

Project Update:
Stevens Reservoir Enlargement
Posted June 29, 2010

After more than 20 years, the Stevens Reservoir Enlargement Project is complete! With the completion of the wetlands planting on June 10, it may now be filled to its new 1,775 acre-foot (AF) capacity as water rights and precipitation allow this fall.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)–required wetlands mitigation work involved moving wetlands soils and plant material from the former water line and placing it in exactly the same configuration at the new, higher water line. This dirt work, covering 27 acres, was followed by planting approximately 1300 small shrubs in October 2009. After this fall planting, the reservoir was filled to its new full capacity. In May, the lake was drawn down slightly in order to plant an additional 78,000 plant plugs, or starts.

The plugs were planted in 27 acres around the lake over the course of 2 ½ weeks by thirty employees of Horizon Environmental, subcontracted by Hart Construction. The plugs must be kept moist for twelve weeks, with a combination of watering, hay mulch and (hopefully) summer rain. The ACOE allows up to 20% mortality after 12 weeks. A higher mortality than that will require replanting. There is then a three-year monitoring requirement, extendable to five years, by the ACOE to verify the survival of the wetlands. If requirements are not met after three-five years, additional mitigation work must be conducted. If requirements are met, monitoring may cease after the three-five years.

In 1999, PAWSD placed a moratorium on new inclusions to the District until more raw water storage capacity and delivery could be developed and improved. The PAWSD Board of Directors lifted the moratorium at their regular meeting July 14, 2009.



Filled to 250 AF, with wetlands work at north end(October 2009)



Wetlands soils, in place and ready for planting



Placing 27 acres of wetlands soils, a bucket at a time



Planting the wetlands plugs (June 2010)



78,000 wetlands plugs, after planting



Some of the 27 planted acres, soon to be inundated



Watering the new plantings with reservoir water