

Abstract

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, surveyed the bathymetry and selected above-water sections of Blackfoot Reservoir, Caribou County, Idaho, in 2011. Reservoir operations managed releases from Government Dam on Blackfoot Reservoir based on a stage-capacity relation developed about the time of dam construction in the early 1900s. Reservoir operation directly affects the amount of water that is available for irrigation of agricultural land on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation and surrounding areas. The USGS surveyed the below-water sections of the reservoir using a multibeam echosounder and real-time kinematic global positioning system (RTK-GPS) equipment at full reservoir pool in June 2011, covering elevations from 6,090 to 6,139 feet (ft) above the North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88). The USGS used data from a light detection and ranging (LIDAR) survey performed in 2000–2001 to map reservoir bathymetry from 6,116 to 6,124 ft NAVD 88, which was mostly in depths too shallow to measure with the multibeam echosounder, and most of the above-water section of the reservoir (above 6,124 ft NAVD 88). Selected points and bank cross-sectional features were surveyed by the USGS using RTK-GPS and a total station at low reservoir pool in September 2011 to supplement and verify the LIDAR data. The stage-capacity relation was revised and presented as a tabular format. The data sets show a 2.0-percent decrease in capacity from the original survey, due to sedimentation or differences in accuracy between surveys. A 1.3-percent error also was detected in the previously used capacity table and measured water-level elevation because of a questionable reference elevation at monitoring stations near Government Dam. Reservoir capacity in 2011 at design maximum pool of 6,124 ft above NAVD 88 was 333,500 acre-ft.

Introduction

Blackfoot Reservoir is an 18,000-acre lake located about 15 mi north of Soda Springs, Caribou County, in southeastern Idaho (fig. 1). The reservoir was formed in 1909–10, after the completion of Government Dam on the Blackfoot River, and primarily is used now (2012) for irrigation supply and recreation. Reservoir releases are managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) based on a stage-capacity relation developed in 1933 using water surface elevations (stages) referenced to the National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD 29) (BIA, 2011). The reservoir supplies irrigation water for about 50,000 acres of agricultural land near Pocatello and on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Elevation of the reservoir bottom ranges from 6,090 to 6,124 ft above NAVD 88. The reservoir has a full pool elevation (6,124 ft above NAVD 88), and the reservoir holds 333,500 acre-ft of water at full pool elevation (6,124 ft above NAVD 88). Drainage area to the reservoir is 581 mi² (Harenberg and others, 1989). The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) operated a non-recording stage-monitoring station on the northern end of the reservoir near the dam from 1912 to 1925 and from 1929 to 1989 (USGS station 13065000). The BIA and Idaho Power Company also have operated stage-monitoring stations in the reservoir near the dam over various time periods.

The USGS surveyed the bathymetry of Blackfoot Reservoir in 2011 to determine temporal changes due to sedimentation and other factors, and to improve the overall accuracy of the stage-capacity table. Bathymetric surveys of high accuracy and resolution are possible through advances in instrumentation, notably multibeam echosounders (MBES). An MBES coupled with real-time kinematic global positioning systems (RTK-GPS) has advantages over traditional techniques for surveying reservoir bathymetry, such as single-beam echosounders, sonaric Doppler profilers, or soundings, because they can provide more coverage of the reservoir bed and real-time data corrections. The topography (above water) of the reservoir, which could not be measured with the MBES, was surveyed by Horizons, Inc., in 2000 using terrestrial light detection and ranging (LIDAR), and verified in selected areas by USGS in 2011 using RTK-GPS surveying equipment.

Wind is a factor that is not accounted for in a typical bathymetric or terrestrial survey, but it can influence an observer's perception of reservoir capacity and operations. Wind moving across a reservoir can cause the water surface to slope, resulting in increased storage on one end of the reservoir. For example, if wind causes high stage near the dam at Blackfoot Reservoir, reservoir managers may release water under the assumption that the stage at the dam is constant across the reservoir. In this case, the current storage in the reservoir would be overestimated, and too much water may be released. The USGS evaluated this phenomenon through wind and stage monitoring in May–November 2011.

