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Subject: : Paflyfish General Forum

Topic: : FE Walter Dam 2007 Flow Plan Workshop

Re: FE Walter Dam 2007 Flow Plan Workshop

Author: : vregular

Date: : 2007/1/26 11:54:47

URL:

Yes, Walter is inadequetly engineered compared to your other dams that provide cold tailwater fisheries.

There are only two release options - one set of valves at the bottom of the lake 1,250' above sea level (can push 10,000cfs), and one set of by-pass valves at 1,297' above sea level that can push upto 400cfs depending on head pressure.

Now last summer was an anomaly imo - most years do not require a massive blow-out. Take a look at this link - this shows the highest pool levels reached since completion of the dam...you can see a lot of years where a fraction of the lakes storage was utilized.

<http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/watercontrol/waltr.his>

What is important to remember about the Lehigh below the dam is all the coldwater tribs. They are where the wild trout seek refuge and as a result trout are pretty well spread out thru the entire river from the Dam through the gorge and beyond. The tribs actually cool the river once you get down into the Gorge, so much so that the temps at Lehighton are cooler then say at Tannery. This is a fact. Water is colder 20 miles below the dam, then right below the dam

I will say though that 115' of storage makes a huge difference then in the past with just 50. In a normal rain year, and obviously a moderate wet, with spaced out rains, you might see good trout friendly temps all summer long, even with this antiquated release tower. There is a chart the corps had last night that showed water temps last year, that were very close to the 2002 drought storage year, when the lake was raised to 1,392' and no whitewater releases. Stratification in the lake had low-50 water temps until late june last year, just before the blow-out.

This year the PFBC is putting 50,000 fingerlings in the upper gorge. This is a huge modification to their previous management of the river, and is a direct result of them understanding the make-up of the river.

However, it is important to understand that these yearly flow-plans are short term. Long term fix to the dam and operation relies on getting a pending study on dam operations. This study was mention a few times last night, and is the logical next step to enhancing the river. [The Lehigh Coldwater Fishery Alliance](#) is actively seeking funding thru Sen Specters office for the fiscal 08 Corps budget.