

NEWS RELEASE

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DELAWARE BASIN STATES AND NEW YORK CITY ANNOUNCE ONE-YEAR RENEWAL OF CURRENT RESERVOIR OPERATING PLAN AGREEMENT

MILFORD, Pa. (May 31) – New York State, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the City of New York today announced that they have unanimously agreed to a one-year extension of the current Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP) intended to meet water supply demands, protect fisheries habitat downstream of the New York City (NYC)-Delaware Basin reservoirs, enhance flood mitigation, and repel the upstream movement of salt water in the Delaware Estuary.

Diversions and releases of water from the three city reservoirs (Cannonsville, Pepacton, and Neversink) are jointly managed by the four states and NYC under the terms of a 1954 U.S. Supreme Court Decree that settled an interstate water dispute between New York State and New York City, and the lower basin states.

The Decree Parties (four basin states and NYC) will use the additional time to further evaluate this interim reservoir management plan and use the experience to help guide ongoing negotiations to develop future multi-year agreements.

The FFMP renewal, which will be in effect through May 31, 2013, will continue to rely on the use of the city's Operations Support Tool (OST) to manage the water forecast to be available in the three NYC reservoirs located in the headwaters of the Delaware River and guide the selection of releases. The OST is a sophisticated monitoring and modeling system that allows for better predictions of reservoir-specific water storage levels, quality, and inflows than previous tools. The progressively evolving OST has proven to be a very useful tool in managing the FFMP. Its development continues on schedule with the final version due out in the fall of 2013.

Release rates in the renewed one-year agreement are patterned after recommendations provided in a January 2010 joint fisheries paper from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

NYC will continue to create a higher potential to achieve a 10 percent storage void in the reservoirs from September 1 to March 15 as well as an average five percent void from July 1 to September 1 and from March 15 to May 1. It is hoped this program will help mitigate river flooding during periods of high inflows and heavy snow melt. Snow pack during the most recent winter was well below normal.

In addition, reservoir releases will continue to be adjusted to assist in repelling the upstream migration of salty water from the Atlantic Ocean that moves up the tidal Delaware River during low-flow conditions. As salt-laced water moves upriver, the City of Philadelphia and other public water suppliers can be affected, along with industrial surface water users and ecosystems.

The renewed FFMP maintains New Jersey's increased maximum diversion from the Delaware River Basin via the Delaware & Raritan Canal to a daily running average of 85 million gallons per day when the basin is in a drought emergency.

Additional details, including the FFMP agreement and OST background information, can be viewed on the web site of the Office of the Delaware River Master, which administers the provisions of the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court Decree, at <http://water.usgs.gov/osw/odrm/>.

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