



Public safety is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' highest priority. The Mill Creek Project's primary authorized purpose is to reduce the risk of flooding to the City of Walla Walla and adjacent downstream areas bordering Mill Creek, Yellowhawk Creek and Garrison Creek.

Project facilities supporting our flood-risk management mission include a diversion dam, intake canal, storage reservoir (Bennington Lake), division works structure, return and outlet channels, and about 1-mile of the Mill Creek Levee System ~ from the diversion dam to the western end of the Project Office parking lot.

These flood-operations facilities require continuous operation and maintenance (O&M) to effectively manage the risk of potential flood damages during seasonal high flows.

Operations ~ Flows through the Mill Creek channel over 3,500 cfs, for an extended period of time, have the potential to cause serious structural damage. Flows diverted to Bennington lake help maintain safe flow in the channel running through town.

Diverted water is held in Bennington Lake until flood flows subside, then the water is released back into Mill Creek by way of a return channel running on the west side of the lake. Water from Bennington Lake can also be released through an outlet channel into Russell Creek on the south side of the storage dam.

Bennington Lake's off-stream, earthfill storage dam, is about 125 feet above the streambed and runs about 3,200 feet long at the crest; The reservoir has a maximum storage capacity of 8,300 acre-feet at elevation 1,265,



with a 5-foot freeboard. The reservoir is the only public lake within 45 miles of the city of Walla Walla.

During severe flooding in 1996, Bennington Lake (reservoir) held 6,653 cubic acre feet for almost 2 months. That's enough water to cover Walla Walla's entire city limits (10.8 square miles) about one foot deep. The Mill Creek Project's flood-risk management operations prevented millions of dollars in potential flood damages.

Mill Creek Project Flood-risk Management Objectives:

- > Keep flows through WW below 3,500 cfs
- > Divert and hold water in Bennington Lake as needed
- > Manage outlet flows to minimize effects in streams
- > Maintain active communication with WW emergency managers and the public

