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State announces fall lake drawdown

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CONCORD — The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services has announced the dates of the annual fall drawdown of lakes and ponds that are controlled by the state.

Because hydrologic conditions and recreational uses of the water bodies vary, the degree and date of the drawdowns are different for some of those lakes and ponds.

The drawdown for Suncook Lakes in Barnstead is Oct. 1, and for Lake Opechee in Laconia, on Oct. 13.



Drawdowns scheduled for Oct. 15 include Barnstead Parade in Barnstead, Crystal Lake and Shellcamp Pond in Gilmanton, Newfound Lake in Bristol, Squam Lake in Ashland, Sunset Lake in Alton, Webster Lake in Franklin, and Lake Winnisquam in Belmont.

Lake Kanasatska in Moultonborough will be drawn down on Nov. 1.

Lake drawdowns are intended to reduce winter ice damage to shoreline properties and to reduce spring flooding. The drawdowns also give property owners an opportunity to make necessary repairs to their waterfront property, as long as they obtain the appropriate permits from the Wetlands Bureau.



The drawdowns of Lake Opechee and Lake Winnisquam occur on two-year intervals and last only a few weeks. This year, the lowering of Lake Opechee will begin on Oct. 13 and will likely take two days to pass the water downstream through Lake Winnisquam. The level of Winnisquam will not drop noticeably until Oct. 15. On Oct. 29, the flows at the Lakeport Dam will be increased to refill Lake Opechee, and the level of Lake Winnisquam should begin to rise late in the day on Oct. 30.

Lake Winnepesaukee is not purposely drawn down, but releases from the Lakeport Dam are reduced from the normal minimum of 250 cubic feet per second to between 30 and 50 cfs for a period of up to two weeks to allow for maintenance of the dams and hydropower facilities on the Winnepesaukee River. That reduction will begin on Oct. 16 this year.