

Alamo Dam News



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2022

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District



Alamo Stats

- In March the lake elevation was 1110. Since then, indicative of current drought conditions, the pool has steadily declined to its current elevation of 1107.
- Dam releases have continued to be baseflow only, ranging around 25 cfs. No deviations from baseflow release are expected in the next 3 months.
- Monitor real-time lake elevation and stream flows at <http://resreg.spl.usace.army.mil/pages/alamo.php>.

Alamo Dam News is an unofficial publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This online publication is produced quarterly with the purpose of providing its readers information about the work USACE completes at Alamo Dam. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Mention of specific vendors does not constitute endorsement by the Department of the Army or any element thereof.

Water Control Plan EIS Update

The Water Control Plan at Alamo dictates how much and when water is released from the dam. In some instances we have a lot of discretion as to how the water is released, but in others, such as flood events, we have a lot less discretion. The Water Control Plan lays out how we go about deciding what size of release we might make at specific water levels of the lake.

The EIS, or Environmental Impact Statement, that is being drafted covers all the environmental, cultural, social, and economic considerations that must be taken into account regarding the effects of any changes made to the existing Water Control Plan. An EIS is the highest level of document that is created to review such considerations as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Developing an EIS is a lengthy process as there are lots of challenging issues that need to get addressed in the document, so it often takes quite a long time to develop a draft EIS before it goes out for public review and comment.

We are still in the development phase of the draft EIS for the Water Control Plan. There are

many stakeholders and many issues to balance when it comes to analyzing the effects of water releases from Alamo. We are taking the development of this EIS very seriously and are devoting the time needed to get things right.

We are still developing the draft EIS, which means the opportunity for public review and comment hasn't happened yet. Folks will get a chance to review the draft EIS and provide comments as soon as the draft EIS is completed. If you received this newsletter via email, you will receive a notice of availability for the draft EIS along with directions on how to provide comments.

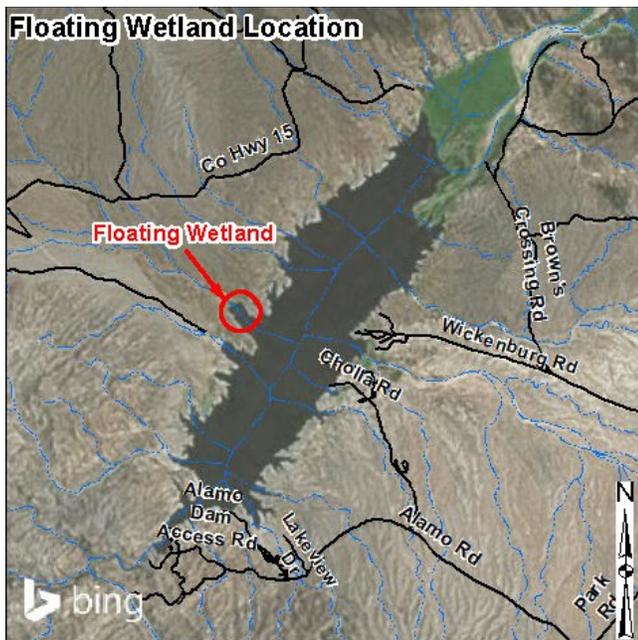
At this point we are hoping to have the draft EIS ready for public review sometime in 2023.

Inside this Issue

Water Control Plan	1
Floating Wetland	2
Look Ahead	3
Electrical	3
Contact Information	3

Alamo Dam Routine Maintenance

A floating wetland was installed during April 2022 in the cove across the lake from the Cholla Boat Ramp to provide habitat for wildlife species and provide a new fishing attraction (**GPS Location: 34.26155 N, -113.58618 W**). The floating wetlands will provide a number of benefits to the lake and provide an interesting site to stop and check out while boating.



The wetland was created from a floating piece of foam with holes spaced around the top for planting. Before anchoring the floating wetland in its permanent location, the holes were filled with a mix of peat moss and potting

soil, and then the plants were added. All plants are native to Arizona. Plants include spike rush, blue rush, gold strike rush, three square bulrush, yerba mansa, arrow head, broadleaf cattail, and grassy arrowhead.

As the plants grow, their root systems will dangle in the water, eventually creating a fairly dense mat of roots. The dangling roots will become covered in biofilm, a sticky secretion produced by microbes, that will collect nearby algae and zooplankton forming a community of periphyton. Periphyton is the base of most aquatic food webs, and will entice aquatic insects to come for a snack, which will in turn attract fish! Above the water the flowering plants will attract pollinators, provide a resting place for birds, and provide a home for other semi-aquatic creatures.

The plants and the periphyton community on the plant roots will also have the ability to absorb excess nutrients in the water. Removing excess nutrients from the water will help reduce the size and/or frequency of harmful algal blooms on the lake.

Have you fished at the floating wetlands? What did you catch? Do you enjoy or dislike the floating wetland installation? Did you notice a problem with the floating wetland? Please let us know! Send us an email at AlamoDamSPL@usace.army.mil.



*Floating Wetland
(Photo courtesy of Paul Miller)*

Alamo Dam Look Ahead

We've got a lot of large projects continuing and starting at Alamo this summer and fall. We will be wrapping up our work on remodeling one of the onsite dam tender homes, test fitting our new bulkhead gate, inspecting the dam's upper conduit, and completing an architect-

tural survey of the dam to assess the potential historic value of the structure. We will also be working downstream in the Bill Williams River corridor conducting surveys for the endangered Northern Mexican Gartersnake. We are also going to wrap up design work on refurbishing

the dam's hydraulic systems and designing a replacement elevator system (the dam's current elevator is original) this fall. Once the designs are complete, we will wait for Congress to allot funding to the specific projects before we are able to start construction.

Electrical Modernization at Alamo Dam

We have been working on updating the electrical systems within the dam since mid-winter. The contractor is very close to completing the updates that were within our budget at this time. The cost and length of time to complete the updates was significantly more than expected, as we had to install explosion proof electrical equipment on account of the hydrogen sulfide gas that enters the dam from the bottom of the lake. The control tower now has explosion proof outlets (that need a special plug!), explosion proof light fixtures, and explosion proof equipment and raceways. It has been a major change for our facility. The new electrical system will assure our dam can safely continue to operate for years to come and will also provide a safer working environment for our resident dam tenders.



Electrician working on the conduit.

Photo Courtesy of Alyson Reichstein

Stay up-to-date on Alamo Dam!

The Corps has an email list to distribute updates, newsletters and other documents to anyone interested in staying up to date on Corps' actions at Alamo Dam.

If you are interested in being on the Alamo Dam email distribution list or have question or comments, please email: AlamoDamSPL@usace.army.mil.

If you received this newsletter via email, you are already on the email distribution list.

Moon setting looking downstream of Alamo Lake. (Photo courtesy of Jim Boyd)

