

Cedar Meadow Lake Watershed District

- Newsletter -

September 2011

Annual Draw Down To Begin September 18

To help ensure that a deep draw down is attained, the annual draw down will start on September 18, two weeks earlier than is usually the case. **Please plan to remove your boats and floats from the water as soon after September 18 as possible.** In the interest of getting water levels down in time to complete needed dam repairs, **the draw down rate will be increased to a target rate of two inches per day during the remainder of September and early October.** The draw down rate will decrease to approximately one inch per day when the water level drops below the spillway channel and the ability to discharge water is limited by the capacity of the lower gate. The District will again coordinate our draw down with the draw down at Burncoat Pond. The goal will be to reduce the lake level to approximately 60 inches below the spillway elevation. Following the dam repair described below, the water will be held at this elevation until the exposed portion of the lake bottom thoroughly freezes to kill the weeds. The lower gate will then be closed to allow water levels to rise to the spillway channel elevation where the open channel will maintain water levels at between two and two and one half feet below the spillway for the remainder of the winter. The lower gate will be opened as necessary during the winter to achieve the desired ice and water levels to minimize ice damage to shoreline structures. Please keep in mind that docks left in during the winter are susceptible to ice damage due to sudden Spring weather changes and resultant ice cap level increases. The flash boards will be reinstalled in the spillway channel after the final ice cap melts in the Spring to bring water levels back up to the spillway elevation.

Sinkhole Discovered On Dam Following Hurricane Irene

A sinkhole was discovered on the upper surface of the dam during a routine check following Hurricane Irene. The previously reported new leak through the dam eroded soil below the dam surface and the approximately six inches of rain that fell during the hurricane, caused a four foot by five foot section of the upper surface to fall three to four feet. This discovery occurred at approximately 1:30 PM on Sunday, August 28 and telephone calls were immediately placed to report the incident to safety officials and to seek engineering and construction assistance. By 4:00 PM, all the necessary parties were assembled at the dam to assess the severity of the problem and to take corrective action. Fuss and O'Neill, the District's engineering firm, sent its lead dam engineer, the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety sent a dam engineer, R. H. White Construction sent supervisors, and the Town of Leicester sent its Emergency Management Coordinator. The integrity of the dam was not at risk, but could have been threatened if the sinkhole was not addressed. The engineers agreed that a temporary repair could be made to ensure the continued integrity of the dam until permanent repairs could be made at a later date. A dump truck, backhoe, fill material and crew were brought in by R. H. White, and repairs were completed by 7:30 PM under the supervision of the Office of Dam Safety engineer.

Sinkhole (Continued)

Previous efforts to find the source of the leak that caused the sinkhole have been unsuccessful. The plan was to bring Fuss and O'Neill's engineers in this Fall to provide expertise and guidance with respect to the maintenance and repair of the dam. The development of the sinkhole may prove to be fortuitous. With the sinkhole open, the path of the water through the dam was very clear. We now know the approximate location of the leak and will be able to concentrate excavation and repair efforts during the annual draw down.

Hurricane Preparedness

The lower gate and emergency spillway channel were opened two days in advance of the forecasted arrival of Hurricane Irene to provide the ability to absorb some of the expected heavy rainfall and to increase the capacity of the dam to discharge water. These efforts worked well. Immediately following the end of the heavy rainfall, there was only three inches of water going over the spillway. This increased to only five inches as the surrounding watershed drained. The lower gate was closed on August 30 when the water level in the lake dropped to about two inches above the spillway elevation, and the flash boards were reinstalled on August 31 when the water level dropped just below the spillway elevation.

Law Suit Update

Central Water District Associates ("CWDA") currently has a judgement against the District in the amount of \$1.6 million. CWDA is attempting to increase this through higher interest rates than statutorily allowed. The summary judgement decision by the trial judge regarding the interest issue was appealed by CWDA and contested by our attorney. The Massachusetts Court of Appeals has not, as yet, issued its decision regarding this appeal.

Your Elected Officials Want To Hear From You

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the lake and dam, please contact one of the following elected officials:

Paul Dufresne, Chairman, Management Committee	508 892-0173	pd0173@hotmail.com
Tommy Lee, Vice-Chair, Management Committee	508 892-3750	tlee@wjgei.com
Wayne Ridley, Member, Management Committee	508 892-8684	nebackpacker@aol.com
Dick Johnston, District Clerk	508 892-1203	Rjohn56503@aol.com
Terry O'Coin, District Treasurer	508 347-6863	the.ocoins@verizon.net

Have a Great Fall and Winter

