March 8 and end March 14, raising the lake another 4.5 feet, back to its normal summertime level. “There will be a one-week period between the two phases during which the lake level will pretty much remain stable. This will allow dock owners and contractors to return docks that were temporarily relocated before the drawdown back to their permitted location,” stated Sikes.

Lake Catherine’s level will gradually rise five feet, beginning on Feb. 22 and ending Feb. 28. The normal summertime level for Lake Hamilton is approximately 399.7 feet above sea level, and Lake Catherine’s summertime level is approximately 304 feet above sea level. The lake levels may fluctuate as much as 24 inches on Lake Catherine and 12 inches on Lake Hamilton.

Drawdowns have been used since 1996 as the Plan’s primary tool to reduce the spreading growth of nuisance underwater vegetation, which is significantly interfering with recreational use of portions of Lake Hamilton. Entergy’s Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan called for the use of more extensive winter drawdowns and the stocking of grass carp by the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission as the primary methods of “whole-lake” nuisance vegetation control. The plan was successful in 1997 in significantly reducing Southern naiad in the southern half of the lake, but in recent years a new species of nuisance underwater weed, Eurasian milfoil, has invaded the northern half of the lake. Milfoil, which is not native to the United States, is rapidly spreading downstream. Unlike the native Southern naiad, milfoil is more resistant to winter kill. In response, Entergy and the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission have determined that two consecutive years of 9-foot drawdowns are needed to slow and hopefully reduce this explosive growth.

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“Unlike Southern naiad, milfoil is not a preferred food for carp,” said Bobby Pharr, lakes and property coordinator with Entergy. “Therefore, we must become more aggressive with the use of drawdowns and hope for freezing weather to help us. It is our desire to do what we can to preserve the recreational qualities of Lake Hamilton. We again call for all lakefront property owners to support this ‘whole lake’ environmentally friendly effort to control the weeds.”

Entergy and the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission will continue to closely monitor all the types of nuisance aquatic vegetation found in Lakes Hamilton & Catherine. Each year in late summer, the volume of aquatic vegetation is inspected to determine the best management tool to use at the best time whether additional stocking of carp or additional drawdowns. The Game & Fish Commission has introduced approximately 3,000 grass carp into the lake since 1996. At this time it appears that the appropriate number has been stocked into the Lakes to control those types of nuisance vegetation they will feed on.

Lake Catherine is formed by Remmel Dam, and Lake Hamilton is formed by Carpenter Dam, both of which Entergy built more than 60 years ago for hydroelectric generation. Lakes Hamilton and Catherine are part of Project 271, a hydroelectric project licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The FERC license grants operation of the reservoirs, the associated Remmel and Carpenter Dams and the project lands to Entergy.

The FERC license also requires and authorizes Entergy to control certain activities that affect the lake’s environmental, safety, and recreational values. Permits must be obtained from Entergy for any construction activity on the lake or shoreline, including boat docks, piers, walkways, swim docks, decks, landings, embankments, bulkheads, seawalls and dredging and filling operations. Relocation, replacement, enlargement or significant alteration of existing facilities also requires a new permit from Entergy.

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For more information concerning the annual drawdown, information on vegetation management strategies, or to obtain a booklet on the permitting of docks and seawalls, please visit our website at [www.energy.com/hydro](http://www.energy.com/hydro) or call Entergy's Hydro Operations office at 501-844-2148.

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