



Welcome...

to Francis E. Walter Dam,  
a multipurpose water resources  
project of the U.S. Army Corps of  
Engineers' Philadelphia District.

We are at the confluence of the  
Lehigh River and Bear Creek, in Luzerne  
County, Pa. — between White Haven and  
Stoddartsville, on State Route 940 near  
Exit 95 of the Pennsylvania Turnpike  
Northeast Extension (I-476).

## About F.E. Walter Dam

Completed in 1961 and originally dedicated as Bear Creek Dam, the project has prevented more than \$233 million in flood damages within the Lehigh River Basin, particularly at Allentown and Bethlehem. (In 1963 it was renamed after the late Rep. Francis E. Walter, who had served the local area in Congress for more than 30 years.)

The Flood of 1942 caused more than \$10 million in property damage and took many lives. In the same area, damage from the August 1955 flood was approximately \$18 million. Both these figures would have been

much lower had the F.E. Walter Dam been in place. It even prevented flooding on several occasions while still under construction.



*Bear Creek Dam under construction, 1959*

A multipurpose water resources project, Francis E. Walter Dam controls a 288-square-mile drainage area by providing 35.8 billion gallons of storage at spillway crest. Most of this capacity is reserved for flood control, a small winter conservation pool along with a seasonal encroachment for recreation.

The dam consists of an earth fill embankment 3,000 feet along the crest and 234 feet high. It has a low concrete spillway section and gate-controlled outlet works discharging through a single tunnel.

The Philadelphia District manages releases as a system from F.E. Walter and Beltzville Dams to reduce flooding risks for downstream communities. The dam was originally constructed for flood risk management and was congressionally authorized for recreation in 1988.

## Dam Operations

At the base of the intake tower, the gate-controlled outlet works house three hydraulic slide gates and three emergency gates that regulate flow through the reservoir.

When key downstream gages reach action stage due to a hydrologic event, the slide gates are reduced to minimum settings. Runoff from the event is stored in the reservoir, lowering downstream stages. Once those gages fall below flood stage, we increase flow—not exceeding the maximum stage of the event, but gradually releasing the impounded water until the reservoir returns to its seasonal level.



## Recreation Opportunities

**BOATING:** Powered (east launch) and unpowered (west launch) craft are permitted, 10 hp limit.

**HUNTING:** You can hunt in season at the project; no hunting zones are clearly marked. Black bear, deer, turkey, ducks, geese, grouse, pheasant, and doves all inhabit the area.

**PICNICKING:** Picnic areas for family outings include tables, grills, and portable toilets.

**WHITEWATER EVENTS:** We seasonally store 70 feet of water for our recreation program; this is utilized on selected weekends between May and October, creating exciting whitewater conditions downstream in the Lehigh River Gorge.

**NATURE TRAILS:** The reservoir's borders contain numerous wooded pathways to lure the summer hiker.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** For camera buffs, F.E. Walter offers a scenic panorama of nature throughout the four seasons.

**FISHING & ANGLING:** You can fish both on the reservoir and below the dam in accordance with state regulations. The reservoir and Lehigh River are stocked with trout several times a season; native species include pike, pickerel, both large and small mouth bass, catfish, perch, sunfish, and crappies.

**ICE FISHING:** Prime season is during January and February, when temperatures are at their lowest and the ice is thickest.

## Vital Statistics

| DAM                                |             |                          |
|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Top-of-dam elevation               |             | 1,474 feet*              |
| Height above streambed             |             | 234 feet                 |
| Top width                          |             | 30 feet                  |
| Length                             |             | 3,000 feet               |
| Base width                         |             | 1,000 feet               |
| Concrete                           |             | 21,000 cubic yards       |
| Earth and rock fill                |             | 4.3 million cubic yards  |
| OUTLET WORKS                       |             |                          |
| Tunnel diameter                    |             | 16 feet                  |
| Tunnel length                      |             | 1,150 feet               |
| Gates (6)                          |             | 5.67 x 10 feet           |
| SPILLWAY                           |             |                          |
| Crest elevation                    |             | 1,450 feet*              |
| Crest length                       |             | 450 feet                 |
| LAKE                               |             |                          |
| Flood control storage              |             | 35.8 billion gallons     |
| Reservoir surface area & elevation | Winter pool | 100 acres at 1,300 feet* |
|                                    | Summer pool | 520 acres at 1,370 feet* |
| Drainage area                      |             | 288 square miles         |

\*all elevations are NGVD 29

*(Dam aerial photos courtesy of David Kappler; fishing photo courtesy of Chris Allebach)*

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## Francis E. Walter Dam & Reservoir

