

Water Supply In Good Shape

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By BOB SHABAZIAN

Northern New Jersey's major water supply systems are in fairly good shape and should show a rapid rise in storage levels if the state gets normal autumn rainfall.

"The trees and undergrowth don't need as much water at this time, and consumption is down," said Donald Kroeck, supervising engineer in the state Division of Water Policy and Supply.

Kroeck reported that the four major systems in the northeastern part of the state—the Wanaque, the Pequannock, Jersey City and Hackensack—had a total storage of 35 billion gallons, or about 52.6 per cent of capacity.

Last year at this time, storage totaled about 19 billion gallons, or about 29.6 per cent.

This year's figure also stands ahead of the 1962, 1963 and 1964 levels, Kroeck said.

Specifically, Newark's Pequannock system shows the most improvement. Down to all-time lows last year, the Pequannock reservoirs yesterday contained 51 per cent of their total storage capacity of 14.3 billion gallons.

In 1965, these drought-drained reservoirs had only 13 per cent of capacity.

The North Jersey District Water Supply Commission's Wanaque Reservoir yesterday posted 50 per cent of total ca-

capacity, about twice as much as it had last year at this time.

Jersey City's Boonton and Split Rock reservoirs, which recoup quickly because of a large watershed area, have on hand 61 per cent of capacity, compared with 39 per cent last year.

The Hackensack Water Co., which is adding to its storage capacity with a new 4-billion-gallon reservoir in Norwood and Old Tappan, reported 56 per cent of capacity, the same as last year.

The daily drain on the four major systems has dipped to between 315 to 320 million gallons daily, compared with an average of 372 for June, July and August and 340 for last month.

Ground levels, however, continue to be low. According to the last report of the U.S. Geological Survey, the deep wells in the state showed no significant gains from last month's drenching rains.

Shallow wells, however, responded to the rains and showed good gains, the agency said.

Conservation Factor

"The curtailment on consumption and the various measures taken last year and early this year got us through the summer," Kroeck said.

He cited such projects as the Elizabethtown Water Co. line to Newark; new facilities of the Passaic Valley Water Commission at Little Falls; new sources of the Hackensack Water Co.; the tapping of Lake Hopatcong and Lake Wawayanda and the increased pumping from the Ramapo River into the Wanaque system.

As water officials breathe a little easier, Newark is busy pressing for its ambitious plan to build a 35-mile pipeline across Warren and Sussex counties to link the proposed Tocks Island Reservoir with Newark's Pequannock watershed.

The overall project also would include the construction of a new 9-billion-gallon reservoir in the vicinity of Dunker's Pond, in the Pequannock watershed, which would boost Newark's storage capacity to nearly 24 billion gallons.

\$40 Million Project

The cost of the entire project is estimated at close to \$40 million, and as the first step this week, the City Council is expected to approve a resolution appropriating \$320,000 to enable the city to purchase the 35-mile right-of-way and easements from the Susquehanna Railroad.

The railroad has abandoned 26.5 miles of its right-of-way from Hainesburg to Sparta Junction, and the 8.5-mile easement would run from Sparta Junction to Stockholm. It is in this area that Newark proposes to hook into its system by building two dams near Dunker's Pond.

Newark proposes to contract with the Jersey Central Power & Light Co. at Yard's Creek in Warren County to have the utility pump the water from the Delaware River into Newark's proposed line at Hainesburg.

Landowners Plan Suit Against Dam

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Staff Correspondent.

TOCKS ISLAND — A court action to halt the Tocks Island dam and recreational area until plans are more crystallized is to be filed within the next two weeks, according to Charles Koons, president of the Delaware Valley Conservation Association Inc.

He said the action will be sought on grounds that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has not presented the plans to the public. Therefore, land purchases should be delayed until the public has full knowledge of the details.

"We feel the engineers will present revised proposals, possibly recommending a series of multiple dams, instead of the \$93 million dam at Tocks Island," Koons said. "We know the master plan has been changed, but to what degree, we do not know, because of the secrecy involved."

Property Owners in Area

The association is made up of property owners in the Delaware River Valley where the Tocks Island dam and recreational area are to be built. Koons said the association is growing rapidly. He said 80 per cent of the property owners in

Pahaquarry Township, where 25 per cent of the project will be located, have joined the association.

The primary function of the recently formed group is to have the association act in behalf of property owners during negotiations with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Koons said one of the main considerations is to obtain "realistic replacement values for land sold . . . property outside the project area is increasing in price very rapidly. The valley people are put in the position of selling their land for nominal prices, then trying to find comparable land outside the area which is already being sold at inflated prices."

Koons said the association is finding many people who at first approved the project, are now opposing it.

Swarm No Benefit

"They are realizing that the project is not as attractive as it once was. There is a growing feeling that the millions of people swarming into this area will not be a benefit," he noted.

Koons also rapped the secrecy of the project, saying "secrecy is detrimental to the overall picture and is creating suspicion. People don't know if they're in or out of the project."

He said some valley people the association, feeling if they criticize the National Park Service, the Army engineers will lower the price offered for their lands.

Koons said the association is mailing questionnaires to congressmen and senators next week in an effort to obtain more information about the project. The association's attorneys are the Crumlish & Kania Co., Philadelphia.