Levee Safety Experiences in the Keystone State

United States Society of Dams
April 5, 2017
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

- 86,000 Miles of Rivers and Streams
- Second only to Alaska
Flood Control Laws of 1936

- U.S. Congress passes Flood Control Act of 1936

- Pennsylvania passes complimentary legislation.
  - Construction of smaller projects
  - Cost sharing for Federal Projects
• PA constructed 61 levee systems since 1936
Shaler Township, Allegheny County
• Borough of Danville, Montour County
• Local communities serve as the Project Sponsor.

• Legal agreement creates partnership

• State services to local sponsor vary
  – Budget
  – Staffing
Partnership with the Corps

• Corps Public Law 84/99 Rehabilitation Program

• PA provides the 20% local match

• Annual meeting with
  – Baltimore
  – Philadelphia
  – Pittsburgh
PADEP Annual Inspections

• Off-years with Corps CEIs
• Specialized inspections
  – Confined Space
  – Camera Inspections of Levee Conduits
• Inactive Projects
Confined Space Entry
Levee Conduit Inspections
• Developed by DEP Staff for each project

• Corps reviewed template

• Requirements for CEIs

• Update as necessary
• Prior to 2007, no longer inspected by DEP.

• Now: Strive to Restore all projects

• Assist Sponsors with SWIF Program
• Prior to 2011, PA DEP has a line item in their budget
  – $3 million annually

• 10-20 grants/year for small projects
  – ~$10,000-50,000

• 3-5 moderate rehabilitation projects
  – $50,000-$500,000
• Now: Grant Program available through other agency

• Sponsor is required to hire own Engineer

• Result is need for technical assistance
• Large rehabs funded by Capitol Budget
Emergency Action Planning

- Development is responsibility of local sponsor municipality.

- DEP developed guidelines

- Coordination with PEMA and Corps
Levee Certification

- Response to Enforcement of FEMA Requirements
- Contract with Engineering Firm circa 2009/11
- New Grant Program
Permitting Assistance

• Flood Control Program is self permitting

• Authorization for Project Rehab and Maintenance

• Coordination with USACE Regulatory Branch
• No Current Regulations specifically to Levee Safety

• Floodplain and Floodway laws allow jurisdiction

• Auditor General Recommends more Comprehensive Requirements
Third Party Impacts
Levee Safety Reviews

- Technical Review on State Projects before Permit Issuance
- Coordination with USACE on Federal Projects
- Recommendations for Private Levees
Levees outside of “Corps Program”

State Levees never active in PL84/99

Levees constructed privately or by local governments

Levees of unknown ownership
• Currently in “information gathering” phase

• Locate levees for upload to National Levee Database

• Non-program levees for Inspections and Risk Assessments
Pilot Program Challenges

- How do we locate all levees?
- Fear of “Unfunded Mandate”
- Limited design data
Pilot Program Challenges
Questions or Comments?

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