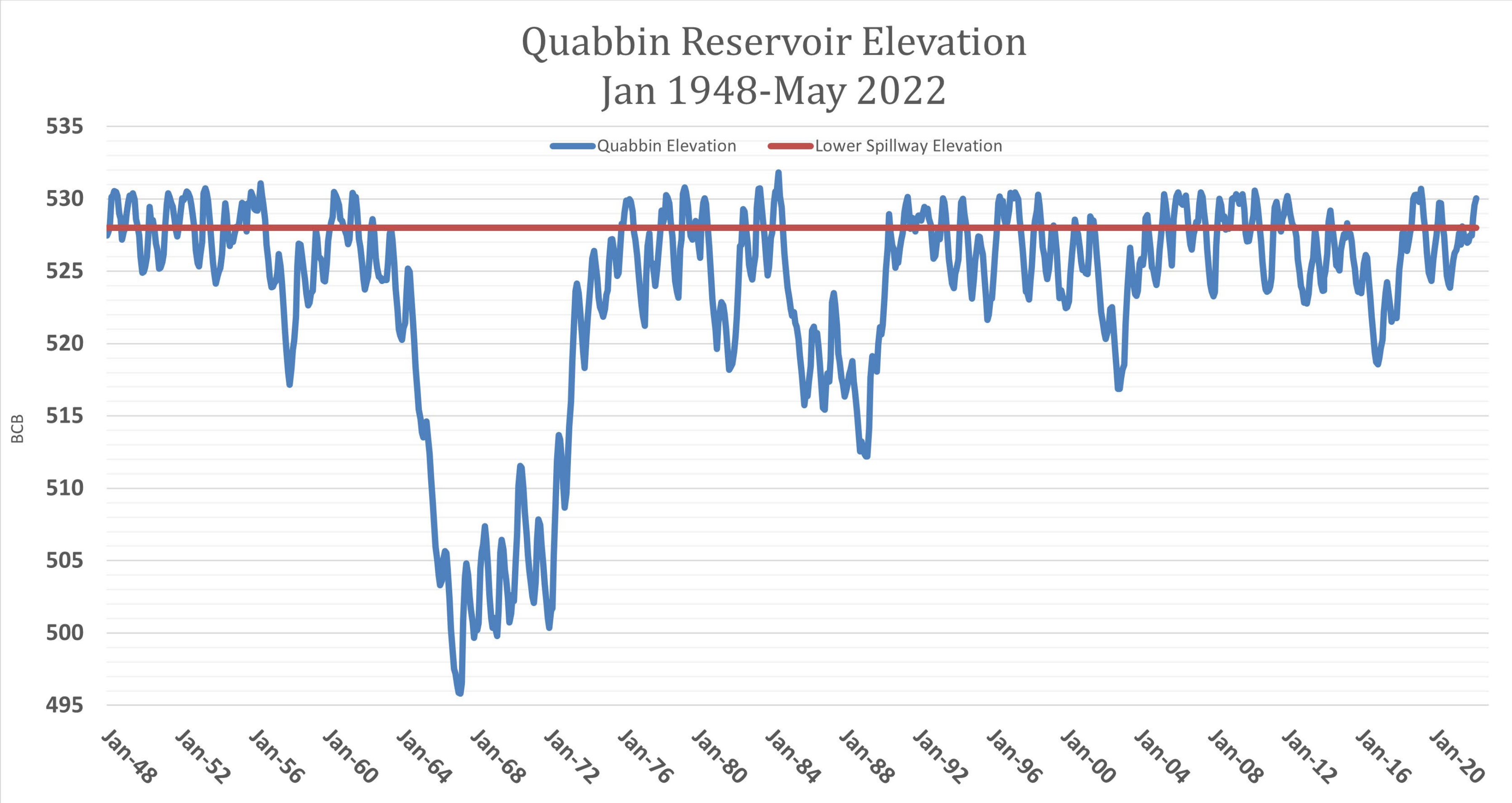


Quabbin Reservoir and Drought

Quabbin Reservoir’s sheer size and the amount of protected watershed land that surround it play a vital role in maintaining water levels. The forest’s leafy canopy intercepts rainfall and the forest floor absorbs it, slowly releasing it into the reservoir

Due to changes in how the Quabbin Watershed land is managed, as well as billions of dollars in infrastructure upgrades to the Boston end of the water system, the lowest the Reservoir has dipped in recent years was during the drought in 2016. In November of that year Quabbin was briefly at 79.5% elevation.

As of October 17, 2022, Quabbin Reservoir is 88.1% full (523.53 elevation). Elevation above 80% is considered within normal range. Despite the drought conditions Massachusetts experienced this summer, Quabbin Reservoir remains at a healthy level.



This chart shows the percent full for the Quabbin Reservoir in the years from 1948 through May 2022. A very serious drought in the late 1960s brought the reservoir below 50% capacity. Full capacity is 530 feet above Boston City Base (BCB). Lower Spillway Elevation is 528 BCB.

The series of photos below show a few areas of the Reservoir during the droughts of 1965, 1989, 2002, 2016 and 2022.



Shaft 12 Intake (Gate 43A) 10-13-1966 Elevation 496 feet



Gate 31 (Fishing Area 2) March 1989 Elevation 511 feet



“Rabbit Run” (Gate 35) November 2002 Elevation 516 feet



Shaft 12 Intake (Gate 43A) 9-5-2016 Elevation 521 feet



Gate 31 (Fishing Area 2) 9-21-16 Elevation 521.68 feet



“Rabbit Run” (Gate 35) 9-21-16 Elevation 521.68 feet



Shaft 12 Intake (Gate 43A) 9-20-2022 Elevation 524.57 feet



Gate 31 (Fishing Area 2) 10-7-2022 Elevation 523.69 feet



“Rabbit Run” (Gate 35) 10-18-2022 Elevation 523.49 feet



Quabbin Reservoir
Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Water Supply Protection
Office of Watershed Management
485 Ware Road Belchertown, MA 01007
413-323-7221 www.mass.gov/dcr/watershed

How to Find Current Conditions

Quabbin Reservoir levels and drought status: www.mwra.com/04water/html/wsupdate.htm
Massachusetts statewide drought status: www.mass.gov/service-details/current-drought-status