



Deibert Valley in southern Schuylkill County may be flooded if it is chosen as a site for a seven square-mile water reservoir. As many as 17 farms, including this land owned and rented by Wilbert Moyer, will be submerged if Pennsylvania electric

companies choose the Red Creek as their location for the dam and reservoir. The Red Creek is just barely visible in this scene and passes under a rural road at the dark spot, right.

Seventeen farms may be drowned

By DIETER KRIEG

LANDINGVILLE, Pa. - A dam and water reservoir project being considered near this southern Schuylkill County community has many of the citizens in the area up in arms. To combat the project, farmers and others in the area have formed a coalition known as "Citizens Opposing Red Creed Dam," or CORCD, for short.

A meeting was held here Monday night, with 75 people in attendance. The purpose was to continue to provide area residents with pertinent information and to organize ways by which the proposed dam site can be defeated.

Farmers in the area are concerned about losing their farmlands and homes, while the community as a whole is worried about the economic impact the proposed reservoir might have.

The Delaware River Basin Commission, headquartered in West Trenton, N.J., told Lancaster Farming that the purpose of the proposed stored water (not necessarily at the Red Creek site) is to provide "cooling make-up water" for nuclear electric generating plants. A spokesman for the DRBC noted that if plans aren't made now to meet present and future water requirements, a critical situation could develop by around 1983.

The DRBC spokesman further explained that "a number of electric utility generating stations are being developed and planned in the Delaware River Basin. We have a very dynamic basin, with seven million people within it and millions and millions more in adjacent areas. There's a great demand for water resources."

Electric companies in the eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey areas are looking for alternate sources of water because of the loss of previously proposed water storage facility at Tocks Island in the Poconos area. Environmental groups and the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) brought that project to a halt, according to Ed Finnegan, secretary for the CORCD. He noted that the Tock Island site was purchased by the government 10-13 years ago and was otherwise approved for a reservoir. The government was reportedly willing to turn the site over to the utilities.

According to the DRBC, water from the considered reservoir at Red Creek will not be directly involved in cooling procedures at power plants. Rather, the stored water is to be released at certain times to control the salinity level of the lower Delaware River. Some concern has been expressed over the lowering of the fresh water content in that area and the inward movement of ocean water to take its place. A reservoir upstream from the Philadelphia area is supposed to help alleviate the problem.

The Red Creek Dam Site is located approximately 100 miles northwest of Philadelphia, with the Schuylkill River being the main artery of flow for the water from the Red Creek reservoir. The Red Creek itself is a tiny stream just a few steps wide. It is not expected to create the reservoir by its own flow once the dam is constructed (if it is constructed). Instead, water will be pumped into it from the Schuylkill

River, into which the Red Creek empties.

Lower Schuylkill Countians don't think much of the possible dam for several reasons, not the least of which is the loss of their lands, and homes and the dampening effect the completed project would have on the economy. The loss of farmlands and homes, for example, would mean the erosion of the tax base in South Manheim Township. Individuals and businesses are likely to feel the resulting consequences. The possible "economic erosion" could filter through the region for years after the project is completed.

The citizens are also concerned about the proposed reservoir not being of the fresh water variety. The water which is supposed to be pumped in from the Schuylkill will admittedly go stagnant, and when the reservoir is drawn down to supply water to the Philadelphia area, 100 miles downstream, the land areas which were previously under water will give off an unpleasant odor.

A study on the Red Creek site states: "The residences overlooking the site would be indirectly affected, in that the vista would be significantly altered, and may be distinctly unpleasant during periods of severe drawdown."

"Drawdown at Red Creek will occur in all years, and in a minimum year will involve a drawdown of 20 feet and 270 acres exposed. The average year drawdown would be 30 feet and 390 acres exposed. This would be approximately 40 per cent of the total reservoir area.

It may seem that water 100 miles away from its

destination will not have much effect on the target area, since it would be "spread pretty thin" all along its path (the Schuylkill River). But DRBC officials say the distance factor makes no difference. Like water carried in a pipeline, it will reach its destination and do the job it's designed for, they say.

It must be pointed out that the Red Creek project is not final. On the other hand, residents in southern Schuylkill County can't afford to wait until a decision is finalized, claiming that by that time they will be sunk for sure. They emphasize that of nine sites originally under consideration, the electric utilities have narrowed their choices down to four. Red Creek is rumored to be in the top two. The DRBC failed to confirm or deny that rumor, saying that their latest update has the narrowing down process down to four sites.

While the DRBC has much to do with the present proceedings and ultimate results, it is the utility companies which are the driving force behind the project. When they lost Tocks Island, they were directed to go elsewhere. The DRBC issued the utilities a directive last October by which they were given 12 months to develop plans for their own reservoir. The DRBC must approve their site selection as well as an environmental impact statement. The concluding phases of the site studies are now in progress, the DRBC told Lancaster Farming.

The Red Creek issue and similar other ones may end up being wasted portions of a study, according to in-

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