



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **A Battle of Inches: Pittsburgh District assists in lower Ohio River flood efforts**

PITTSBURGH -- Water levels on the lower Ohio River are approaching historic levels as communities in several states downstream of Pennsylvania fight to hold back flood waters. To support efforts to reduce severe flooding impacts there, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Pittsburgh District has reduced discharges at its reservoir dams to retain as much water as possible without impacting public safety or the integrity of its dams.

District water management and operations personnel worked over the weekend to incrementally lower dam gates and decrease flows from Corps reservoirs. As of this morning, the district had reduced total flows from its reservoirs from 47,000 to 10,000 cubic feet per second. Flows in the lower Ohio River Basin have reach levels of more than one million cubic feet per second and are expected to climb as new storms enter the basin.

"This flood fight at the end of the Ohio River is coming down to a battle of inches," says Col. William Graham, the Corps' district engineer in Pittsburgh. "Every drop of water that we can hold back is one that won't add to flood waters hitting our downstream neighbors."

Higher than normal lake levels in Corps reservoirs may temporarily restrict or close some recreation areas. Please call lake offices prior to visiting.

Pittsburgh District dams will use available flood storage capacity to reduce lower Ohio River water levels until significant flood concerns subside or until a storm in the local region requires increased flows from Pittsburgh District dams. In coordination with the National Weather Service, the Corps will continually assess the situation and, if determined necessary, will begin controlled releases to increase storage for the capture of local precipitation.

"This is a dynamic situation," says Graham. "If conditions change here or downstream, we'll adjust our operations with the primary intent of protecting lives."

The Corps will continuously monitor weather forecasts to prepare for local rain events. District officials are coordinating with local, state and other emergency management agencies to share information on current reservoir conditions. Corps engineers continue to monitor the condition of district dams to ensure public safety.

The multi-district Ohio River Basin flood management reservoirs, which include Pittsburgh District's 16 dams, work as a system to decrease the risk of flooding to downstream communities. When a storm hits, the Corps reduces flooding by capturing precipitation and runoff in its reservoirs. The district releases that excess water as the rain decreases to regain flood storage capacity for the next storm.

Since February, a pattern of storms has kept reservoirs and river levels high. The Pittsburgh District has taken advantage of short breaks in precipitation to discharge water in preparation for the next rain event. High flows on area rivers are expected to continue for several weeks. Boaters should monitor river conditions and understand the risks associated with them. To access flood prep information, river and lake levels, and navigation updates, please visit the district's Flood Safety Awareness site at [http://www.lrp.usace.army.mil/wm/flood\\_prep.html](http://www.lrp.usace.army.mil/wm/flood_prep.html)

For more information call the Public Affairs Office at 412.395.7500/01/02 or email [CELRP-PA@usace.army.mil](mailto:CELRP-PA@usace.army.mil)