

Lake Hopatcong Citizen Advisory Committee

Review of 2012 Operations

Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2012 and October 10, 2012

- Water Chestnut Report
 - Kerry Pflugh reported on discovery of water chestnut on Greenwood Lake
 - Discussion took place regarding educating the public on this topic and power washing boats before launching for Lake Hopatcong.
 - NJDEP urged CAC to be vigilant about looking for Water Chestnut and reporting suspect plants asap

- Water Level Management
 - Emily Rich reported on consistent flows throughout the season. Staff kept a watchful eye for debris caught in the sluice gates.
 - Overall Analysis - Consistent flows and lake levels eventually rose once it started to rain. Committee applauded State Park Service on their efforts.
 - One member stated that this was the best management of the dam in the past 10 years.

- Fish and Wildlife Report
 - In spite of the vigilance and adjustments to outflow during the Spring to encourage refill, **the only thing that finally filled the lake was the rain**
 - Decisions on adjustments to flow were made by – reviewing local, regional and state weather forecasts several times daily and by monitoring water temps and air temps regularly
 - Conclusion: **While the lake eventually filled, it filled due to rain not to the adjustments in outflow.**
 - 24 hour reductions did not help increase lake level
 - Reduced outflow raised water temps
 - **Preliminary analysis of adjustment to outflow at the dam and refill indicate that if the 12 cfs had been maintained on all days instead of reducing outflow, the lake level would be only 1” lower than it is today.**

- Upcoming 26 inch drawdown

Due to public concern raised to the NJDEP about the slow refilling of the lake and due to extreme weather conditions and fear of more of the same, the subject of the need for an annual drawdown of 26 inches was discussed. Issues such as loss of business, loss of access to the lake and loss of use of the

lake for a period of time during the height of the summer season were mentioned as reasons to curtail or reduce the inches for an annual drawdown. It was pointed out that Greenwood Lake does not have an annual drawdown. It was further pointed out that Greenwood Lake is different in that it has more floating docks and less boat houses on the lake, so when there is a hard freeze and ice drift, there is less or no damage to property. There was concern raised that without an annual drawdown there could be ice damage from ice drift, flooding and weed growth.

A straw poll was conducted to see where CAC members stood on the issue. The pros and cons were listed:

O 4 members for drawdown; 4 members for having a reduced drawdown; 2 members abstained (river representatives), three members absent, NJDEP Commissioner rep facilitated the discussion and did not vote

o Reasons for drawdown:

* Prevent ice damage to docks during a hard freeze

* Prevent flood damage

* Weed control benefits if there is a deep freeze

* Dock repair

o Reasons for reduced or no drawdown:

* Dock repair can still happen with no drawdown (preferred method by some contractors)

* Slow refill and potential loss of business and a lake economy

* Docks can still be damaged by ice during drawdown

- Action Plan

- o Based on the concerns raised at the meeting it was decided that some information was needed in order for the CAC to make a recommendation to the LHC and NJDEP.

- o The following data will be collected:

- Dan McCarthy- providing estimated dates when the lake was frozen enough for ice fishing (15 years of data)

- Emily Rich

- Provide number of dock permit applications received in the last year

- Talk to contractors dock and property ice damage repairs-what type, how much and how many on the lake over the past several years
 - Obtain information from NJDEP Land use about other water front repairs such as bulkhead, etc.
 - Fish and Wildlife provide data and summary about water monitoring, air/weather review that went into adjusted outflow recommendations
 - Jeff Hoffman NJGS to provide calculation on water lost/saved had the reduced outflow not occurred
 - Survey water front owners on dock repairs, bulkhead repairs and ice damage
- 2013 Five Foot Drawdown
 - Some feel this is a key time to clean the lake
 - Foundations for new construction next to lake are poured (high water table areas)
 - Weed control
 - Repairs made to docks, sea walls, bulkheads
 - Many very concerned lake will not recover

Action: Determine what action to take per five year drawdown at next meeting and prepare recommendation to LHC.

- A follow up meeting was held on October 10 at 10 AM (Hopatcong State Park). Many of the same issues were discussed. The CAC could not come to an agreement on whether a 5 foot drawdown should take place. A decision was made to conduct a water front property owners survey to obtain information about ice damage, flooding, dock and bulkhead repairs as it relates to ice and their experience with repairs. The data from this survey will be shared with the CAC and LHC with more discussion to follow.