



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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State Announces Its 2015 Fall Drawdown of Lakes

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) announced today that the annual fall drawdown of the lakes and ponds controlled by dams owned by DES will be initiated according to the schedule below.

| LAKE | RIVER | TOWN | START DATE | DEPTH (in feet) FROM FULL |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Angle Pond | Bartlett Brook | Sandown | Oct. 12 | 2' |
| Akers Pond | Greenough Brook | Errol | Oct. 12 | 1' |
| Ayers Lake | Tributary to Isinglass River | Barrington | Oct. 19 | 3' |
| Ballard Pond | Taylor Brook | Derry | Oct. 12 | 2' |
| Barnstead Parade | Suncook River | Barnstead | Oct. 12 | 1.5' |
| Bow Lake | Isinglass River | Strafford | Oct. 12 | 4' |
| Burns Lake | Tributary to Johns River | Whitefield | Oct. 12 | 1.3' |
| Chesham Pond | Minnewawa Brook | Harrisville | Oct. 12 | 4' to 2' |
| Crystal Lake | Crystal Lake Brook | Enfield | Oct. 12 | 4' |
| Crystal Lake | Suncook River | Gilmanton | Oct. 12 | 3' |
| Deering Reservoir | Piscataquog River | Deering | Oct. 12 | 4' |
| East Washington Pond | Beards Brook | Washington | Oct. 12 | 2' |
| Glen Lake/Greggs Falls | Piscataquog River | Goffstown | Oct. 25 | 1.5' |
| Goose Pond | Goose Pond Brook | Canaan | Oct. 12 | 7.5' |
| Grafton Pond | Bicknell Brook | Grafton | Oct. 12 | 2' |
| Great East Lake | Salmon Falls River | Wakefield | Oct. 1 | 3' |
| Great Pond | Powwow River | Kingston | Oct. 12 | 1' |
| Highland Lake | North Branch Contoocook River | Stoddard | Oct. 12 | 3' |
| Horace Lake (aka Weare Reservoir) | Piscataquog River | Weare | Oct. 10 | 5' |
| Horn Pond | Salmon Falls River | Wakefield | Oct. 1 | 1.5' |
| Howe Reservoir | Tributary to Minnewawa Brook | Dublin | Oct. 12 | 6' |

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|----------|-------|
| Island Pond | North Branch Contoocook River | Stoddard | Oct. 12 | 3' |
| Lake Kanasatka | Tributary to Lake Winnepesaukee | Moultonboro | Nov. 1 | 1.5' |
| Jones Dam ¹ | Merrymeeting River | New Durham | Oct. 1 | 2' |
| Kezar Lake | Lane River | Sutton | Sept. 30 | 2' |
| Kingswood Lake | Churchill Brook | Brookfield | Oct. 12 | 4' |
| Little Sunapee Lake | Kidder Brook | New London | Oct. 15 | 1' |
| Lovell Lake | Branch River | Wakefield | Oct. 12 | 3' |
| Mascoma Lake ² | Mascoma River | Lebanon | Oct. 12 | 3' |
| Mendums Pond ³ | Little River | Nottingham | Sept. 9 | 20' |
| Milton Three Ponds ² | Salmon Falls River | Milton | Oct. 12 | 3' |
| Newfound Lake ² | Newfound River | Bristol | Oct. 12 | 2.5' |
| Nay Pond | Dead River | Milan | Sept. 30 | 7.5'' |
| Nippo Pond | Nippo Brook | Barrington | Oct. 12 | 2' |
| North River Pond | North River | Nottingham | Oct. 12 | 1' |
| Northwood Lake | Little Suncook River | Epsom | Oct. 12 | 6' |
| Ossipee Lake | Ossipee River | Effingham | Oct. 12 | 3.25' |
| Opechee Lake ⁴ | Winnepesaukee River | Laconia | Oct. 12 | 5' |
| Pawtuckaway Lake | Pawtuckaway River | Nottingham | Oct. 12 | 5.5' |
| Pequawket Lake | Tributary to Swift River | Conway | Nov. 1 | 2' |
| Pine River Pond | Pine River | Wakefield | Oct. 12 | 8' |
| Pleasant Lake | Tributary to Little Suncook River | Deerfield | Oct. 12 | 2.5' |
| Robb Reservoir | North Branch Contoocook River | Stoddard | Oct. 12 | 2' |
| Sawyer Lake | Badger Brook | Gilmanton | Oct. 12 | 3' |
| Shellcamp Pond | Academy Brook | Gilmanton | Oct. 12 | 2' |
| Silver Lake | Minnewawa Brook | Harrisville | Oct. 12 | 3' |
| Squam Lake ² | Squam River | Ashland | Oct. 12 | 2.5' |
| Sunapee Lake ² | Sugar River | Sunapee | Oct. 12 | 2.5' |
| Suncook Lakes | Suncook River | Barnstead | Oct. 1 | 5' |
| Sunset Lake | Suncook River | Alton | Oct. 12 | 7' |
| Trickling Falls | Powwow River | East Kingston | Nov. 1 | 1' |
| Webster Lake | Chance Brook | Franklin | Oct. 12 | 2' |
| Whittimore Lake | Tributary to Contoocook River | Bennington | Oct. 12 | 1.5' |

