

Beavers, dams and baffler

Winter is moving towards spring, and after a slow start in terms of snowfall there are now fairly typical levels of snowpack around our lakes. The timing and nature of the thaw will determine how the run-off affects lake levels.

As you all know, levels in Little Silver are also strongly influenced by the beaver dam across the outflow stream. For the last decade, the Association has installed a beaver baffler system of pipes run through the dam to mitigate the rise in level in spring, and to handle other period of high precipitation during the year. A team of volunteers maintains the system to remove any blockages, and we are continuously reviewing how to make the overall system more effective and less visually intrusive.

Historically, some residents removed the dam in the spring, and in some years also disposed of the beavers. However, the beavers return, and the dam is always rebuilt. It and the beavers can be considered as features of the lake's ecosystem. Removing the dam can have a range of negative effects on water levels and quality during dry periods and depending on timing can have impacts on fish spawning and on other wildlife. Therefore, the Association strongly discourages removing or breaching the dam. If water levels do become excessive, our volunteers will skim the top few inches from the dam to increase flow rates. In combination with the baffler, this will prevent excessively high water levels from persisting.

Dam, beavers, and water levels (high and low) have been some of the most controversial issues around our lake, and the Lake Stewardship Plan provides additional background and opinion surveys. The Plan is intended to be a living document, and so the Association Board encourages feedback at any time on this and any other concerns.

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