

Delaware Plan Faces Series of Fights

Landowners To Oppose Reservoir

Second of a Series
By Richard J. O'Leary

The Delaware River plan of the board of consulting engineers of the Philadelphia Water Commission seems headed towards a series of legal and legislative complications—not the least of which will be advanced by affected landowners—in the event the board's suggestions are adopted.

Essential parts of the Delaware River project involve creation of a reservoir running 30 miles north from Wallpack Bend Dam to Bushkill to the New York State line at Port Jervis and a storage reservoir at Warrington in Bucks and Montgomery counties.

TWO-FOLD PROPOSAL

The proposal of the engineers is two-fold concerning the method by which the water would be moved from the Wallpack Bend Reservoir, to the Warrington Storage Reservoir. The first method would be by means of a pressure tunnel extending nearly 82 miles. The proposal known as the Delaware River Project for purposes of identification will cost an estimated \$264,588,000.

Under the alternate plan, known as the Yardley-Wallpack Bend Project, the engineers suggest that while retaining both the Wallpack Bend Reservoir and the Warrington Reservoir, the water could be dropped down the natural bed of the Delaware River to Yardley north of Trenton. From there it would be moved by tunnel to Warrington. This project, they estimate, will cost \$137,456,000.

SPLITS TWO RANGES

The 30-mile projected reservoir above Wallpack Bend lies in a valley separating two mountain ranges, the Pocono Mountain Range in Pennsylvania and the Kittatinny Range in New Jersey.

Pennsylvania shares with New York and New Jersey the rights to the Delaware River and the disposition of its waters is regulated by treaties between the three States made in 1873, a Tri-State compact, an amendment of which, according to some authorities, would require approval of Congress and consent of the War Department.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Opponents of the Delaware River project and its alternate maintain legislative action also would be required by three States to repeal the original treaties of 1783.

The Wallpack Bend Dam would back up the Delaware River to the bridge connecting Matamoras in Pennsylvania and Port Jervis in New York and also would create a higher level of water in the Neversink River which joins the Delaware at a point where the boundaries of three States meet at what is known as Tri-State Rock. The reservoir would run about two miles northwestward up the Neversink in New York.

14,000 ACRES NEEDED

For much of the length the reservoir lake would be one-half mile wide and would cover an area of approximately 9500 acres. Of that acreage 4600 would be located in Pennsylvania, 4225 in New Jersey and 325 in New York. Including a 500-foot protective strip along the reservoir lake, it would be necessary for Philadelphia to acquire up to 14,000 acres in the three States.

Of the acreage to be acquired, the engineers estimated that cultivated land would amount to 2688 in Pennsylvania, 1794 in New Jersey and 204 in New York. Uncultivated land, property subject to flooding and land necessary for the 500-foot protective strip would make it necessary for the city to acquire an additional 4243 acres in Pennsylvania, 4095 acres in New Jersey and 247 acres in New York.

WOULD FLOOD BUSHKILL

Bushkill, a prosperous summer and winter resort, located opposite the site of the proposed Wallpack Bend Dam, would be almost entirely inundated by the waters of the reservoir. A good portion of Dingman's Ferry, eight miles north, also would be flooded as would a small part of Milford, the largest town between Stroudsburg and the New York State line.

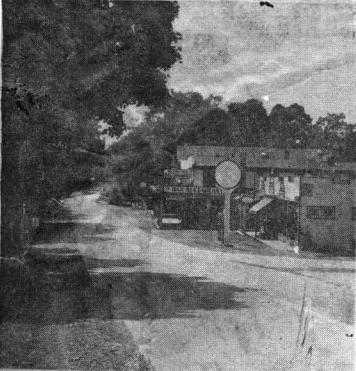
North of Milford the land that would be flooded generally is unutilized. Below Milford and extending to Bushkill, are summer colonies and rich farm lands, all of which would be inundated. It is along this strip and in Bushkill as well as a corresponding area on the Jersey side of the river that greatest opposition to the reservoir has been advanced.

