

APPENDIX C

Agency/Partner Coordination



Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8551
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8551
March 14, 2005

Bureau of State Parks

Mr. Peter M. Tranchik, P.E.
Chief, Engineering Division
Philadelphia District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3390

Dear Mr. Tranchik:

A revised 2005 schedule for target flow management releases and constraints from the Francis E. Walter Dam on the Lehigh River to provide for downstream recreation has been developed. This proposal replaces the approved releases from my December 20, 2004, letter. By copy of this letter we are requesting the reviewing agencies (Delaware River Basin Commission, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Watershed Management) approve the following dates as they have done in the past: All dates are for 2005.

Target flow of 750 – 1000 cfs – May 14 – 15

Target flow of Inflow Equals Outflow with a 750 cfs min. – May 28

Target flow of Inflow Equals Outflow with a 500 cfs min. – May 29

Target flow of Inflow Equals Outflow – May 7 – 8; May 21 – 22; June 4 – 5, June 18 – 19

Target flow of 750 cfs – June 11 – 12; June 25 – 26; July 2 – 3; July 23 – 24; August 6 – 7;

August 20 - 21

Target flow 750 – 1000 cfs – September 3 – 4; September 17 – 18; October 1 – 2

In addition, the following target flow management constraints are proposed.

- Temporarily raise pool from 1300 to 1335 between May and October.
- Begin raising pool the Monday after the first weekend of trout season (April 18, 2005) with a target to reach a pool of 1335 by May 1.
- Limit pool fluctuation between 1330 and 1335 in May and June for lake spawning enhancement.
- Increase Target Minimum flow to 250 cfs between May and September for downstream fisheries. However, beginning on July 1, if a target release cannot be met due to limited pool, then the minimum target flow would be reduced to 200 cfs until the pool returns to a level where in all likelihood it could sustain the next scheduled release.

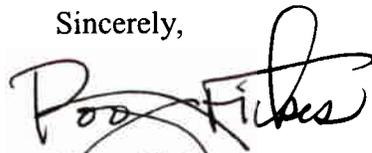
The reviewing agencies should have approval letters to my office by March 31, 2005. Upon receiving concurrence from the reviewing agencies, copies of their correspondence will be forwarded to your office.

In consideration for local sportsmen, no commercial rafting will take place on the upper section of the Lehigh River between White Haven and Rockport on the opening weekend and the following weekend of the 2005 trout season.

The target period of a typical weekend release event (under normal non-drought emergency conditions) for the 2005 whitewater release schedule would begin on Friday at 1600 hours and end on Sunday at 1200 hours.

As always, we extend our thanks for your continued cooperation in ensuring these successful events. Please contact me at 717-787-6640 or Dave Madl, Park Manager, Hickory Run State Park, at 570-443-0400, if you have further questions on these release dates.

Sincerely,



Roger Fickes
Director
Bureau of State Parks
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources

cc: Concession Outfitters:
Jim Thorpe River Adventures, Inc.
Pocono Whitewater, Ltd.
Whitewater Challengers, Inc.
Whitewater Rafting Adventures, Inc.
Senator Charles D. Lemmond, Jr.
Senator James J. Rhoades
Representative David G. Argall
Representative Todd A. Eachus
Representative Keith R. McCall
Frank Cook, US Army Corps of Engineers
Carbon County Sportsmen's Association
Reviewing Agencies:
Delaware River Basin Commission
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Stuart Gansell, DEP Bureau of Watershed Management



established 1866

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Bureau of Fisheries
Division of Environmental Services
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, PA 16823-9620
(814) 359-5133 Fax: (814) 359-5175

April 4, 2005

Mr. Minas Arabatzis, Chief
Planning Division
ATTN: Environmental Resources Branch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3390

Re: Draft Environmental Assessment
Francis E. Walter Reservoir
Temporary Operations Study

Dear Mr. Jones:

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Temporary Operations Study for the Francis E. Walter Reservoir. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) collaborated with our agency as well as with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) to propose the measures evaluated in the DEA. The DEA evaluates the following planned modifications in the operation of the dam in 2005 in order to provide environmental and recreational enhancements in the reservoir and downstream:

1. Store to 1335' (as compared to the historical summer pool of 1300') by 1 May if possible depending on inflows. Begin to raise the pool after the 3rd Saturday in April so early trout season angling pressure would not be impacted in-lake and downstream.
2. Keep lake elevations between 1330' and 1335' between 1 May and 30 June to protect newly inundated in-lake spawning areas
3. Maintain a minimum outflow target release of 250 cfs, as long as water is available. Otherwise, match inflow above 50 cfs or 43 cfs under drought conditions
4. Make whitewater recreational releases every weekend in May and June when possible to augment whitewater rafting opportunities.

