



Francis E. Walter Dam Re-Evaluation Study

Overview

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District, in partnership with the Delaware River Basin Commission and New York City Department of Environmental Protection, is conducting a re-evaluation study for Francis E. Walter Dam and Reservoir. The study is authorized by Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970 to investigate project modifications based on changed economic conditions. The Feasibility Cost Share Agreement was signed on 9/25/19 jointly with Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP). The first milestone for the study was completed in May of 2020.



The Francis E. Walter Dam was constructed by the USACE in 1961 and has prevented more than \$340 million in flood damages. It also supports recreation in the Lehigh Valley with planned fishing and whitewater rafting water releases.

Initial Study Progress

The study first focused on the originally authorized purpose of flood damage reduction, with additional consideration given to associated environmental, recreation, water supply, low flow augmentation, and in-lake recreational opportunities, to identify possible improvements to the existing structure, infrastructure, and operations.

Next Steps

In the next phase, the study will evaluate the existing and future use of F.E. Walter Reservoir during Delaware River Basin emergency drought conditions to support/aid salinity repulsion in the Delaware Estuary, provide low flow augmentation, and protect aquatic life. Previous studies did not fully reevaluate all opportunities to provide additional flows for drought management. Initial formulation screening and historical storage events have shown that increased storage alternatives may result in potential dam safety and downstream flood risk and water quality/environment impacts.

Next Steps (Continued)

To reduce these risks, study scoping needs to be increased to provide technical analysis for environmental modeling, structural modification designs, hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) analysis, Geotech Analysis, and Dam Risk Management Center approval. An Additional Resource Request (ARR) to conduct this work was approved by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works in November 2023.

On Sept 17, 2024, USACE, DRBC, and NYC DEP signed a feasibility cost sharing agreement amendment. This positions the study to ensure adequate time and resources to complete a full re-evaluation. This includes additional environmental modeling and engineering analysis.