Volume 3, Number 2 of the Regulating District Newsletter

Hudson River - Black River Regulating District

Message from the Executive Director

Growing up in the southern Saratoga County community of Waterford, two things that seemed ever-present were the Canals, and floods. Situated at the confluence of two rivers - the Mohawk and the Hudson - and two canals - the Erie and the Champlain - water was the very reason Waterford developed and prospered as a community beginning in the 1700s, and also the very source of an almost chronic apprehension each Spring that pervaded everyday community life, especially in low-lying areas.

Having seen the devastation that flooding can create in a community, I was also very cognizant that there were protections that did not always exist. After all, I had seen the images of people rowing by my house - located about a block and a half from the water - in the flood of 1913, and I knew that it did not get *that* bad anymore. In my youth, I was not truly a student of the Regulating District's mission or history, but - from my own parochial view - I certainly knew that the Sacandaga Reservoir existed and why, and was grateful for it.

After my active duty service in the Coast Guard, I was privileged to have enjoyed a two-decade career with the New York State Canal Corporation, the first few years of it running the ubiquitous blue and yellow maintenance tugboats I'd admired as a Waterford lad. Truly one of those rare occasions where one's vocation and avocation intersect; it was a wonderful way to earn a living and be part of an important tradition.

Joining the Regulating District as Executive Director is an incredible honor for me, as it again represents an intersection of my vocation and avocation. Long familiar with the innumerable flood control and flow augmentation benefits the Regulating District's operations provide, I am quickly getting up to speed on the other important environmental, economic, recreational, and quality-of-life benefits that our organization helps deliver. I am also quickly gaining a profound appreciation for the talent, dedication, professionalism, and diligence which typifies all of the members of our small but extraordinary workforce here at the Regulating District. Pound for

pound, I think there is as much public service value represented by our team here than anywhere in New York State government.

Which brings me back to my upbringing in Waterford, NY, one which emphasized public service, led me to the Coast Guard and - eventually - to this amazing opportunity to lead the Regulating District. My wife Jenny and I have felt fortunate to raise our five children in the same house where I grew up. Like so many of my neighbors, one of the first things I look at when I walk out the door in the morning is the level of the water flowing at the end of my street. To now be part of a tradition that keeps - to the extent possible - that water within the banks, feels like coming home.

I look forward to spending the years ahead working faithfully and diligently with my colleagues at the Regulating District to deliver on our important mission on behalf of the New Yorkers we serve.

Control House of the Conklingville Dam on the Great Sacandaga Lake

National Dam Safety Awareness Day

Keeping Dams Safe

May 31st is National Dam Safety Awareness Day in remembrance of the 1889 Johnstown Pennsylvania dam failure that resulted in the deaths of more than 2,200 people. Extreme negligence by the owners of the South Fork Dam led to what should have been a preventable disaster.

At the Regulating District, safety is paramount when it comes to the operation and maintenance of our six dams. The District follows industry, state and federal guidelines for dam safety, enlists engineering consultant firms with the latest technology to study and advise on any remedial action, and adheres to a daily surveillance monitoring program to document any changes to the dam structures. These include technology such as piezometers to measure pressure and water changes in the dams, surveillance cameras, settlement monuments, daily visual inspection, and meticulous record keeping to document any observed changes.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

Because the dams at Stillwater and Conklingville both supply water to hydroelectric facilities, they are subject to regulation by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Each year these facilities are inspected by

FERC engineers, and every five years the Regulating District is required to hire a FERC approved independent consulting engineer to inspect and evaluate the safety of the dams and the adequacy of their maintenance. FERC also requires the Regulating District to prepare Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) as blueprints for the dissemination of information to the affected public and emergency management agencies should an event occur at one of the dams. While FERC only requires EAPs for the Stillwater and Conklingville Dams, the Regulating District has independently developed Emergency Action Plans for each of the six dams it owns and operates.

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Dam Safety

The Regulating District dams are also subject to safety regulations through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation under State Conservation Law. These laws set rules on the hazard classification of dams throughout the state, as well as guidelines for maintenance and inspection. With the exception of the Conklingville and Stillwater Dams which fall under the jurisdiction of FERC, each of the Regulating District's four other dams are inspected biannually by engineers from the NYS DEC's Dam Safety Section.

