

GEHR Watershed Minute #34

Lake Lenape: (241 words)

The Lake Lenape Dam in Mays Landing was first built across the Great Egg Harbor River around 1844 by Jeremiah Stull, flooding approximately 300 acres of apple orchards to a depth of about 13 feet. This new lake was first called Mays Landing Pond.

The original dam eventually broke, and was replaced by a new dam constructed as the power source for a cotton mill. In 1853 the R.D. Wood & Company constructed the Millville Cotton Mill utilizing water power from Union Lake on the Maurice River, and in 1867 they created the Mays Landing Water Power Company to utilize the water power at Mays Landing Pond on the Great Egg Harbor River.

The Mays Landing cotton mill which manufactured toweling, sheeting, and other fabrics was closed in 1949 and sold to Wheaton Industries, which operated at the dam location until it closed around 1999.

The gravity dam in Mays Landing is primarily an armored earth levy about 1,050 feet long, with a substantial stone overfall or weir. The overall height is about 29 feet, and the waterfall varies from 10 to 11.5 feet as the tide changes. The lake drains an area of 205 square miles, and in 1890 the overall power rating of the dam was 490 horse power.

Today the dam is owned and operated by Atlantic County and Hamilton Township, and Lake Lenape is maintained for public recreation as part of Atlantic County's large public park system.