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To provide fishing and boating opportunities through the protection and management of aquatic resources.

5. Recreational outflows of 750-1000 cfs from May to the 1st week in June and 750 cfs the remainder of June.
6. Whitewater releases of 750 cfs the 1st and 4th weekends in July and the 1st and 3rd weekends in August.
7. Whitewater releases of 750 – 1000 cfs in September and October.

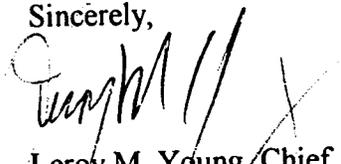
Our comments on this document follow:

1. We would like to emphasize that we view the 2005 operation plan as an experimental schedule that could change significantly in future years. Only limited evaluations have been conducted to date of all the various options that could be achieved if pool levels were increased above 1335' or the release regime varied from that proposed in the DEA. We have concerns about the effects of the release plan to deplete the hypolimnion of cold water conducive to trout survival, particularly in light of the significant increases in the numbers and volumes of whitewater releases proposed, although data collected in 2002 when the pool was much higher (1392') suggests that the capability for sustained cold water releases may be limited. The impact of the proposed release schedule on water temperatures in the reservoir and downstream will be important to evaluate in 2005.
2. At the February 24, 2005 public meeting regarding this proposal, we received complaints from anglers who believed the 2005 plan overly emphasized whitewater rafting opportunities to the detriment of angling, particularly in May and June, which are peak fly fishing months. We heard concerns that wade fishing, particularly near the dam, is very difficult at flows of around 500 cfs. In subsequent discussions with your agency, DCNR and DRBC, we have agreed that whitewater events in May and June would be limited to May 14-15 (750-1000 cfs), May 28 (750 cfs minimum) and 29 (500 cfs minimum), June 11-12 (750 cfs), and June 25-26 (750 cfs). Otherwise, weekend releases in these months would equal inflow. We believe this is a more equitable way to manage flows in these months to deal with the needs of the varied user groups.
3. Page 8, last paragraph – This paragraph refers to the state water quality standards in 25 PA Code Chapter 93. The Lehigh River from the dam to Jim Thorpe is designated for protection as a High Quality – Cold Water Fishery in Chapter 93. The temperature criteria under this option peak at 66° F for the period from July 1 to August 30. We would note that these criteria were not met in 2002, when the pool was at 1392', but average temperatures were generally below 68° F at least to White Haven and Tannery. We believe that it will be important to document what the effects of this year's plan is on river temperature and whether the criteria are met less often than historic operations allowed. We would think that this would be unlikely, but if the greater number of whitewater releases increases mixing, perhaps temperatures could increase in some months. The goal should be to maintain temperatures within Chapter 93 criteria as much as possible.

Mr. Minas Arabatzis
April 4, 2005
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Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding the above comments or if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



Leroy M. Young, Chief
Aquatic Resources Section

cc: J. Arway
D. Arnold



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Pennsylvania Field Office
315 South Allen Street, Suite 322
State College, Pennsylvania 16801-4850



April 8, 2005

Mr. Minas Arabatzis, Chief
Planning Division
(ATTN: Environmental Resources Branch)
Philadelphia District, Corps of Engineers
Wanamaker Building
100 Penn Square East
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3390

Dear Mr. Arabatzis:

The Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed Public Notice Number CENAP-PL-E-05-03, dated March 9, 2005. The Corps of Engineers intends to evaluate and study public recreational alternatives associated with the Francis E. Walter reservoir, located in Luzerne and Carbon Counties, Pennsylvania, and has prepared an Environmental Assessment for an interim operation plan for 2005. Water quality, flow, and recreational data will be collected to evaluate the interim release schedule, and used to consider long-term reservoir operational plans. The following comments are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-667c).

We concur with the 2005 release schedule proposed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (letter of March 14, 2005; copy enclosed) and developed through a collaborative effort by the Corps, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, DCNR, and the Delaware River Basin Commission. We hope that this schedule will not only maintain whitewater release events, but also provide adequate water quality and flow conditions for the downstream coldwater fishery and associated angling opportunities.

We view the 2005 release schedule as an interim plan. We look forward to reviewing the data collected during 2005, and trust that it will inform decisions on future release schedules.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. Please contact Jennifer Kagel of my staff at 814-234-4090 if you have any questions or require further assistance regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

David Densmore
Supervisor

Enclosure

