



Vermont

North Hartland Lake

The dam at North Hartland Lake in Hartland is located on the Ottauquechee River, 1.5 miles above the confluence of the Ottauquechee and Connecticut Rivers. From White River Junction, the dam is five miles south on U.S. Route 5.

The project provides flood protection to downstream communities on the Connecticut River, including Hartland, Windsor, Weathersfield, Springfield, and Rockingham, and the New Hampshire communities of Plainfield, Cornish, Claremont, Charlestown, and Walpole. In conjunction with other reservoirs in the Connecticut River Basin, North Hartland Lake also reduces the Connecticut River's flood stages in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Construction began in June 1958 and was completed in June 1961 at a cost of \$7.3 million. The project consists of an earthfill dam with stone slope protection 1,640 feet long and 185 feet high; a 743-foot-long gated concrete horseshoe conduit under the dam with a diameter of 14 feet four inches; a 2,110-foot-long dike with stone slope protection having a maximum height of 52 feet; a 476-foot-long gated concrete circular conduit under the dike with a diameter of three feet; and an L-shaped spillway cut in rock with a 465-foot-long concrete ogee weir. The weir's crest elevation is 25.5 feet lower than the top of the dam. Relocations included telephone and power lines and approximately 2.2 miles of highway.

North Hartland Lake has a permanent pool of 215 acres with a depth of 35 feet. The flood storage area of the project totals 1,100 acres and extends 5.5 miles upstream through Hartford. The project and associated lands (including Quechee Gorge State Park) cover 1,711 acres. North Hartland Lake can store up to 23.2 billion gallons of water for flood control purposes. This is equivalent to 6.1 inches of water covering its drainage area of 220 square miles.

The reservoir's recreation area offers a wide variety of leisurely pursuits. The area is very popular for picnicking, and it features three covered picnic shelters. Each has tables underneath, a large grill, and electrical outlets. Two of the three shelters can hold up to a hundred adults, and the smaller one can hold up to sixty adults. These shelters can be reserved for a fee, or if unreserved, used on a first come, first serve basis. Sanitary facilities and drinking water are located nearby. There are also uncovered picnic shelters in both wooded and meadow settings, available at no charge on a first come, first serve basis. The wooded setting includes grills and brick fireplaces, and grills are available in the meadow setting. Visitors may use the area's volleyball nets and horseshoe pits and its small playground, walk its mile long, self guided nature trail, or visit its small nature center near the trail head. They may swim in the North Hartland reservoir, or play and sunbathe on its 100-foot-long beach. This part of the recreation area also has a boat ramp, and both power and non-power boats may launch here. The reservoir is a very popular location for non-power boats and bird watching. The state of Vermont stocks rainbow trout here, and other fish species found within the reservoir include brown and brook trout, brown bullhead, yellow perch and small-mouthed bass. Fishing conditions range from heavy water to placid pools. Hunters will find wild turkey, deer, ruffed grouse, fox, raccoon, woodcock, and squirrel. Visitors may snowmobile and cross-country ski in this area in the winter.

About 2.5 miles upstream of the dam (approximately 5.5 miles by car), the Ottauquechee River flows through a sheer faced, 163-foot-deep valley known as Quechee Gorge, one of the most beautiful natural spectacles in the northeastern United States. A visitor center at the top of the gorge was built in 2005 and offers public restrooms, educational displays, and area information. A hiking trail that goes to the bottom of the gorge begins behind the building, and a gorge overlook with spectacular views is nearby. With the exception of holidays, the center is open seven days a week, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Quechee Gorge State Park, operated by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, is located at the edge of the Gorge (The park is situated on Corps-owned land that is part of the North Hartland Lake reservoir area). Quechee Gorge State Park offers 48 campsites and six lean-tos, each with its own picnic table and fireplace grill. There are also a total of 20 picnic tables and 11 fireplace grills along the sides of the gorge for non-campers. Boating (non-power boats only) is permitted on Dewey's Mills Pond. The park has three marked hiking trails with distances of two miles, one-half mile, and 1/4 mile, as well as marked cross-country skiing and snowmobile trails (the hiking trails can also be used for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling). Quechee Gorge State Park offers an open field for ball playing; a small playground; hot showers; drinking water; and sanitary facilities. The state stocks brown and rainbow trout on the Ottauquechee River upstream of Quechee Gorge, and largemouth bass can be caught in Dewey's Mills Pond. Ice fishing is permitted. Hunters will find deer, partridge, and ruffed grouse in season.

From North Hartland Lake, it is a short drive to Quechee Gorge State Park. When leaving the dam, turn right on Clay Hill Road and drive 4.4 miles to U.S. Route 4. Turn right on U.S. Route 4 (east). It is 1.1 mile to the park.

There are two hydroelectric power plants within the reservoir area of North Hartland Lake that are owned and operated by private interests, located both up and downstream of the dam at North Hartland Lake.