



November 2, 2016

Army Corps of Engineers – Francis E Walter Flow Management Plan Comments/Recommendations for 2017

The Lehigh Coldwater Fishery Alliance (LCFA) submits the following comments and recommendations for the 2017 Recreational Flow Plan (“Plan”), in addition to comments previously submitted for prior Flow Plan years:

- 1) There was discussion about alignment of dates for the cancellation of fisheries augmentation and whitewater releases. I recommend caution as to not upset the balance for fisheries releases. As previously stated, 100 cfs augmentation release has provided noticeable benefits to the fishery. As such, the goal should be to maintain this 100 cfs augmentation for as long and consistently as possible, especially during the peak thermal heating months.
- 2) There was a request by the whitewater community to re-allocate water for a white water release the Columbus Day weekend Saturday. It was requested to maintain enough storage to have at least a one day release that weekend to help promote the Lehigh River festival. The LCFA requests that any storage not affect water allocated for fisheries augmentation.
- 3) The LCFA has concerns about trying to change these Flow Plans significantly. This past season was a dry and hot summer and the LCFA is under the impression that the Plan performed adequately to the extent practicable. The ACOE, PFBC and DCNR should be commended on their coordination to make 2016 a successful recreational season.
- 4) If the user groups see the need for additional storage to meet recreational demands, the LCFA requests the agencies (PFBC, DCNR and ACOE) investigate options to fund the Feasibility Study. The most significant factor limiting trout populations and angler days on the Lehigh is a result of thermal stress during June, July and August. If structural, operational and mandated changes can be implemented at FEW Reservoir, to maintain a consistent and cold (55 F desirable) release of water during the summer months, the Lehigh trout fishery has the potential to provide revenue to the local economy in the millions of dollars.

The LCFA requests that the Agencies, with support from the user groups, aggressively seek funding for this Feasibility study in an effort towards making the Lehigh River a destination for angling and whitewater enthusiasts.

In closing, on behalf of the LCFA, I want to thank all the agencies for their cooperation and hard work in making this Flow Plan possible and the overall willingness to work towards the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the water resources of the Lehigh River.

Sincerely,

Dean Druckenmiller, President
Lehigh Coldwater Fishery Alliance