

## FRIENDS OF PONTOOSUC LAKE BULLETIN

**October 5,2023**  
**WINTER DRAWDOWN**

The annual drawdown of Pontoosuc Lake will begin on October 15. The plan in accordance with Orders of Conditions as approved by the Pittsfield and Lanesborough Conservation Commissions as well as the responsible departments of the Commonwealth is:

- Commence drawdown on Oct 15.
- Drawdown at 1-3 inches/day until the target of -3 ft +/- .5 ft is attained.
- Maintain the lake at that level until spring refill.

Ideally the lake level will remain down for the duration of the time the lake is frozen, but if there is a significant storm event the lake can fill quickly and the wind-blown ice sheet can exert tremendous force on the shoreline and shoreline structures. Of course if a dock is left in the lake it can be severely damaged. We strongly recommend that docks and rafts be removed before the ice sheet forms.

Details of the refill schedule are being worked by the responsible agencies of the Commonwealth. Below is an excerpt from one of their releases describing the concerns which have necessitated the ongoing work to consider a revision of the drawdown/refill parameters.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation – Office of Dam Safety (DCR ODS) is re-permitting the ongoing annual drawdown of Pontoosuc Lake in Pittsfield and Lanesborough. The drawdown is conducted by operating an existing slide gate in the dam designed for a 3-foot drawdown of the lake water surface.

The drawdown is performed in the fall to prevent ice damage to the dam over the winter and to provide spring floodwater storage. Damage to the dam could result in partial or complete failure which would pose significant risk to downstream communities located in the flood plain downstream of the dam.

We will continue to keep you on this mailing list informed as this work proceeds and there are opportunities for public input. Below is a link to the website with the latest information.

<https://www.gza.com/pontoosuc-lake-annual-drawdown-project>

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Friends of Pontoosuc Lake