

History of the Silver Lake Drain

In the mid 60's the water levels were so low that the south end was virtually a mud-hole. Developers built homes mid-lake on low lying properties that then had flooding issues when the water rose. A group of concerned residents got together and formed the SLIA to investigate what they might do to bring the levels up. At the end of the 60's the levels so no further action was taken, however, there was continued interest in the betterment and preservation of the lake through the SLIA, which continues to this time. In the mid 70's the levels rose very high flooding homes and septic systems and eroding the shoreline. At that time the SLIA petitioned the county to establish a lake level, this action failed because the statute it was presented under was to "establish & maintain" a level, which would have required bringing it up when low, with too much cost and repercussion to the watershed.

In the mid- 80's the levels rose even higher than the 70's with even more damage. Residents were resorting to sandbagging to keep the water at bay, pumping water out of flooded lower levels and many were unable to use their septic systems, some even having to leave their homes. The SLIA began contacting every property owner and with overwhelming support, petitioned the county again, asking this time that only a high-water level be established with a control structure that would divert the overflow water, this is what is referred to as the Silver Lake Drain.

The legal lake level and control structure were determined by a team of engineers; the drain structure was constructed and has been maintained by the County Drain Commissioner and SLIA volunteers since that time. The drain is on the south end of the lake, flowing under US31 through a pond and creek and ultimately to the Boardman River and Grand Traverse Bay. Monitoring requirements are in place to protect the fishery and water quality downstream. The drain does NOT get "opened and closed". It only functions as an overflow when the lake levels exceed the determined high-water mark. More information regarding our drain and historic water level data can be found on our website: SilverlakeTC.Org