

## History of the Silver Lake Drain

The high water levels on Silver Lake this spring have been of concern to many. For those of us "old-timers" who have resided on the lake for many years, these ups and downs are taken for granted and the actions that have resulted from them as well - but for those of you who have joined us in recent years - we'd like to share a little history.

The "really" old-timers tell of drastic changes back in the early 1900's, but we'll start with 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 came back up and nothing was really done, but the good and lasting result was the 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 with flooded homes and septic, erosion, and many stately old trees lost along 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 & repercussion to the watershed. .... and the water was down by the end of the decade.

In the mid- 80's the levels rose even higher than the 70's with even more damage. Residents resorting to sand bags to keep the water at bay, pumping water out of flooded lower levels or unable to use septic systems, some even having to leave their homes. The SLIA swung into action again, contacting every property owner and with overwhelming support, petitioned the county again, asking this time that only a high water level be established with an overflow drain to be constructed to release the water when needed.

The proper level & drain requirements were determined by a team of engineers, the drain was constructed and has been maintained by the County Drain Commissioner 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 is opened in years as needed and remains closed when not. (Pictures and description of the drain can be found on the SLIA website)

2014, again in mid- decade, the waters have risen - higher than they have for many years - definitely testing our endurance - but the drain is open and we are thankful for the dedication of those people who gave many hours to bring it into being.