

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
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**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS DIRECTS \$4.3 MILLION TO
WHITNEY POINT MODIFICATION PROJECT**

Project Moving Forward to Design and Construction, Will Enhance Environment and Recreation

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) today commended the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for approving \$4.3 million from its budget for the Whitney Point Lake Environmental Restoration Project at the Whitney Point Flood Control Reservoir in Broome County, N.Y. With the \$2 million local share already provided by the State of New York in 2005, this federal allocation represents the final fiscal milestone in the 8-year long effort led by SRBC – the non-federal partner – to adopt new operations at the lake for environmental restoration purposes and significant recreational and economic enhancements for Broome County and the region.

The modifications to Whitney Point Lake will result in the current summer lake level being maintained year-round, allowing for downstream releases during low flow periods when aquatic ecosystems are stressed. The releases during these low flow periods will range from 32.5 to 65 million gallons per day to benefit the aquatic habitat downstream.

SRBC Executive Director Paul Swartz said, “To put the benefits into context, had this modification project been in place during the region’s last dry period in summer 2005, more than 1.6 billion gallons of water, or 40 million gallons per day, would have been released from Whitney Point Lake over a 40-day period to enhance stream flows.”

The rivers receiving the benefits in downstream order from the lake are the Otselic River (a small portion), Tioughnioga River, Chenango River and Susquehanna River.

Swartz said, “The in-lake and downstream environmental benefits, coupled with the economic development potentials to be realized from the upgrade of recreational facilities, make this an extremely important regional project.”

With the federal share now secured, SRBC and USACE are moving forward with the next steps, which include the signing of a project cooperation agreement this summer and the USACE’s solicitation of project bids this fall. Construction activities are scheduled to run from early 2008 to summer 2009.

SRBC Federal Commissioner Brig. General Todd T. Semonite (Commander, North Atlantic Division, USACE) said, “At a time of very tight budgets and competing resource demands, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ decision to provide the \$4.3 million federal share clearly demonstrates the agency’s commitment to environmental restoration and to its partnership with SRBC, New York State and regional and local stakeholders. The supplemental flows from Whitney Point Lake will reduce stresses on the ecosystem, protect susceptible aquatic species and increase the population of others, including fish, amphibians and mammals.”

The benefits to the park's recreational facilities from the numerous construction activities will include:

- upgraded water treatment, water distribution and waste treatment facilities;
- improved and modified beaches, swim areas and boat ramps;
- widened and paved roads and parking lots;
- improved restrooms (flush toilets and handicap access);
- improved bathhouses (changing rooms, flush toilets, handicap access and lifeguard office); and
- constructed fish habitat structures in the lake and enhanced wetland for an existing 20-acre mudflat area located at the north end of the lake.

N.Y. State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis said, "The restoration of the Susquehanna River and its tributaries is a priority for DEC. Improving water quality and aquatic ecosystems of natural resources provides tremendous environmental, economic and recreational benefits to local communities. Restoring Whitney Point Lake and its connecting waterbodies to their full potential will help enhance the quality of life for Broome County residents and visitors. DEC is committed to working with our local, state, and federal partners on the continued progress of the important project."

"This project includes so many positive enhancements for our region," said Broome County Executive Barbara J. Fiala. "We are thrilled the final piece of the financing puzzle is in place and the work can finally begin. We want to thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, our federal representatives for their support, and our state leaders for their financial support as well."

Whitney Point Lake Information

Whitney Point Lake is a reservoir behind the Whitney Point Lake on the Otselic River near the Village of Whitney Point in Broome County, N.Y. The 95-foot high dam was constructed (operationally complete in 1942) by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) primarily for flood control purposes. The lake has a total storage capacity of 86,500 acre-feet, of which 74,000 acre-feet are currently dedicated to flood control. The Whitney Point Lake is one of 13 USACE reservoir projects in the Susquehanna basin. The USACE Whitney Point web site is www.nab.usace.army.mil/recreation/whitney.htm.

Susquehanna River Basin Commission

SRBC – headquartered in Harrisburg, Pa. – is the governing agency established under a 100-year compact signed on December 24, 1970, by the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland to protect and wisely manage the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, N.Y., and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Md., where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay. The SRBC web site is www.srbc.net.

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