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Lake Tapps

In response to the ever increasing demand for electrical power in the region during the early 20th century, a plan was proposed by Pacific Coast Power Company (later Puget Sound Traction Light & Power), and in 1910 the “White River Power Project” was begun. This project created a large reservoir by the flooding of 4 existing lakes known as Kirtley Lake, Crawford Lake, Church Lake (formerly Kelley Lake), and Lake Tapps. The flooding was accomplished by building approximately 2.5 miles of earthen dikes which raised the water level by 35 feet, thereby joining the lakes together. The resulting 14 mile long lake required some 20 million board feet of lumber to complete the necessary miles of flumes, canal linings, and rail trestles.

The water level was maintained by diverting water from the White River near Buckley by a diversion dam and then to the lake via an open top wooden flume box. The water traveled north through the lake to a penstock tunnel, where it exited to the White River Power Station at Dieringer, along the East Valley Highway north of Sumner. The water then rejoined the stream from which it was taken and continued into the Puyallup River. The power station has since been closed, but picturesque 2,566 acre Lake Tapps remains. Its 45 miles of shoreline continues to provide a haven for residents, recreation and a source of fresh water.



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