

The York Water Company
Lake Williams Dam Project Frequently Asked Questions
October 14, 2021

Q: What is the purpose of this project?

We will be permanently removing the existing bridge, roadway, bascule gates, and spillway to rebuild and enhance the dam structure to meet current regulations and dam design safety standards. This work will include demolition of most of the dam structures, followed by construction of a new dam structure and spillway. This is a significant investment in an important water storage facility for the future needs of York Water customers. This investment will incorporate state-of-the-art engineering technology and will add environmental improvements that will be appreciable to the park and our community. This work is an investment that will help meet our needs for the next 100 plus years.

Q: When will you start drawing down and/or draining the Lake?

We began slowly lowering Lake Williams up to a maximum of 6-feet on October 1, 2021. In 2022 and 2023, the Lake will need to be drained to complete the dam reconstruction work.

Q: Why will Lake Williams be lowered?

Lake Williams is initially being lowered 6-feet. In 2022 & 2023, we are required to lower the reservoir (lake) down 44-feet so that The York Water Company and our contractors can safely complete the Lake Williams Dam reconstruction. Reconstruction will include installation of a new spillway, gatehouse, and armoring of the dam to maximize safety and to ensure the facilities can control and moderate the effects of future storm events and weather pattern changes.

Q: When will the access road construction be completed?

The access road is a road that will be constructed on the Jacobus side of the current bridge. This road is needed for safe construction vehicle and construction worker access to the base of the dam. Construction of this access road is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021. The reconstruction of the dam will then begin in 2022-2023.

Q: Why didn't you complete all of this work when you previously drained Lake Williams in 2019?

The 2019 draining was necessitated to install a short-term sluice gate at the dam for public safety purposes. Time was of the essence for that project, and this major dam reconstruction project was not yet funded nor authorized at that time. The York Water Company has worked to minimize changes to Lake Williams and Redman due to the importance of these resources in our community. However, they are both engineered structures that require periodic and sometimes significant maintenance. Our company will continue to look for ways to minimize the impact on our water supplies, aquatic and aesthetic resources, and our community.

Q: Is the dam in danger of breaking?

No, the dam does not present a danger. The structure is subject to annual inspection and reporting, which documents positive performance and sound maintenance each year. State regulatory requirements and engineering standards related to climate influences necessitate improvements to the original 1911 dam and 66-year-old bridge structure that you see today. These standards exceed federal standards and are highly conservative and protective of both persons and the environment. We are fortunate to have the resources and local professionals who can help with this significant engineering and environmental project that will serve the community and York Water for many generations.

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Q: Will you be removing trees during this construction?

Yes, we need to timber approximately 3-acres of mostly mature evergreens that were planted by York Water in the 1920's. This area is mainly located on the southeast (Jacobus and Springfield Township) side of the dam and dam base, where the access road will be constructed. Harvested trees will be lumbered and reused for various park projects and recycled for other environmental purposes.

Q: Will Water Street and the bridge over Lake Williams be closed?

The Water Street bridge has been closed by PennDOT for over 3 years and will remain closed. The Lake Williams entrance and road to the boat launch and picnic area will remain open for public use and enjoyment throughout this access road phase of the project. However, caution is advised and will be posted to ensure people are aware of and look for significant heavy-duty truck traffic on Water Street and South Main Street.

Q: Will the water supply be negatively impacted during this process?

No. Our community will continue to receive the same high-quality water that The York Water Company takes pride in providing during the entirety of this project.