



Informal Short History of Water Levels on Lake Missaukee

October 1941 – After 10+ years of receding lake levels, Missaukee County Board of Commissioners petitions District Court to review information and fix a normal water level for Lake Missaukee.

April 1942 – Court orders that the normal water level be set at 1238.0 feet U.S.G.S.

NOTE: From records available, appears that no method was recommended for holding this level, nor was there any mention of how it would be funded. Over time, the ruling was largely forgotten.

May 1970 – (Court File C-280) Complaint filed by property owners on north shore whose land had been developed during a period low lake levels and were now being flooded by unusually high water. Lake level in March 1971 was 1240 feet, two feet above the legal level.

District Court orders county to take emergency measures to lower lake from the current 1240 feet to 1238 foot “normal” level. Structure to be in place by August 1970.

March 1971 – (Court File C-323) Additional complaints filed due to outlet structure not completed.

October 1971 to May 1974 – 1238 foot level upheld. After many appeals, a special assessment district is agreed to and established. Group of south shore residents proposes keeping level at 1238.5 feet early in the season to allow for normal evaporation during dry season. The higher level is approved for Feb, Mar, Apr and May.

July 1989 – Group of property owners petition to have 1238.5 foot level maintained through June and July. Approved by the District Court in October 1989

Comments

- The 1238’ “normal” or “natural” level was not originally described as a maximum level. In fact, the issue in 1941 was water levels too low.
- On this reading of the files, I could not find any mention of leeway to hold level above 1238.5’ although it has been above that level at the start of the season at least a few times in the past 10 years, including this year.
- Obviously, the septic system failures cited as a result of high water 40 years ago is no longer an issue.