

Changes in the Outflow at Lake Hopatcong Dam Must be Supported by Scientific Data

The NJDEP has relied upon data from the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife to make decisions to reduce flow in violation of the Lake Hopatcong Water Level Management Plan. MWA and other downstream stakeholders have the following concerns about the data being used:

- The NJDEP requires a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for data used in decision making at this level however the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJF&W) does not have an approved QAPP for this project. NJ DEP does require QAPPs in the case of other intra-agency monitoring, and it must do so in this case.
- Decisions are being made without specific pass/fail criteria.
- The 1.5 mile stretch between Lake Hopatcong and Lake Musconetcong must be characterized at 12 cfs; without a well characterized stream it is impossible to assess effect of lowered outflow. The Department needs to fully document width, depth, flow, temperature, dissolved oxygen and habitat conditions that exist at the minimum flow of 12 cfs.
- The EPA Stream Habitat Assessment should be used quarterly during periods of the required 12 cfs flow to determine a characteristic score in this segment of the Musconetcong River. MWA is particularly interested in the scores for 1) Epifaunal Substrate/Available Cover, 2) Velocity / Depth Regime and 3) Channel Flow.

When typical conditions are established for this stretch, pass/fail parameters (numeric values) must be established for -

- Temperature
- Depth
- Width
- Stream Habitat Assessment Score