The Science of Dam Safety

The Regulating District takes a disciplined and scientific approach to keeping its dams safe. Meteorology, hydrology, geology and engineering are each employed to maximize the safety of Regulating District Dams and their surrounding communities. From the study of probable maximum precipitation events and their potential effects, to geotechnical studies, to the District's partnership with the United States Geological Survey's New York Water Science Center in the operation of stream and reservoir elevation gauges, knowledge from multiple fields of science are integrated in the safe construction, maintenance and operation of dams.

Dam at Old Forge on the Moose River, creating the Fulton Chain of Lakes

Recreation

In addition to the benefits of flood control, flow augmentation and renewable energy, the Hudson River - Black River Regulating District's six dams provide the recreational benefits of swimming, boating, fishing and whitewater rafting. Local economies rely on tourist dollars and the jobs that are created and

sustained through river regulation in the two Adirondack watersheds. However, recreating near dams can be dangerous and deadly even when the proper precautions are taken.

Low Head Dams

The Hawkinsville Dam on the Black River is the only low-head dam operated by the Regulating District. Low-head dams can present a high risk to swimmers and boaters because they can appear to be a deceptively placid area to swim and fish. However, these dams have been given the moniker "drowning machines," because water going over a low-head dam creates a strong re-circulation current that can trap boats and swimmers. Avoid swimming or boating near low-head dams, and always obey caution signs.

Hawkinsville Dam on the Black River

Hydroelectric Dams

The log boom at the Conklingville Dam prevents debris from going into the spillway and the turbines of the hydroelectric facility

Both the Conklingville Dam on the Great Sacandaga Lake and the Stillwater Dam on the Stillwater Reservoir are river regulating dams that supply water for hydro energy production. Because of the unpredictable and at times rapidly changing flow of water near them, it is never safe to swim, boat, or recreate near one of these facilities. A placid downstream waterbed can become suddenly inundated with rapidly moving water during a scheduled release. Upstream water can become unpredictably turbulent as it is drawn through the outlet gates, valves or turbines to generate electricity. Always obey warning signs, stay out of restricted areas and away from booms both upstream and downstream of a hydroelectric dam.

The Regulating District dams provide recreational opportunities as well as flood control, renewable energy, municipal water supply, navigation, and numerous economic benefits. Keeping the public safe through rigorous monitoring of the dams as well as spreading awareness of the potential dangers of recreating near these structures is always of the highest priority. Caution must be exercised near any dam to prevent unnecessary tragedy.

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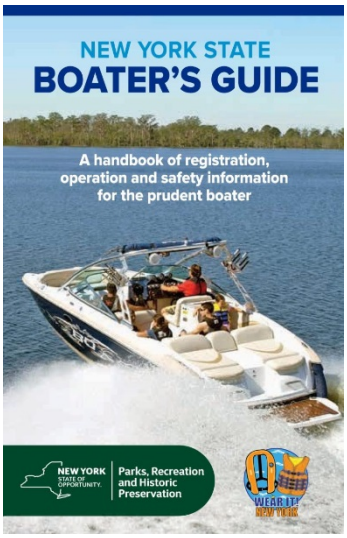
Boating Safety

The Regulating District has no authority to control the number, type or speed of boats which use its reservoirs, and does not have any role in enforcing laws pertaining to boat handling, equipment or safety. However, there are excellent resources available to help people stay safe while enjoying the water this summer. Everyone at the District wants those who enjoy our reservoirs to have a safe and enjoyable boating season.



The New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation publishes the annual New York State Boater's Guide as a reminder of boating laws and rules of safety and courtesy. It is available in PDF by clicking on the link or the by clicking the picture on the right.

Every summer avoidable tragedies take place on New York waterways. Please follow the laws and rules when enjoying boating and the use of personal watercraft to help keep everyone who works, lives, or plays on the lakes safe this summer.

Hudson River Area News

Work Permit Reminder

- An approved Hudson River - Black River Regulating District work permit is required prior to performing any work on New York State land under the jurisdiction of the Regulating District. Before performing any work on your Access Permit Area, including but not limited to moving rocks, installing docks or moorings or cutting trees, you must get written approval from the Regulating District. In some cases separate

authorization will be needed from DEC, APA, ACOE, or local government. You can find a work permit application here . Email your work permit application to sacfo@hrbrrd.com, mail it to the Sacandaga Field Office at 737 Bunker Hill Rd., Mayfield, NY 12117, or bring it in Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4 PM.

