THE RISE AND FALL OF LAKE HITCHCOCK  
New England’s Greatest Glacial Lake

Glacial Lake Hitchcock is perhaps the most important story in the geologic and human history of the Connecticut Valley. 14,000 years ago the lake extended 200 miles from central Connecticut into northern New Hampshire and Vermont, where the remnants of the last ice age still calved icebergs into the lake.

Much of the landscape we see around us today was created and shaped by this immense lake. For example, Westfield State University is located on an old delta surface built into the lake – that’s why it is so flat around here!

The film explains many of the mysteries of Lake Hitchcock:

- What created the dam, and what caused it to break?
- What color was the lake? Why?
- What made the sand dunes on the lake floor, and what do they tell us about ancient climate conditions?
- How did the lake create waterfalls used today for hydropower?
- How did the lake shape the landscape that we see around us today?

Additional Resources

http://www.bio.umass.edu/biology/conn.river/crygeology.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Hitchcock
http://www.bio.umass.edu/biology/conn.river/hitchcock.html
http://www.wesleyan.edu/ctgeology/Glacial/GlacialGeology.html

Your Task

1. Watch the movie and take notes along the way – concentrate on the main events! You can fill-in details later using the resources above.
2. Tell the story of Glacial Lake Hitchcock to your 15-year old brother and sister as a 1-page summary of the movie.

Remember that you are writing for a 15-year old! Keep your story engaging and simple, yet accurate and complete.

Please include a title page with your name, CWID, and lab day. Your summary has to be professional and well-written – think of this as a writing sample you would show a potential employer at a job interview. Be sure to proof-read your writing and include page numbers.

Contact me (cbraun@westfield.ma.edu) for help and clarification as needed.