

Dam Committee Report

A Strange Spring

By Bill Van Voorhis

We had some strange issues last spring, with not much snow, and so not much runoff. As a result, the lake was super low in mid-March, down to around 9 inches. I ran down to the dam and closed the gate almost completely to try to build the water level back up. I went away for the first three weeks in April and gave my gate key to Larry Clark, who diligently watched over the situation.

While I was gone, the rains came and the level rose back up to around 25 inches. Also, while the gate was so low, the State biologists were in and needed the gate opened up, as the smelts were locked in below the dam. They also netted ten pails of smelts and released them above the dam. So the gate was opened and closed right back up until it rained. We then opened the gate so there was a 13-inch opening under it, until the water level dropped to 19 inches. Then we lowered the gate to 8 inches until the water level stabilized at around 16 inches. We then closed the gate to two inches to try to hold this level.

By July 1, the lake was back up to 16.5 inches from 14 inches before the rain. The gate was closed to one inch for the remainder of the summer to prevent it from going down below our goals, with another drought expected. Many lakes in northern and western Maine are bone dry- pure dry sand bottom. We are lucky that ours are holding their own.

As usual, the gate was opened way up in mid-November for the winter.