

11/27/2022

An update from the Lake Level Advisory Committee:

For those who have questions about why we decide to lower the lake most years, some additional information is below...

We lower the lake annually for three reasons. Water quality, reduce weed growth, and shoreline protection.

Water quality: We've been annually lowering Big Bungay Lake 4 ft. to flush out the Nitrates and Phosphorus which contribute greatly to annual weed growth and contribute to algae blooms, inclusive of the dangerous blue-green algae (cyanobacteria). In addition, the recent weed kill efforts have been very effective. But a byproduct of weed kill is the breakdown of materials which can result in high turbidity (the transparency of the water). Flushing a percentage of the volume can result in clearer water when it refills.

Weed growth: We also lower the lake to expose shallow areas to freezing temperatures which effectively limits certain types of submersed and root propagating weeds. Lowering the lake annually is the least expensive way of controlling weed growth and is promoted by the N. Attleboro Fish Hatchery, MA Congress of Lakes & Ponds Association (MA COLAP) and Bungay lake's water quality management firm of Water & Wetland LLC.

Shoreline Protection: If the lake is lowered annually as previously described, there is no issue with damaging docks, boathouses and retaining walls. It also provides a time for each homeowner to clear their waterfront of debris and repair any damaged structures. It's when the lake is not lowered that the expansion and movement of the ice plays havoc on all structures.

Lake management is a **balance** between our recreational desires and being good stewards of a healthy lake, not to mention maintaining our home and property values. The Bungay Lake Association with the cooperation of the NA National Fish Hatchery (NAFH) have been lowering Big Bungay 4 ft. annually with few exceptions since Army Corps of Engineers rebuilt the dam back in 1991. It should be noted that the prior dam also had a weir gate system which was opened annually to achieve similar goals.

Most years we begin lowering the lake Nov. 1st. The water level typically reaches the 4 ft. mark by mid/late Dec. It's suggested that we allow a minimum of 8 weeks to effectively freeze and kill those weeds species that freezing can kill. Starting early February, we review the long-term forecast to determine the amount of freezing temperature on the horizon. If favorable, we then request the NAFH to close their weir gate, so we can secure the Spring runoff, snow melt and any rain we can capture to hopefully achieve a full pool as soon as possible. This is a judgment call based on the data we have in front of us. Close too soon and we risk dock and wall damage. Close to late and may miss out on some potential gains.

It's unfortunate that New England suffered a major **drought** last Spring and Summer (2022). Most lakes in the area were significantly low, as Bungay was. We do take a chance each year that a full pool may not be reached, but not lowering the lake will certainly reduce the quality of the lake that

we all enjoy. Although we have inflow from our relatively small watershed; Bungay Lake has, and always will, rely on rain to fill it up...and keep it full throughout the summer. If it turns out to be a drought year, whatever we decided in the Fall is irrelevant.

The other way we can manage our lake level is to keep the **inlet river** flowing as free as possible. In 2016, a Bungay Lake Earth Day group was formed that has grown to over 20 + residents. We meet every April to clean out the Little Bungay stream, and as of this date have contributed over 350 hrs. to freeing the stream of debris and obstructions which has significantly increased flow and therefore the rate at which both lake bodies rise.

You can watch the rise and fall of Big Bungay Lake's water level on the HOBOLink website. <https://www.hobolink.com/p/cae29012f9ed1bf5c9d0985887b42e51>.

We're fighting an all-out battle to preserve Big and Little Bungay Lake's water quality and throwing every know form of preservation at it that we can.

Please contact any of us if you have more questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Rick Bassler, Evan Carter, Scott Freerksen – The Lake Level Advisory Committee