

Arnold Lake Water Level Control

The legal lake level was set by the Clare county circuit court in December of 1964 at 1141.4 feet above sea level. At that time the circuit court actually set the legal limit below what was recommended by the environmental study that was done at the time. Arnold Lake only has about a 600 acre watershed to feed the lake. There are no streams or rivers that run into the lake. There are rumors that there are springs that feed the lake but there is no documentation showing the locations of any springs. Arnold Lake's watershed drains into the Saginaw Bay unlike neighboring Long Lake that drains into Lake Michigan so we are right at the divide in Michigan for water runoff.

The lake level on Arnold Lake is controlled by an 18 inch culvert that runs between Arnold Lake and Cranberry Lake. The culvert opening is horizontal and the rim is set at 1141.75 feet above sea level or about 4 inches above the legal limit set by the court. The opening of the culvert has a cover that is on a screw adjuster. The Drain Commissioner can open the cover completely to allow as much water that will flow thru the 18 inch culvert to flow. He can also screw the cover down into the culvert that limits and can almost completely restrict any water from leaving the lake.

The Drain Commissioner has some leeway on retaining extra water in the lake to compensate for water loss during the summer. This is a delicate balance on not allowing the lake to get too high in the spring that could adversely affect property owners on the lake such as lost useable property or septic issues. At the same time the commissioner must keep as much water as possible to try to maintain an acceptable lake level all summer.