1. Jones Dam – this will be drawn for a two week period to allow for repairs to reduce seepage from the dam.
2. These larger lakes generally do not reach their full drawdowns until mid or late March. The values listed above are generally the maximum levels reached, although during any given year the levels reached can be either higher or lower due to weather conditions.

3. Mendums Pond – will be drawn down this year to allow for needed dam repairs.
4. Opechee Lake - will be drawn down 5 feet below full this year to allow contaminated sediments to be excavated in the dry adjacent to the impoundment. The level will be returned to the normal level after the work is completed, which has been estimated to take 5 business days.

The depth of drawdown listed above is not from the current level, but is from the normal full pond level. Due to changing ice and hydrologic conditions, these levels can vary throughout the winter. Since the hydrologic conditions and recreational uses of these water bodies vary, the degree and date of the start of drawdown for each lake vary and could be affected by the amount of rainfall during the period. In addition, the actual date at which the drawdown will begin could vary by a few days based on operational constraints. However, at two dams, the drawdowns will be initiated on a specific Saturday in October to provide recreational opportunities for canoeists and kayakers in the rivers below these dams. The schedule for these recreational opportunities is as follows:

- On October 10th, approximately 450 cubic feet per second (cfs) will be released into the North Branch of the Piscataquog River from the Horace Lake Dam in Weare.
- On October 17th, approximately 250 to 300 cubic feet per second (cfs) will be released into the Little Suncook River from the Northwood Lake Dam in Epsom.

These special releases will start at or near 8 AM for the dates specified above, and will be reduced to near normal levels by 4 PM that same day. DES reminds people that canoeing and kayaking have inherent risks, and paddling the state's lakes and rivers is at the paddler's own risk.

Lake drawdowns are conducted each fall to reduce winter ice damage to shoreline properties and to reduce spring flooding. Drawdowns also give property owners an opportunity to conduct any necessary repairs to their waterfront property, provided they first secure a permit from the DES Wetlands Bureau at (603) 271-2147.

Generally, lake levels are allowed to return to the normal full pond level in the spring. However, Chesham Pond is lowered by 4 feet starting after Columbus Day for a period of 6 to 8 weeks and the level is brought up to 2 feet below the normal full pond level for the remainder of winter. In addition, the drawdown of Opechee will last only approximately 5 days. This year, the lowering of Opechee Lake will begin on October 12th, then on or about October 19th flows at Lakeport Dam will be increased to refill Opechee. This drawdown is being conducted to allow for the safe removal of volatile organic compounds buried adjacent to the dam which controls Opechee's water level.

Not included in this schedule is Lake Winnepesaukee. Unlike the other lakes in this schedule, Lake Winnepesaukee is not purposely drawn down in the fall. Instead, each year on Columbus Day, the releases from Lakeport Dam are reduced from a normal minimum of 250 cubic feet per second (cfs) to a flow between 30 and 50 cfs for a period of up to two weeks to allow for maintenance of the dams and hydropower facilities on the Winnepesaukee River. The flow of 30 to 50 cfs is the minimum flow needed to maintain the downstream aquatic life during this period. For a short period this year the rate will be increased to fill Opechee as soon as the work is done removing the contaminated soil by the shore.

By the middle of the fall, Lake Winnepesaukee is, on average, 15 inches below its springtime full level due to evaporation and releases from the lake that have occurred over the course of the summer. As a result of the reduction in the amount of water released from the dam after Columbus Day, the lake level does not drop for the remainder of the month of October and is generally maintained at this level through the month of December. Depending on the amount of snow on the ground in the winter, the lake level may be lowered further beginning in January to a depth of two feet below the normal full level.

A plot of the average lake levels throughout the year for Lake Winnepesaukee is provided on DES's website at http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/winni_levels/index.htm. Also included are updated plots of this year's lake levels, releases from the dam, and precipitation.

The NH Fish and Game Department recommends that if special drawdowns are to be conducted for the purposes of repairing property such as retaining walls or private boat ramps they occur only once in every 5 years. In the event a party may wish to conduct such a drawdown, please contact the DES Dam Bureau immediately after receiving all permits required for such work, so that the drawdown can be coordinated with any other work at the same water body being proposed by other parties. In this way the number of special drawdowns can be minimized, and unexpected delays (up to 5 years) for your project can be avoided.

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