While property owners on both sides of the river have skeleton organizations that are prepared to carry a strong fight against the condemnation of their land if the project is approved, currently they have adopted a plan of watchful waiting.

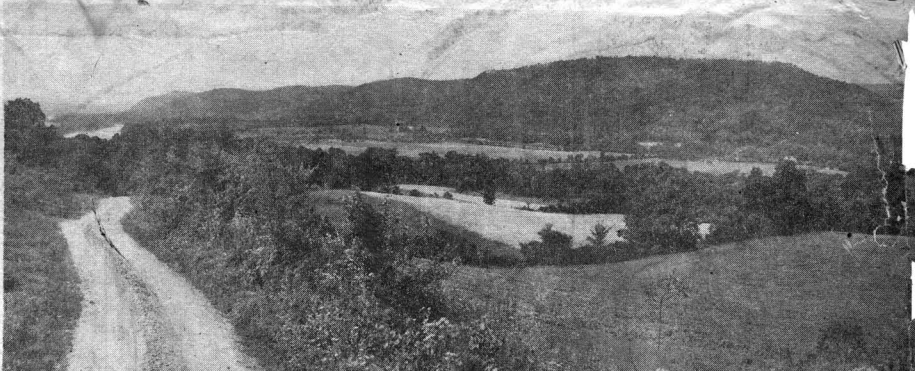
Many reflected the attitude evidenced by the indifference of Philadelphians to the public studies and are inclined to doubt that the project will ever get beyond the stage of talk. Should it, however, they indicated their readiness, particularly in New Jersey, to contest agreement of that State to any use of the Delaware River water beyond the limits of the current compact.

J. Russell Babcock, prothonotary of Pike county, who has extensive farm holdings along the Delaware between Dingman's Ferry and Bushkill, also is skeptical the Delaware River Project will go through. He, at the same time, is prepared to lead the fight of the landowners against it in the courts if that move is necessary.

(Continued Tomorrow)

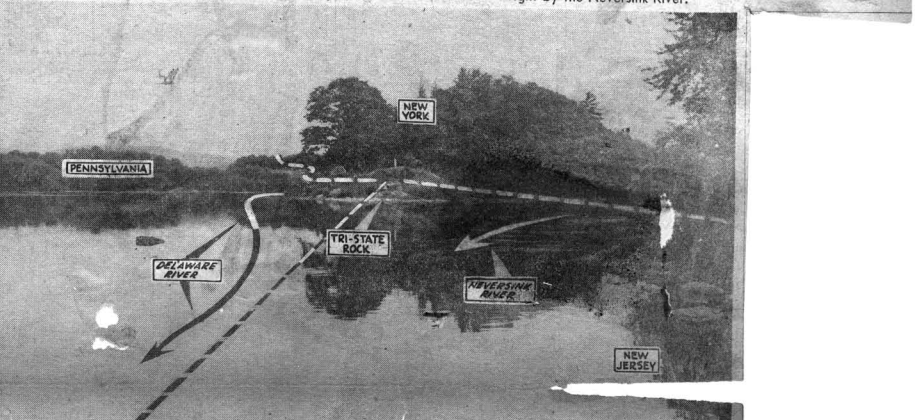


Under plans of consulting engineers of the Philadelphia Water Commission a 30-mile reservoir extending from Bushkill, Pa., to the Tri-State boundary point of Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey would be created to provide the city with a new water supply. The river level would be materially raised to create



a lake a half-mile wide between the slopes of the Pocono Range in Pennsylvania and the Kittatinny Range in New Jersey. The above pictures the reservoir which would be flooded. The upper left shows a section of Bushkill which would be inundated. To the right is a view of the Delaware Valley that will contain the

backed-up waters south of the New York State line. On the lower left is a section of Dingman's Ferry and the entrance to the bridge over the river to New Jersey. At the lower right is shown the Delaware River at the Tri-State Rock where it is joined on the right by the Neversink River.



TOWNS AND VALLEY ALONG THE DELAWARE RIVER THAT WILL BE FLOODED BY PROPOSED WALLPACK BEND RESERVOIR

Philadelphia Water Department
Historical Collection
2004.019.0019A