



Rye Patch Dam and Reservoir

Overview

Rye Patch Dam and Reservoir are part of the Bureau of Reclamation's Humboldt Project, located on the Humboldt River in Pershing County, Nevada. Originally constructed in 1936, to provide reliable irrigation water for agricultural lands in the Lovelock Valley, the dam and reservoir continue to play a critical role in water storage, flood control, and recreation in northwestern Nevada. The facility is owned by Reclamation and operated by the Pershing County Water Conservation District.

- ✓ Location: Pershing County, NV
- ✓ Impounds: Humboldt River
- ✓ Creates: Rye Patch Reservoir
- ✓ Total Capacity: 213,000 acre-feet
- ✓ Part of: Humboldt Project
- ✓ Built: 1935-1936
- ✓ Type: Earthfill
- ✓ Size: 75-ft high; 1,074 ft long



Rye Patch Dam takes its name from the nearby community of Rye Patch, Nevada, a railroad stop along the Humboldt River in the late 1800s. The name came from the wild rye grass that grew in patches along the riverbanks.

Operations

The Humboldt Project was authorized in 1933 to improve agricultural production and stabilize water supply reliability in the Lovelock area. The reservoir captures and stores seasonal flows of the Humboldt River, which are highly variable from year to year due to the arid climate and snowmelt-dependent hydrology. Water from Rye Patch Reservoir is released into the Humboldt River and diverted downstream at the Pitt-Taylor Canal to irrigate roughly 30,000 acres of farmland.

The reservoir and surrounding recreation areas are managed in cooperation with the Nevada Division of State Parks as the Rye Patch State Recreation Area. Popular recreational activities include boating, camping, fishing, hiking, and wildlife viewing. Rye Patch Reservoir provides seasonal habitat for migratory birds and native fish species. While water levels can fluctuate significantly, the reservoir plays an important role in regional habitat conservation and waterfowl management.

Rye Patch Dam is regularly inspected and maintained under Reclamation's Safety of Dams Program to ensure its continued safe operation. Periodic maintenance and monitoring activities are conducted in partnership with the local operating district. [Real time water surface data is available here.](#)



Rye Patch Dam is a New Deal legacy project, built to fight unemployment, strengthen agriculture, and expand Reclamation's mission during the 1930s.