Black River Area News

Black River Regulating District Celebrates its Centennial August 14, 2019

The Black River Regulating District was constituted and established 100 years ago on May 7, 1919, and officially incorporated on August 14, 1919. It was the first river regulating district to be created in the state under the provisions of the Machold Storage Act passed by the legislature in 1915. The District was created to meet an urgent need on the Black River to improve drinking water, sanitation, regulate flooding, improve navigation, and maximize hydro power capabilities.

The following is the original 1919 petition to form the Black River Regulating District as printed in the February 19, 1919 addition of the Watertown Daily Times:

To the Conservation Commissioner, the Attorney General and the State Engineer. Constituting the Commission under Chapter 663 of the Laws of 1915 of the State of New York and the Acts Amendatory Thereof.

The petition of the undersigned respectfully shows:

First: That your petitioners are residents or owners of real estate within the district herein asked to be created, or public corporations whose boundaries like wholly or partly within such district.

Second: Your petitioners pray that a river regulating district be created under and pursuant to said Chapter 662 and the Acts amendatory thereof, to regulate

the flow of the Black River and its tributaries, and that the name of such district be the "Black River Regulating District."

Third: That the Black River is one of the largest and most important rivers of the state; it and its principal tributaries, the Moose and the Beaver rivers, have their head waters in the Adirondacks. It is about one hundred and fifty miles long, drains the westerly slopes of the Adirondack mountains, and empties into Lake Ontario at Dexter, NY: that the watershed of said river has a total area of approximately one thousand nine hundred and eighteen (1,918) square miles.

That said Adirondacks constitute a high plateau located in northern New York, having an area of many thousand square miles: that within the area so designated there is a heavy annual fall of rain and snow; that the average annual rainfall for the Black river watershed as a whole is forty-six (46) inches, while for that portion thereof within said Adirondack region the rainfall is greater; that from about the first of December in each year to about the following March or April the coldness of the climate causes large quantities of snow and ice to accumulate on said watershed. Each Spring the melting of snow causes a freshet in said river, with the result that vast quantities of water rush unrestrained to said lake, causing the river in places to overflow its banks, inundate the area adjacent to said banks, and threatening and doing great damage to property along said river.

That the average flow of Black River at the City of Watertown, NY which is located about twelve miles from the mouth thereof, is over thirty-six hundred cubic feet of water per second, while during the summer months the volume of its flow falls below five hundred cubic feet of water per second.

That from Lyons Falls to Carthage, a distance of about forty miles, the Black River is navigable and is a part of the Black River Canal: that said canal proper runs from Lyons Falls through Boonville to Rome and is now used as a feeder for the Erie canal; that through reservoirs, especially the reservoir at Forestport, water is impounded to feed said canal and during the period of navigation which includes the low water months of the year, approximately two hundred and ten cubic feet of water per second are and for many years have been diverted through said canal from the Black River watershed to the Erie Canal or to the Mohawk River canalized: that to compensate for such a diversion the state has constructed reservoirs one with its dam at Old Forge on the middle branch of the Moose River and at Sixth Lake on said branch and one at Stillwater, and of these reservoirs is adequate to compensate for the water diverted.

That the city of Watertown and the villages of Dexter, Brownville, Glen Park, Black River, Felts Mills, Great Bend, Carthage, Lyons Falls, Deferiet and Herrings are adjacent to said river and its tributaries and within such proposed

district, and there are many other villages and towns adjacent to said river and its tributaries within such district. That between Lyons Falls and the level of Lake Ontario there is on Black river proper a fall of approximately five hundred (500) feet. That on the Beaver river there is a fall between the present Stillwater dam thereon and the junction of said river with the Black, of approximately six hundred (600) feet. That on the Moose river there is a fall of approximately five hundred (500) feet.

That the Northern New York Utilities, Inc., of Watertown, NY is a public service corporation owning valuable water-powers developed on said river and its tributary, the said Beaver river, and furnishes light and power created thereby to the city of Watertown and to most of the villages within said watershed, or to the people thereof; and in a smaller way the Empire Pulp Company of Black River, NY, performs a like service.

The village of Boonville has a municipal lighting and power, deriving its power from Black river.

