



High flows scheduled during annual maintenance at Cherry Creek Dam May 22: USACE urges public safety

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Media should meet here for an escort.

DENVER --

Higher than normal flows of water through Cherry Creek Dam will begin Wednesday, May 22, as part of annual sediment flushing by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District to help ensure proper operation of the dam's outlet gates.

"These annual flushes keep the gates clear of sediment so that gates can operate reliably when needed to help reduce downstream flood risk to people and property in the Denver metropolitan area," said Joe Maxwell, operations project manager for the USACE Tri-Lakes projects.

Maxwell explained that during normal operations, USACE generally releases less than 100 cubic feet of water per second from the dam. One cubic foot of water is equal to 7.5 gallons, about the volume of a

beachball. During a flush, releases across the dam's five main outlet gates will fluctuate between 150 and 1,300 cfs between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The higher flows will take an estimated six hours to reach the Champa Street Bridge downstream. Flows from the last gate opened for the flush will reach this area in the evening. This plan is subject to change due to operational conditions and flow from the dam will return to normal following the flush.

Maxwell emphasizes that in the interest of public safety, the public should not attempt to cross or access Cherry Creek on Wednesday, May 22. Higher flush releases may cause minor flooding at low-level crossings or access points downstream of the dam including bike paths.

"Of notable concern to us are the potential impacts to unhoused people in the vicinity of the creek who may not be aware of these releases," added Maxwell.

USACE provides advance notice of the flush to local agencies with responsibility for public safety along the creek and to downstream property owners with known impacts.

USACE owns and operates Cherry Creek Dam located in Aurora, Colorado, south of Interstate 225 and Chatfield and Bear Creek dams in the Denver metropolitan area. Collectively, the three dams reduce risks to the region from flooding. When not operating to reduce flood impacts, USACE manages water releases from the dams for recreation, water quality, and to support fish and wildlife.

MEDIA ACCESS TO MAY 22 FLUSH ACTIVITIES

Dam operations staff will escort interested news media representatives to view the higher flush flows at vantage points just below the dam on May 22 at 9:00 a.m. Staff will explain the details of operating and maintaining the dam to sustain its role in reducing flooding through downtown Denver. Media can meet staff at the gate located at the east end of Dam Road for a vehicle escort to a location below the dam.

RSVP directly to Amy Echols, USACE Omaha District, at amy.m.echols@usace.army.mil or call/text 503-544-5013 (Pacific Time).

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Cherry Creek Dam USACE Omaha District