



Connecticut

Colebrook River Lake Dam

The dam at Colebrook River Lake is located on the West Branch of the Farmington River in Colebrook, approximately two miles south of the Massachusetts state line. From Winsted, it is six miles north on Route 8.

The Colebrook River Lake Dam has substantially reduced flooding along the main stem and West Branch of the Farmington River and downstream flooding along the Connecticut River. It is a multipurpose reservoir, supplying water for the Hartford Metropolitan District and supporting downstream fishery habitat in addition to its flood control function.

The Colebrook River Lake Dam is one of three flood control dams (Mad River and Sucker Brook dams being the others) that were constructed as a result of major flooding from Hurricane Diane that devastated Connecticut in August 1955. Construction of the dam at Colebrook River Lake started in May 1965 and was completed in June 1969, costing \$14.3 million. The Dubois Cemetery in Sandisfield, Massachusetts, and portions of Route 8 (3.5 miles in Connecticut and 3.4 miles in Massachusetts) were relocated.

The project consists of an earthfill dam with stone slope protection 1,300 feet long and 223 feet high; an earthfill dike 1,240 feet long and 54 feet high; a gated circular outlet tunnel edged in rock 774 feet long and 10 feet in diameter; and a chute spillway cut in rock with a 205-foot-long concrete weir. The weir's crest elevation is 29 feet lower than the top of the dam.

The amount of water stored at Colebrook River Lake can fluctuate substantially. The pool, used for both water supply and fishery habitat, normally covers an area of about 750 acres. When filled to capacity with floodwaters, however, the pool covers 1,185 acres. Together, the lake and associated lands stretch out over 1,618 acres in Colebrook and the Massachusetts towns of Sandisfield and Tolland. Colebrook River Lake can store up to 16.56 billion gallons of water for flood control purposes. This is equivalent to eight inches of water covering its drainage area of 118 square miles.

A hydroelectric power facility at Colebrook River Lake, developed by the Metropolitan District of Hartford, began generating electricity in 1989. The 3.3 megawatts of power is sold to the Connecticut Light and Power Company.

Colebrook River Lake offers lake fishing and one mile of stream fishing. The fish and game agencies of Connecticut and Massachusetts stock trout and salmon to complement the native bass, pickerel, perch, horned pout, and bluegill. Reservoir waters are open to licensed fishermen under the regulations established by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. A large boat launching ramp, a boat landing area, and sanitary and parking facilities are also available.