

GARDNER LAKE AUTHORITY

270 Hartford Road
Salem, CT 06240

Special Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2022
Gardner Lake Dam, Bozrah
2:00 p.m.

Attendees

Bozrah: Henry Granger, Scott Soderberg
Montville: Bill Wrobel, Kate Johnson
Salem: Chris Rios, Jim Miller

Guests: Bob Neddo, Salem
Mike Socha, Bozrah

DEEP: Mike Lambert, Bureau Chief of Outdoor Recreation
Jack Hine, State Parks Recreational Supervisor 2
Linda Brunza, Analyst, Office of Planning and Programs
Eric Ott, Director of Engineering & Field Support Services
Joe Cassare, Fisheries

The Gardner Lake Authority (GLA) and CT DEEP staff met to discuss the lake's annual drawdown and operation of the dam. Historical data was shared by GLA members. The following items were addressed.

- In addition to GLA's annual request for a three-foot drawdown, GLA explained the need to have the drawdown completed no later than Thanksgiving. The drawdown request for 2022-2023 will be clear on its specifics. Now that Bob Hannon is retired, who in the State determines when the dam gate is closed and opened?
- The importance of a prompt and timely drawdown assists the native wildlife in adapting to the change in water levels before freezing occurs.
- The main purposes of the annual drawdown are: to manage the spread of invasive plant species (this has been confirmed by our limnologist over the years); to prevent downstream flooding during spring rains; to lessen shoreline erosion; and to prevent property damages. With the water level remaining high this winter (only reached 3' drawdown during January) there were significant property damages reported around the lake.
- GLA expressed concerns about paying for the 3' drawdown and not receiving it. Just prior to March 2, 2022, the water level was fully restored.
- DEEP has put together a team to assess and perform the drawdowns, providing GLA with contacts to reach out to for information.

- GLA is working with DEEP to determine how billing is calculated, especially when the drawdown does not meet requested levels and/or does not follow requested timelines.
- DEEP Engineering is looking at the rate of flow through the culvert and downstream.
- DEEP looks to balance the drawdowns with public usage, including boating and fishing. Concerns were raised about compromising the lake's ecology to provide public usage so early in the season, and who would bear the financial burden if the invasive aquatic plants were to spread due to high water levels during the drawdown period.
- GLA continues to raise concerns about the stewardship of the lake vs. accommodating the fishing tournaments.
- Discussion will continue to reach a mutually acceptable balance between the lake's ecology and meeting the needs of public use.
- DEEP is reviewing its current statewide drawdown policy.
- DEEP will research the possibility of installing weir boards to help in the water level management.

The Gardner Lake Authority extends its appreciation to the DEEP staff that attended the meeting and provided information on the operation of the dam. After years of limited or revolving contacts, in partnership we are moving in a positive direction with improved communications.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Johnson". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Kate Johnson
GLA Secretary