Previous Investigations

The original stage-capacity table for Blackfoot Reservoir was developed in 1933 using data from topographic maps that were made about the time of construction of Government Dam (David Hollister, Bureau of Indian Affairs, written commun., 2012). Selected elevations and capacities from the 1933 stage-capacity table are published in U.S. Geological Survey (1956) and in various USGS Annual Water Data Reports from 1912 through 1989 (Harenberg and others, 1989). Horizons, Inc., surveyed the above-water section of the reservoir in autumn 2000, when stages were about 6,116 ft above NAVD 88, using terrestrial LIDAR equipment resulting in a point spacing of 14 × 7 ft. Horizons, Inc., provided the LIDAR data to Dowl HMKM in March 2001, who used the data to prepare a map of the exposed reservoir pool with 2-ft contour intervals from 6,116 to 6,124 ft above NAVD 88 (Gary Ellwell, Dowl HMKM, written commun., 2004). No parts of the reservoir below 6,116 ft were surveyed during this study. Dowl HMKM used a 2-percent decrease in reservoir capacity from 1933 to 2000 in the range of surveyed elevations (Gary Ellwell, Dowl HMKM, written commun., 2004).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers rebuilt the spillway at Government Dam in 1984, and the spillway crest elevation was raised 2 ft from 6,122.5 to 6,124.5 ft NAVD 88 (reported as 6,118.5–6,120.5 ft NGVD 29) (Gary Ellwell, Dowl HMKM, written commun., 2004). Dowl HMKM noted a discrepancy in the reported spillway crest elevation during

their 2000–2001 study. Project personnel observed water spilling over the spillway crest when the reservoir pool elevation was measured at 6,124.4 ft NAVD 88 (reported as 6,120.4 ft NGVD 29), and three locations and water data at one location. Reservoir pool elevation was measured at 6,120.0 ft NGVD 29, and determined that the true spillway elevation must be closer to 6,124.0 ft NAVD 88 (reported as 6,120.0 ft NGVD 29). The USGS verified the spillway elevation as near 6,124.0 ft NAVD 88 (6,120.0 ft NGVD 29) during the 2011 study using RTK-GPS surveying equipment. The spillway is slightly sloped with highest elevations on the northern side (6,124 ft NAVD 88), and lowest elevations on the southern side (6,124 ft NAVD 88).

Methods

Field data were collected at various times from May 29 to November 30, 2011. The USGS collected stage data at three locations and water data at one location. Reservoir bathymetry was measured using MBES equipment on June 24–25, 2011, at maximum pool (average 6,124 ft NAVD 88), and selected ground elevations were measured using RTK-GPS and a total station on September 25–30, 2011, at minimum pool for the year (average 6,119.3 ft NAVD 88).

Stage and Wind Monitoring

The USGS installed three stage-monitoring stations and one wind monitoring station on Blackfoot Reservoir in May and June 2011 (fig. 1). The stage and wind monitoring station (USGS station 13065000) on the northern end of the reservoir near Government Dam was installed on May 27, 2011. Station equipment included a Sotom ACCURAP® bubbler pressure sensor to measure reservoir stage, a Vaisala WINDCAP® sonic anemometer to measure wind speed and direction, and a Sotom Sulf2x2 datalogger to record and transmit data. Data were recorded every 15 minutes and transmitted through satellite telemetry every hour. The anemometer stored instantaneous and 12-minute average readings of wind speed and direction. Average wind readings were used for the analysis unless an anomaly was detected, such as an erroneous reading resulting from a leaf or bird obstructing one of the sensors. In this case, the instantaneous readings were used in place of the average readings if they were reasonable and did not appear to be outliers. Stage data from the northern station from May 27 to November 30, 2011, are published in USGS station 13065000.

The other two stage-monitoring stations were installed on the eastern and southern sides of the reservoir on June 21, 2011. The two additional stations were compared with the stage and wind monitoring data at the northern station to determine whether wind causes enough slope in the reservoir's water surface to warrant consideration of wind in reservoir operation. The stations were equipped with two In-Situ Level TROLL® 600 vented pressure transducers mounted on a weighted platform on the reservoir bed. The vertical cables extended to the water surface to a buoy, and the cable ends were housed in a locked case attached to top of the buoy, enabling USGS personnel to periodically download data from the transducers. Stage at all three monitoring stations was referenced to a staff plate or other suitable reference point installed near each station. Reference points on each staff plate were surveyed during the ground RTK-GPS survey to the nearest centimeter using a common datum for comparison. Stage sensors were reset to the staff plate readings at each visit. Corrections for sensor drift or malfunction were applied as needed by pre-ratting errors on the cause and magnitude of the correction.

