



US Army Corps
of Engineers ®

Huntington District

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Zoar Levee

In 1947, Dover Dam's pool reached a then record elevation of 902.7 feet and under seepage and interior runoff were noted on the interior toe of Zoar Levee.

In 1948 several actions were taken to remediate the under seepage and interior drainage problems. Fourteen, 40 feet deep relief wells were added to the landward toe of the levee approximately 125 feet apart. In addition, 13 piezometers were installed between the relief wells.

Between 1950-51, a pump station was constructed to help pump flows from the Zoar Diversion Dam outside of Zoar Levee. The station was equipped with twin pumps, with 125 horsepower able to discharge 15,000 gallons per minute (gpm). At the time of construction, a space for a third pump of equal size was provided but never installed.

In 1951 the federal government, acting through the USACE, made further investments in protecting Zoar from the occurrence of a Standard Project Flood while Dover Dam's reservoir was at spillway capacity. These investments raised the levee elevation from elevation 919 feet to elevation 928.5 feet. This increased the footprint, on average of about 25%, and required an embankment to be placed on a portion of the Rock Knoll that had previously been "high ground". It is noteworthy, that similar efforts were not taken to protect other developments, including purchasing additional flowage easement or raising other appurtenant levees located upstream of Dover Dam.

In 1969, Zoar Levee was loaded for approximately three weeks, when Dover Dam's pool reached a then-record height of elevation 905.0 feet. No seepage issues were reported in the Ball Field reach, though some basement flooding was experienced. A possible seep exit was noted on the interior of the Rock Knoll reach, but later dismissed as the emergence of high groundwater.

Between 1975 and 2010, several shallow slides were noted and re-dressed in three locations: the riverward slope, the highway ramp along the pump station access road, and the landward slope.

In 1992, new manhole extensions and outlet pipes were added to existing relief wells to improve access.

Between 1994 and 1995, Relief Wells 11, 12, and 13 were replaced at Zoar Levee and five additional piezometers were added.



In 2005, Dover Dam retained a pool of record at elevation 907.4 feet, which loaded water against Zoar Levee for approximately a month. Widespread small “pin” boils were noted on the Ball Field reach and more concentrated seepage was found on the Rock Knoll reach of the levee. The District installed rings of sand bags around the seeps and attempted to place a small granular filter berm to reduce the movement of soil particles. A Screening Portfolio Risk Assessment (SPRA) of Zoar Levee and Diversion Dam assigned Zoar Levee a DSAC II classification, citing “extensive seepage and small boils” and rating both the levee and Diversion Dam as “Probably Inadequate” for seepage and piping under “Normal” loading conditions.



In 2008, another significant Dover Dam pool occurred loading Zoar Levee for a month and peaking three feet below the 2005 pool, at 904.6 feet. The levee’s performance near the Rock Knoll reach worsened significantly, with large concentrated seepage or boils appearing at several locations within the interior of the levee.

Early during the 2008 event, boils on the Rock Knoll reach were sand-bagged. As the pool elevation increased during the next two weeks the number of boils, the size of

boils, and the total quantity of seepage across the area increased significantly. Boils repeatedly expanded and collapsed sandbag rings.

Flood fighting with sandbag rings was employed for two and a half weeks, while Dover Dam’s pool rose from approximately elevation 894 feet to elevation 904.6 feet and several boils grew to 1.5 feet in diameter. It was estimated by the Geotechnical Engineers on site that some boils produced up to 300 gallons per minute (gpm) of water each. There was a concern that this water flow may have been eroding the foundation of the levee.





Without having the benefit to be able to interpret whether the seepage was flowing solely through bedrock or dangerously along the bedrock/soil contact, the changing locations and increasing seepage quantities were considered as just cause to declare an emergency. Under an emergency situation, it was decided to install a \$1.26 million seepage berm with 37,000 tons of granular material.



At the same time, widespread small boils and pervasive area seepage were again observed on the Ball Field reach of the levee, but no immediate flood fighting actions were taken. This scenario was very similar to what occurred in 2005. The boils were monitored for about three and a half weeks, but did not expand.

This event resulted in Zoar Levee and Diversion Dam being reclassified as a DSAC 1 project, as progression toward failure was believed to be potentially occurring.



Zoar Diversion Dam

In 1947, after significant seepage was observed through the right abutment, the pool was drained and a sinkhole was observed about 150 feet upstream of the upstream embankment toe in the reservoir area. The 1947 remedial measures consisted of concreting the bedrock in the sinkhole and filling the remainder of the depression with clay. Also, a trench was excavated along the upstream right abutment exposing highly fragmented limestone, which

was grouted and covered with a thin coat of concrete. The trench was backfilled with clay and the lake was again impounded. Clear seepage was still observed at some point after this exiting from the downstream right abutment area.

In 1970, during the first periodic inspection, clear seepage was noted exiting at the downstream toe near the outlet conduit. By 1976, the seepage exit had progressed upslope to a location 8 feet above the toe and the toe area was described as being saturated.

In 1978, major remedial measures were undertaken which consisted of:

- Installing a toe drain system
- Lowering of the outlet channel to provide positive drainage from the outlet headwall.
- Repairing gullies on the downstream slope.
- Regrading the upstream slope and providing wave protection with large stone



In 1989, seepage of 50-100 gallons per minute (gpm) was reported 300 feet downstream of the conduit outlet on the right side, exiting at several points. By 1990, flow had increased to 150-200 gpm. During the spring and summer of 1991 the seepage caused the lake level to drop significantly before leveling off at elevation 906 feet. The flow had peaked at 500 gpm and a large vertical piping cavity had developed. Studies were begun, including a seepage tracing study that confirmed a connection

between pool and seepage.

In 1993, after an Embankment Re-Analysis was conducted to study the seepage problems, repairs were implemented which included installation of an upstream impervious geomembrane along the upstream right abutment of the dam, construction of an access road to the downstream area, and installation of a seepage berm with collection system downstream of the dam extending along the right abutment to the area of seepage.



In 1997, an analysis was completed to study Zoar Diversion's flood storage capacity and potential for being overtopped. This study recommended that the impounded Goose Run Lake be drained and a permanent lake no longer retained. The gate has remained open ever since,



and the only known pools retained occurred in spring 2011 (3 very flashy pools as high as elevation 909 feet). No concerns were noted during these pools, but only limited observation was possible due to the lack of warning.

For more information or to provide comments, please contact:

Attention: Zoar Levee

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District

502 Eighth Street

Huntington, West Virginia 25701

Voice: 304-399-5720

Email: zoarlevee@usace.army.mil