

6/17/11 UNH Campus Recreation Comments (Sailing, Crew, General Outdoor Recreation)

Lamphrey River Emergency Drawdown Notes:

**Sailing:**

The University of New Hampshire Sailing Program uses Mendums Lake, in Barrington eight months out the year for its various programs, March (pending ice out) – Early November.

During the academic year the UNH Sailing Team provides sailing lessons and racing programs for over 50 collegiate students. The collegiate team also hosts several regattas at Mendums. At each of these events there are between 90-130 participants. During the spring of the year in addition to the collegiate team we also serve a large number of junior and senior high school students from the neighboring towns/schools. We host the NH State Championships and several other regattas, including the Mark Trophy the New England Team Racing Championship which saw over 100 competitors for the weekend. In addition we run an instructional program for the UNH Family Boatbuilding Program and their docents. During the summer the Summer Community Program serves over hundreds of different family members, including children ages 6-18 **and** adults.

After our devastating fire last year (March '10) the local sailing community, families, various regional and national yacht clubs and team parents helped raise over \$85,000 in order to purchase new sailboats. In addition seacoast community members also loaned and donated various boats for the Sailing Programs' use.

In the fall and early spring the effects of the current lowered/normal water levels has presented significant safety issues as well as damage concerns for all of our sailors and boats. When sailboats come close to the shore damage can be significant. Rescue becomes more difficult, often damaging safety boat propellers in addition to the damaging sailboats. Often rocks are closer to the surface in areas not expected. All costs money, time and decreases the availability of use. These costs are borne by the sailing team members.

The availability of boats negatively impacts the Sailing Program both for practice and hosting events. In addition the lowered water level makes it extremely difficult to both launch and remove safety boats as well as our docks from the water. In years past when the water level was low in the spring the Sailing Program was unable to have our docks and boats accessible to the shoreline, instead we had to anchor docks 100 feet away from shore creating access difficulties for all concerned and putting our sailboats and sailors at greater risk. Additionally participation decreased as a result. A side consequence was access by homeowners as they too have less area in which to recreate.

The thought of lowered water for more than a week or so puts the entire University of New Hampshire Sailing Program in serious jeopardy, impacting hundreds of kids and adults. It spells potential disaster for the only community sailing program in the state of New Hampshire.

All kids on the seacoast should know how to sail.

**Crew/Rowing:**

- Extremely difficulty in launching the safety/chase/coaching launches in the cove that houses the team docks and boat ramp.

- As depth decreases, the danger of hitting rocks increases around the sailing cove and the sailing practice area.

- The navigation/hazard markers, throughout the pond, will need to be updated in a very timely manner, to help prevent damage to persons and property.

**General Outdoor Recreation:**

There are a few concerns we would like to share regarding the emergency drawdown recommendations by DES. The first and foremost comment offered is 1. safety of our participants, 2) reduction/elimination of recreational opportunities for the UNH and Barrington communities. Assuming normal depth reduction due to weather and supply issues, we would see a significant safety risk to those using Mendums for recreation, swimming, boating, canoeing, kayaking and fishing. The pond itself is, at point of high water, always a safety concern. The area around the key swimming and boating areas are shallow, with intermittent rocks throughout. Some of the rocks are easily seen, many are at water level or just slightly below water level, regardless of water depth. Assuming a drought condition and normal evaporation/weather related conditions, a 4" lowering of this body of water will make the recreational area a greater risk for those utilizing the area. Swimming may need to be eliminated or restricted to a level that children are not allowed to participate. Boating will likewise be affected as the 'informal beach like' areas, the islands, the sailing bay (also a loon nesting area) and surrounding areas are rife with both hidden rocks, those rocks in plain sight and those just under the surface. Marking the rocks or problems areas will be problematic/difficult. We are not sure of the effect of a drawdown on the portable docks and safety launches as we have not mapped the bottom when the pond is drawn down in the late fall...we will be doing this, this next fall drawdown period. The last major concern I would like to mention is one which was highlighted during the Pawtuckaway Lake Improvement Assn. meeting on Sat June 11 in Nottingham. That fact is: that the studies done have been done with Pawtuckaway Lake and the river in mind, but the detailed studies have not been completed to the same level at/for Mendums Pond. I would think this would be a major concern in implementation at this point-from the perspective of Mendums.

Please let me thank you for your consideration of these concerns and we all here at UNH would be happy to discuss this further at any point in this process!

Respectfully,

Denny Byrne, Director  
UNH Campus Recreation  
128 Main St.  
Durham, NH 03824  
603-8622-2073