That the Black River Traction Company is a public service corporation operating a street railway, in the city of Watertown and from said city to the village of Dexter and derives its power for such operation from said Black river.

That the city of Watertown, with a population of over thirty thousand people, depends for its municipal supply and for protection from fire upon the use of the water of Black river; that said water before use is mechanically filtered: the filtration process is seriously strained during times of freshet, and during the summer periods of low water the condition of the water is such after filtration that it has a disagreeable taste which renders it unpalatable: that this condition is not noticeable during periods of normal flow of the river.

The ground-water levels in the state of New York have during the last hundred years been lowered about nine feet. In other words, these levels are nine feet farther below the surface than they were one hundred years ago; the result is that agriculture is now forced to rely upon rainfalls instead of subsoil waters for support of plant life, and the conditions of agricultural activity materially improved and the productivity of the soil materially increased.

The only feasible method of regulating the flow of said river, or of the other rivers of the state, is by the construction and operation of storage reservoirs.

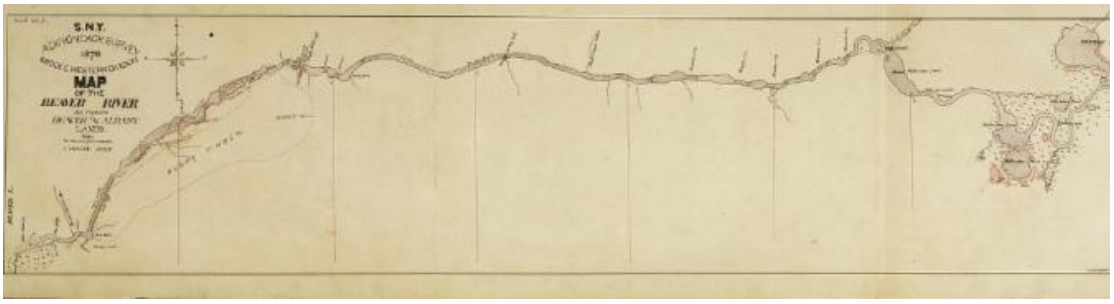
Fourth: That the territory included in the proposed district is sufficiently described as the watershed of Black river and comprises parts of Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, Oneida and Jefferson counties of the state of New York.

Fifth: It is possible through the construction and operation of reservoirs on this watershed to regulate the flow of Black river so that the minimum flow will be not less than two thousand (2,000) cubic feet of water per second, and it is believed that this minimum flow can in a time be increased by the development of all the storage possibilities so that the minimum flow would be not less than two thousand five hundred (2,500) cubic feet of water per second.

Sixth: Both state and private lands will be required to the extent--as to state lands--of not exceeding six thousand (6,000) acres, while a certain quantity of private lands, substantially all of which are Adirondack lands, the extent of which your petitioners are now unable to state with accuracy, will also be required for such regulation of the water of said stream as is practicable. It is estimated that not exceeding thirty thousand (30,000) acres of land owned by the state of the forest preserve will be required to furnish all available reservoir sites for all rivers requiring the use of state-owned lands of the forest preserve much less than the three per cent (3%) thereof allowed to be used for such purpose by section seven of article seven of the state constitution will be required.

That the regulation of the flow of said Black river by storage reservoirs will control the flood conditions thereof, decrease the danger to life and loss to property, improve health and sanitary conditions, benefit municipal water supply and municipal lighting, prevent the danger to bridges and obstruction to highways during freshet periods, facilitate public travel and intercourse, improve agricultural and industrial conditions, afford steady employment of labor, establish the basis for future industrial development, increase the value of the property, promote the general public good within said district, and will subserve the objects and purposes of said Chapter 662 of the Laws of 1915 and the Acts amendatory thereof.

Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honorable commission will create the Black river regulating district pursuant to and for the purpose of chapter 662 of the laws of 1915, and the acts amendatory thereof.



1878 Map of the Beaver River

The geography of the Regulating District encompasses nearly six million acres in the Hudson and Black River watersheds.

Scheduled Board Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of the Hudson River - Black River Regulating District is June 11, 2019 at 10 AM at the Indian Lake Town Offices,117 Pelon Road,Indian Lake,NY at 10:00 A.M.

Hudson River Black River Regulating District
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STAY CONNECTED:

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