Bathymetric Survey

USGS personnel determined that a full-coverage MBES bathymetric survey for the reservoir was not required to create a stage-capacity table that would accurately represent the true capacity of the reservoir. Wilson and Richards (2006) stated that a planned MBES survey of approximately 1 percent of the longitudinal length of the reservoir is suitable for defining a bathymetric surface. The spacing of MBES survey lines used for the Blackfoot Reservoir survey was 500 ft, which is approximately 0.6 percent of the longitudinal length of the reservoir (fig. 2). This smaller spacing better defined some of the more complex bathymetric features around the islands and shorelines. A 2-ft interval contour map created from the LIDAR data was used to create the boundary file for the bathymetric survey. The LIDAR survey (2000) was conducted at a stage of 6,116 ft NAVD 88, which is 8 ft below full pool. This data set provided spatial data in parts of the reservoir that would normally have been below water (6,116–6,124 ft NAVD 88). Due to depth constraints, most parts of the reservoir in this elevation range were not measurable by the MBES system. The MBES survey was planned to include all areas less than around 6,116 ft and include overlap of the MBES and LIDAR data above 6,116 ft NAVD 88 wherever possible.

Horizontal and Vertical Control

Horizontal and vertical control for the bathymetric survey was established by setting three temporary benchmarks on two islands located within the reservoir. A National Geodetic Survey-designated benchmark, "Gray GPS," located about 7 mi east of the center of the reservoir, was used to survey and verify the temporary benchmarks. Two benchmarks were established on the reservoir to be used as daily set-up locations for the bathymetric survey, and a third was used as a daily coordinate check benchmark. Two benchmarks were established on Long Island and one benchmark was established on Split Island (fig. 2).

Data Collection and Processing

The equipment used to conduct the bathymetric survey included an Odium Hydrographic Systems ES-3 multibeam echosounder; an Interational Industries™

DSM-10 TSS dynamic motion reference unit (roll, pitch, yaw); and an Odium DIGIBAR-Pro profiling sound velocimeter to provide continuous near-surface sound velocity data. A Hemisphere™ VSI10 heading and position receiver using two GPS antennas mounted on the epi and sonar transducer provided a precise heading. A more detailed description of the equipment used for the bathymetric survey is described in Fossnes (in press). Horizontal and vertical positioning was accomplished using RTK-GPS receiver mounted directly above the MBES and radio linked to a static base-station receiver using a GPS antenna positioned over one of the three temporary benchmarks. The elevation for the reservoir-bottom was calculated in real time, so a water surface measurement was not necessary for the bathymetric survey. Bathymetry data were collected using HYPACK™ software's HYSWEEP™ software (HYPACK, Inc., 2011). The raw data were post-processed to remove erroneous data caused by macrophyte growth and false echo returns. An algorithm called the Combined Underwater Bathymetric Estimator (CUBE) was built into the HYSWEEP™ software suite. The CUBE method is a robust statistical filtering approach that incorporated both data points and the total propagated uncertainty of each component of the MBES to determine the best estimate of position and elevation within a gridded surface. The CUBE results from the Blackfoot Reservoir bathymetry were output to a 3 × 3-ft gridded table that defined the Easting (X), Northing (Y), and elevation (Z) in ASCII format. In some areas, a CUBE estimate could not be resolved in the software. In those areas, the data were reduced to the median value and output to a 3 × 3-ft gridded surface.

