

NEWS RELEASE



Contact: Public Affairs Specialist
Ms Pamela Spaugy
Phone: (757) 201-7606

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Corps to conduct “pulse release” at Gathright Dam Aug. 17

NORFOLK - The Norfolk District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in cooperation with Virginia’s Departments of Environmental Quality and Game and Inland Fisheries, will conduct a “pulse release” Aug. 17 at Gathright Dam near Covington, Va.

The pulse release, a controlled release of water that simulates storm events, is expected to raise water levels downstream in the Jackson River by up to four feet and up to two feet in the upper James River.

Water levels will remain several feet below flood stage.

In some areas, the rate of the river rise may exceed 1 foot per hour and people who live near or recreate on the rivers are cautioned to be alert to changing conditions.

The pulse release will begin at about 6 a.m., with dam operators gradually increasing outflow of water from 280 to 3,000 cubic feet per second by 9 a.m.

Dam operators will maintain the 3,000 cubic feet per second release for two hours and gradually decrease the water flow from the dam at 11 a.m. By 2 p.m., water flow from Gathright Dam will return to a normal seasonal outflow.

The controlled release of water is being done to test whether or not pulses are effective at removing algae and improving water quality by simulating late-summer and early-fall storm events, a natural variability that’s been reduced by the operation of Gathright Dam. This test is part of a study authorized under Section 216 of the Rivers and Harbors and Flood Control Act of 1970.

The Corps’ Gathright Dam and Lake Moomaw project, located on the Jackson River, 43.4 miles upstream of its confluence with the Cowpasture River, is a multipurpose project authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1946, and is regulated to reduce flood damage at downstream locations, to increase low flows for improvement of downstream water quality, and to provide water-based recreation opportunities.

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**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District
803 Front Street
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-201-7606**

www.armyengineersnorfolk.com