

## **Part 522 – Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting**

### **522.0 Reservoir Operations Guides**

A. Selecting appropriate storage levels and average release rates for reservoirs in snowmelt runoff environments is a prerequisite to sound water management. A number of impoundments, operated for single- or multiple-purpose use in the United States, lack adequate management tools to guide this process each year. Seasonal volume forecasts improve water management at these reservoirs.

B. Reservoir operations guides are decision support tools to help reservoir operators manage their facilities by using streamflow forecasts. Reservoir operations guides provide a means to optimize water use while minimizing flood damages. This policy has been developed to ensure that operation guides are technically sound and meet the operator's needs.

### **522.1 Authority and Request for Assistance**

A reservoir operations guide may be prepared for any reservoir upon receipt of a written request from the reservoir operator or owner. Requests must be reviewed by the soil and water conservation district before forwarding to the State Conservationist for approval.

### **522.2 Responsibility**

A. Upon receipt of a request, a determination of feasibility and desirability of preparing a reservoir operations guide will be made jointly by the State conservation engineer (SCE) and the water supply specialist or the data collection office supervisor. Their concurrence is required before proceeding with the development of the reservoir operations guide.

B. For federally owned, operated, or funded structures, it is essential that full agreement on the feasibility and desirability of developing a reservoir operations guide be reached between the Federal agency (non-NRCS), the sponsor or land user, and NRCS.

### **522.3 NRCS Technical Review**

The SCE and the National Water and Climate Center will be actively involved in the development and review of the reservoir operations guide. A copy of the reservoir operations guide must be sent to the State agency responsible for administering dam regulations during the NRCS review process.

### **522.4 Reservoir Operations Guide Review**

For the first 3 years after the reservoir operations guide is implemented, there will be an annual review by the SCE to determine its effectiveness as a management tool. After the first 3 years, the frequency of review must be reevaluated to determine an appropriate review frequency.