Ground Survey

Elevations of major erosional bank surfaces and reference points near monitoring stations were measured on September 26–30, 2011 (fig. 2). The ground survey was used to verify that the Dowl HMKM LIDAR data set from 2000 to 2001 properly represented major erosional banks and other features that could affect the capacity-table calculation. USGS personnel used a survey-grade RTK-GPS, in conjunction with a Trimble Vx total spatial station to collect ground-survey data. The RTK-GPS and Trimble Vx total spatial station system provide a combined accuracy of 0.03 ft horizontally and 0.02 ft vertically (Trimble Navigation Limited, 2003, 2010), and has built-in constraints to exclude any data collected outside of the desired accuracy limits. The RTK-GPS data were collected using the 2009 Geomatics (Roman and others, 2010) to derive NAVD 88 elevations, and post-processed in Trimble Business Center software (Trimble Navigation Limited, 2011). The ground-survey data were referenced to the National Geodetic Survey's Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS) network (Snay and Soler, 2008) by establishing accurate base-station locations using the State Online Positioning User Service (OPUS-S) (Weston and others, 2007). The survey data used the same spatial reference as the bathymetry and LIDAR data: State Plane Idaho East Zone referenced by the North American Datum of 1983 and NAVD 88.

Quality Control and Quality Assurance

Static observations were collected daily at the RTK-GPS base station to ensure accuracy within the survey and provide quality assurance to the horizontal and vertical positioning established for each of the temporary benchmarks. The National Geodetic Survey's OPUS-S network to provide the static data for each day of surveying. Daily benchmarks checks were made to ensure the RTK-GPS was properly set up and that the coordinates matched those established at the temporary benchmarks.

Physical objects were measured for each of the MBES components and entered into the software to ensure proper translation for the MBES data solutions. A patch test was conducted for the multibeam system prior to the start of the survey to ensure that the physical objects were correctly aligned to the heading, pitch, roll, and yaw according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2012). The physical object measurements, the results of the patch test, and uncertainty estimates for each component of the MBES were entered into the total line interval of approximately 1 percent of the longitudinal length of the reservoir is suitable for defining a bathymetric surface. The spacing of MBES survey lines used for the Blackfoot Reservoir survey was 500 ft, which is approximately 0.6 percent of the longitudinal length of the reservoir (fig. 2). This smaller spacing better defined some of the more complex bathymetric features around the islands and shorelines. A 2-ft interval contour map created from the LIDAR data was used to create the boundary file for the bathymetric survey. The LIDAR survey (2000) was conducted at a stage of 6,116 ft NAVD 88, which is 8 ft below full pool. This data set provided spatial data in parts of the reservoir that would normally have been below water (6,116–6,124 ft NAVD 88). Due to depth constraints, most parts of the reservoir in this elevation range were not measurable by the MBES system. The MBES survey was planned to include all areas less than around 6,116 ft and include overlap of the MBES and LIDAR data above 6,116 ft NAVD 88 wherever possible.

The 2011 ground survey data confirm that the LIDAR data were collected in the presence of the major erosional banks, and the LIDAR data does represent the vertical nature of the erosional banks within the reservoir. The RTK-GPS surveying station elevations were on average 0.8 ft lower than the LIDAR elevations in areas where comparisons were possible. This difference is slightly higher than the combined uncertainty (0.704 ft) of the RTK-GPS and LIDAR survey (0.71 ft). Some of the differences may have been due to varying benchmarks or control points used to establish vertical and horizontal control, and true differences in location and elevation of comparison points. Overall, however, the LIDAR data are considered to be good quality and were used along with USGS-collected data sets to create a revised stage-capacity table.

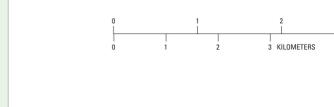
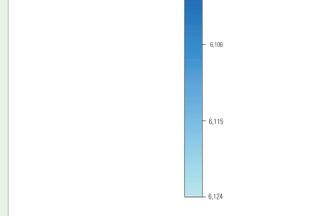
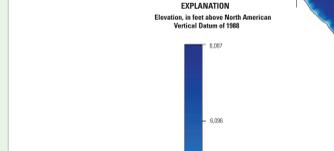
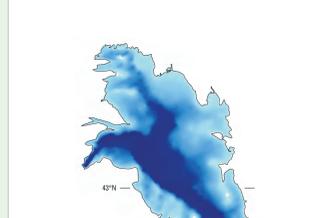


Table 1. Reservoir area and capacity (volume) at specified elevations for Blackfoot Reservoir, Idaho, 2011.

