

New England District celebrates milestone anniversaries for Littleville Lake and Knightville Dam

By Ann Marie R. Harvie

Between them, Littleville Lake and Knightville Dam in Massachusetts both have served the people of New England by keeping dangerous floodwaters at bay for a total of 125 years. Local representatives joined members of the New England District team in commemorating the 75th anniversary of Knightville Dam and the 50th anniversary of Littleville Dam, at an event held in Huntington, Massachusetts, Oct. 8.

Matthew Coleman, Park Manager of both projects, welcomed the audience and introduced the event's speakers. Steven Lehmann, Operations Manager, Lower Connecticut River Basin, spoke on behalf of the District. "This is a significant milestone for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," he said. "These flood risk management protection projects have protected the citizens of this community, the region and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for 50 years in the case of Littleville Lake and 75 years in the case of Knightville Dam. That's quite an accomplishment."

According to Lehmann both dams are just part of the comprehensive flood risk management protection system for the Lower Connecticut River Basin which consists of five reservoirs, and the New England Region, which consists of 35 dams and reservoirs, 112 local protection projects and five hurricane protection barriers.

"These projects are great examples of applied engineering and science successfully mitigating flood risk and damage, and adding immeasurable value to the region," he said. "These dams have protected downstream citizens in Massachusetts for 75 years in the case of Knightville Dam and 50 years in the case of Littleville Lake dam. They have proven to be a very successful investment of time and money, together preventing more than \$490.8 million in flood damages since their construction."

The Operations Manager said that the District has enjoyed a long flood risk management protection partnership with the citizens of this region and sees that partnership continuing long into the future.

"I hope our successors will stand right here some day to commemorate future anniversaries and envision an even greater future for the region and the Corps of Engineers, and for future generations, and am truly confident our partnerships will remain strong," he said.

In addition to flood risk management, the lands around the two dams have various recreational opportunities for the public to enjoy. "Today Knightville Dam draws over 41,000 visitors and Littleville Lake draws over 39,000 visitors annually, who enjoy boating,

picnicking, fishing, nature study, hunting, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and more,” said Lehmann. “Additionally the projects provide continued support to the local businesses and the economy in the region.”

Lehmann concluded his remarks by thanking the towns of Huntington and Chester as well as members of the New England District team who made the commemoration event possible. "I take great pride in what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has contributed to this community, this region, this state and this nation and the work that we do here and around the world," said Lehmann.

Other speakers at the event included John McVeigh, town of Huntington Board of Selectmen; Bob Stoops, Chief Engineer, city of Springfield Water and Sewer Commission; Bill McVeigh, Huntington Historical Society, and Jeff Penn, Huntington Representative, Westfield Wild & Scenic Rivers Committee.

Following the ceremony, participants were invited to view a display of historic photos of the reservoir area and Littleville Dam by the Chester Historical Society as well as some artifacts from the old village of Littleville. New England District team members also gave dam tours of both dams. In addition to Coleman and Lehmann, Park Rangers Colin Monkiewicz, Keith Goulet and Brooke Dube participated in the event.

Construction of Littleville Lake dam began in June 1962 and was completed in October 1965 at a cost of \$6.8 million. Joe Ledgere was the first damtender for the project. Since its construction, Littleville Lake dam has prevented \$152.8 million in flood damages.

Work on Knightville Dam began in August 1939 and was completed in December 1941 at a cost of \$3.3 million. John Parker was the project's first damtender. To date, Knightville Dam has prevented \$338 million in flood damages.