



Lake Red Rock

1105 Highway T15, Knoxville, IA 50138
Des Moines River

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Lake Red Rock Land Easements

Red Rock Dam and Lake Red Rock flowage easement lands total 76,841 acres with 50,580 acres in fee ownership and 26,261 acres in flowage easement.

Red Rock has considerable acreage in flowage easements rather than fee title property. This means the flowage easement lands remain in private ownership but can be used for reservoir flood storage. As such, there are some types of private use of these lands which is restricted due to the flood storage requirement of the easement. The government purchased these flowage easements in the 1960s under the rules of the 1953 Eisenhower Plan which governed land acquisition at the time. Flowage easements were purchased for occasional water storage between the five-year flood frequency elevation of 760 feet mean sea level (msl) and 783 feet msl (the top of the flood pool, plus three feet of freeboard).



Easement Concerns and Questions

Concern: The Red Rock Dam and Lake Red Rock Easement Acquisition Project Authorization (P.L. 99-190), “willing seller program,” was inadequate and the land values did not represent fair market value.

- Original land values were based on fair market values, by licensed appraisers, using the before and after method, and included any severance damages when appropriate.

Concern: Original acquisition payments for Flowage Easements were not adequate for current crop loss, debris cleanup, noxious weeds, and loss of access.

- The fair market value estimated and paid in connection with purchase of the Flowage Easements was determined in part by the historic frequency of flooding in the reservoir area, extrapolating such data to a “with reservoir” scenario. Original acquisitions were conducted according to all federal laws and regulations including condemnation actions, which provided appropriate legal processes and the rights for appeal.

Concern: The original flood frequency projections, at time of easement purchase, do not reflect actual flooding that has occurred since Lake Red Rock was constructed.

- The Corps of Engineers recognizes the recent wet period that has resulted in increased frequency and duration of flooding throughout Iowa and supports the state’s request to study the operational plans for all flood risk management projects within Iowa as well as the Mississippi Valley Division’s desire to study the complete watershed throughout Iowa.

Concern: Owners were not adequately notified about public meetings for the permanent pool raise in the revised Operation Plan.

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- Landowners were offered the opportunity to provide input and comment on the permanent conservation pool raise in the revised Plan. Many comments from landowners were received regarding the pool raise.

Concern: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Crop Insurance Program excludes crop loss claims when caused by contained waters of Red Rock Dam.

- The Rock Island District understands the landowners' dilemma regarding crop insurance exclusions for project-contained water and the District submitted a letter to USDA requesting a review of their policy.

Question: When will the Corps of Engineers once again provide land owners with a willing seller program to allow the sale of continually flooded farmland to the federal government?

- The Rock Island District had the ability to offer fee acquisition of flowage easement lands during the late 1980s' and early 1990s' "willing seller program," at the then current fair market value, to willing sellers using the existing authority of the Red Rock Dam and Lake Red Rock Easement Acquisition Project Authorization (P.L. 99-190, Section 108(b)), subject to appropriation of funds.

The initial offering (1993/1994) included an estimated 750 owners, encompassing 29,473 easement acres. The Corps contacted 554 owners, of which; 156 declined participation, 88 owners entered into negotiations, 49 owners rejected offers, 39 owners (3,212.49 acres) accepted offers totaling land payments of \$2,065,363.

The funds required to implement P.L. 99-190 under 2010 market conditions was estimated to be within a range of \$50,000,000 to \$70,000,000, assuming a 100% willing seller participation.

Question: Is Red Rock Dam being effectively operated as a flood risk management project?

- Yes. From 1969, when the dam was put into operation, until 2010, Red Rock Dam has prevented more than \$559,000,000 in flood damages. Additionally, in 2010, visitors logged more than 4,000,000 hours using the Lake's recreational opportunities which equates to a regional economic impact of more than \$14,000,000.

Visit Lake Red Rock on the Web @ <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/LakeRedRock.aspx>

For more information about reservoirs operated by the Rock Island District, visit us on the Web @ <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Media/FactSheets.aspx>

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