

Indian Lake Residents:

While we are all no doubt frustrated that the lake has not yet risen to normal pool level, there seem to be a few folks that feel that someone should be blamed – as if that would solve the problem. There is no one to blame. No decision was made in advance as to specific date the valve was to be closed. There was nothing “over the top”. The valve was closed the day that the ice was melted. We can all thank Marc Alaia for helping the process along by taking his crane boat out and breaking up some of the last large chunks of ice so as to save a few days.

This year was different than our usual lake drawdown. We had to drop it down 10’ this past fall (3 to 4 feet more than normal) to complete the work on the dam. Had we not completed this work, we wouldn’t have a lake. Add to that the fact that we have been a bit short on heavy rainfall this spring, and also consider that we had some abnormally warm temperatures followed by freezing temps early in the season, which caused the snow to melt well before the ice on the lake.

While we have closed the valve earlier in the past, we were able to do so because the ice melted sooner. I recall, however, that in one case we closed the valve too soon and had some significant problems because the ice was not melted. The rather large chunks of ice still floating in the lake were moved around by the wind and a number of docks were damaged or destroyed as a result. To avoid that possibility, Council made the decision to not close the valve except to prevent the lake from dropping below 9-10 feet until the ice was gone. Understand that the valve was cycled throughout the winter and early spring to maintain the level of the lake. It is not a precise process since we cannot anticipate how much inflow we might get. Additionally, the pipe is only 32” and it takes some time to react to a sudden inflow of water when attempting to maintain a particular level in the lake. Regardless of those issues, given the problems in the past, not closing the valve permanently until the ice was gone was a responsible decision. If Council had done otherwise, and docks were damaged, they would have been chastised for that decision.

Being a member of council is often a no win situation. These folks donate their time and have to make decisions on imperfect information. Rather than express frustration at them for circumstances that they cannot control, I would ask everyone to try to be a bit more understanding and simply thank them for agreeing to donate their time on your behalf. Please consider that but for the responsible efforts of Council who oversaw a long and difficult remediation effort, we wouldn’t have a lake at all.

To answer some common questions that have been asked, there are no valves to open in order to refill the lake. Our lake is fed primarily by two tributaries - Clear Run and Calendar’s Run. The rainfall and associated runoff in our watershed feeds these two tributaries, which dump out into the lake. Bottom line, the lake will refill as soon as we get enough precipitation to refill it. Flash flood warnings have been issued for today and tomorrow. Let’s hope that provides us with the precipitation and resultant runoff that we need. As was demonstrated in 2009 when a major storm caused the lake level to rise 30’ in approximately 8 days; with enough rainfall, the lake level can change dramatically in a very short period of time. In the meantime, I can only hope that you can use our present situation productively to do any necessary dock and seawall repairs.

I hope you find this information helpful and while we all have cabin fever and want to get out on the lake, the drawdown was necessary and unavoidable. With a little cooperation from Mother Nature, the lake will refill and we can all enjoy the summer season.

With kind regards,

*Mike*

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