

October 7, 2022

Tracey Hanson, First Selectman
Town of Voluntown
P.O. Box 96
Voluntown, CT 06384

RE: Beach Pond Drawdown

Dear First Selectman Hanson,

This letter is in response to your request to draw down Beach Pond by six (6) feet during the 2022/2023 winter season. The reasons for the deep drawdown were to allow repairs of retaining walls and weed control.

Your request has been reviewed by staff in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and is denied for this winter season.

We acknowledge your request was to draw down Beachdale Pond and Beach Pond this winter season. We recognize that the depth requested for Beach Pond was to allow homeowners to make long-standing repairs, and that your preference would be for DEEP to approve a drawdown a year in advance. The ponds are hydrologically connected and will not be drawn down in the same season if Beach Pond were to have a deep drawdown. As per our conversation, Beachdale Pond is town's the priority for a drawdown this winter season.

There are several concerns with a 6 ft. drawdown at Beach Pond. A draw down at that depth will not be able to support aquatic life by exposing a vast majority of the littoral zone to freezing conditions. Stocking and recreational uses of the pond would be compromised because the drawdown would need to begin earlier in the year to achieve that depth by the winter months. In addition, coordinating the timing on the refill of a deep drawdown is extensive. Under DEEP's Lake Drawdown Policy, refill should begin in early March to reach full pond by early April, which can be accomplished with previous 2 ft. drawdowns at this pond. According to our calculations for 6 ft., refill will take 98 days under normal weather conditions, and the pond would not reach normal surface elevation until early June. If the weather is dryer than normal, the expected refill may not be achieved until August. DEEP supports an April refill target date to avoid interfering with the April to June spawning period for largemouth bass and bluegill, which utilize the shallow littoral zone.

Beach Pond is also an important public fishing lake and is stocked by DEEP with 4,800 trout, 3,700 walleye fingerlings, and 50,000 kokanee salmon fingerlings. Rhode Island also stocks 1,000 trout into Beach Pond each year.

DEEP staff would be interested in continuing discussions with you to find a suitable drawdown depth that fits the needs of the homeowners on the lake and considers the wildlife, habitat, and recreational uses of the lake. As you mentioned in your letter, early approval of a drawdown allows for homeowners to obtain necessary permits and line up contractors. We are open to early discussions to prepare for a drawdown in November 2023.

Thank you for your understanding and we look forward to future discussions for Beach Pond.

If you have general questions regarding this notification, please contact Linda Brunza of my staff at Linda.Brunza@ct.gov.

Sincerely,

Katie S. Dykes

Katie S. Dykes
Commissioner

cc: Mark Sulik, DEEP