

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Gary Paulachok, Deputy Delaware River Master, (570) 296-7213

DECREE PARTIES ANNOUNCE CHANGES TO THE FLEXIBLE FLOW MANAGEMENT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE HABITAT PROTECTION IN SUMMER 2009

MILFORD, Pa. (June 1) – In a continuing effort to improve the habitat downstream of the New York City (NYC)-Delaware Basin reservoirs, New York State, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the City of New York (Decree Parties) today announced two agreements to revise reservoir operations based upon the December 10, 2008 Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP).

The first agreement, in effect through May 2010 only, is designed to provide additional habitat for trout in the West Branch of the Delaware River by increasing cold water releases from NYC's Cannonsville Reservoir during the summer 2009 period from June 1 through August 31. The additional cold water will also benefit the Upper Delaware River main stem. Cold water released from the bottom of the reservoir will help the renowned trout fishery by reducing thermal stress caused by the summer's warmer temperatures. Absent prolonged drought conditions, the agreement increases the base Cannonsville release by up to 25 percent to 325 cubic feet per second for most of the summer. It also reserves a quantity of water in an "Extraordinary Needs Bank" to be available to be used by the Decree Parties for unforeseen needs. The agreement resulted from the recommendations of state fishery experts and a review of the 2008 operations of the FFMP.

The second agreement will serve to reduce storage zone bouncing, an effect that results in rapid increases and decreases in the reservoir discharge mitigation release rates, (known as the yo-yo effect) by allowing NYC operational flexibilities to better manage release rate transitions during rapidly fluctuating reservoir storage levels. During certain periods of the year, the reservoir levels are more subject to increases and decreases around the trigger points that can result in excessive bouncing between storage zones and release rates. In the spring and fall, changes in releases are more substantial and rapid fluctuations are generally something that fishery experts would prefer to avoid as they can be detrimental to river habitat. This is an amendment to the FFMP which provides NYC with the flexibility, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, to modify releases to avoid unreasonable fluctuations in releases.

Both agreements revise operations in accordance with the FFMP agreement that governs NYC-Delaware Basin reservoir diversions and releases under the terms of the 1983 Good Faith Agreement The FFMP, which was originally adopted in September 2007 and amended in December 2008, is an adaptive and collaborative approach by the five Decree Parties. An advantage of the FFMP is the ability of the Decree Parties to make adjustments as either new information is presented or as scientific understanding improves or meteorological or environmental conditions warrant.

These two changes announced today are another demonstration of the adaptable approach embodied in the FFMP concept. Among other things, the FFMP is designed to provide safe and reliable supplies of water essential to serve the needs of the 15 million people who get their

water supply from the Delaware River Basin, which also supports a diverse wildlife habitat. These amendments to the FFMP will enhance the balance needed to protect this vibrant recreational fishing resource during the warm summer months, while still protecting the water supply so vital to the public and our economy.

The FFMP and its associated agreements may be accessed at the U.S. Geological Survey Office of the Delaware River Master web site, <http://water.usgs.gov/osw/odrm/>.

2009