Elevations were covered from National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD 29) to North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88) using the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration VERTCON website (<http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/g18/vERTCON/converter.html>) based on the latitude and longitude of the northern monitoring station. Conversion was 3.995 feet (ft).

Stage or reservoir elevation (feet above NGVD 29)	Reservoir elevation (feet above NAVD 88)	Area (acres)	Capacity (acre-feet)	Stage or reservoir elevation (feet above NGVD 29)	Reservoir elevation (feet above NAVD 88)	Area (acres)	Capacity (acre-feet)
6,096.0	6,090.0	0.12	0.05	6,093.2	6,097.2	894	1,389
6,096.4	6,090.4	0.15	0.08	6,093.6	6,097.6	1,269	1,604
6,096.8	6,090.8	0.21	0.15	6,094.0	6,098.0	1,894	1,914
6,097.2	6,091.2	0.32	0.25	6,094.4	6,098.4	2,541	2,358
6,097.6	6,091.6	0.50	0.41	6,094.8	6,098.8	3,135	2,927
6,098.0	6,092.0	0.88	0.73	6,095.2	6,099.2	3,626	3,695
6,098.4	6,092.4	1.68	1.58	6,095.6	6,099.6	4,059	4,374
6,098.8	6,092.8	2.66	2.61	6,096.0	6,098.6	4,435	5,224
6,099.2	6,093.2	3.83	3.85	6,096.4	6,099.0	4,700	6,148
6,099.6	6,093.6	5.25	5.25	6,096.8	6,099.4	5,080	7,135
6,098.0	6,092.0	2.66	1.21	6,096.8	6,098.6	4,435	5,224
6,098.4	6,092.4	3.83	1.85	6,097.2	6,099.0	4,700	6,148
6,098.8	6,092.8	5.25	2.75	6,097.6	6,099.4	5,080	7,135
6,099.2	6,093.2	7.23	3.98	6,098.0	6,099.8	5,462	8,280
6,099.6	6,093.6	10.7	5.73	6,098.4	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	17.0	8.42	6,098.8	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.4	6,092.4	28.2	12.8	6,099.2	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.8	6,092.8	48.5	20.3	6,099.6	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,099.2	6,093.2	79.7	32.9	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	118	52.7	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	155	80.0	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	185	114	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8	244	154	6,099.6	6,101.8	7,387	22,600
6,099.2	6,093.2	306	199	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	366	250	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	494	306	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	622	367	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8	751	435	6,099.6	6,101.8	7,387	22,600
6,099.2	6,093.2	879	508	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	1,007	587	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	1,135	672	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	1,263	764	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8	1,391	863	6,099.6	6,101.8	7,387	22,600
6,099.2	6,093.2	1,519	972	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	1,647	1,081	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	1,775	1,190	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	1,903	1,300	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8	2,031	1,409	6,099.6	6,101.8	7,387	22,600
6,099.2	6,093.2	2,159	1,518	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	2,287	1,627	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	2,415	1,736	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	2,543	1,845	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8	2,671	1,954	6,099.6	6,101.8	7,387	22,600
6,099.2	6,093.2	2,799	2,063	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	2,927	2,172	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	3,055	2,281	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	3,183	2,390	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8	3,311	2,499	6,099.6	6,101.8	7,387	22,600
6,099.2	6,093.2	3,439	2,608	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	3,567	2,717	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	3,695	2,826	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	3,823	2,935	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8	3,951	3,044	6,099.6	6,101.8	7,387	22,600
6,099.2	6,093.2	4,079	3,153	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	4,207	3,262	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	4,335	3,371	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	4,463	3,480	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8	4,591	3,589	6,099.6	6,101.8	7,387	22,600
6,099.2	6,093.2	4,719	3,698	6,098.0	6,100.2	5,842	11,900
6,099.6	6,093.6	4,847	3,807	6,098.4	6,100.6	6,227	14,900
6,098.0	6,092.0	4,975	3,916	6,098.8	6,101.0	6,612	18,970
6,098.4	6,092.4	5,103	4,025	6,099.2	6,101.4	7,000	21,000
6,098.8	6,092.8						