

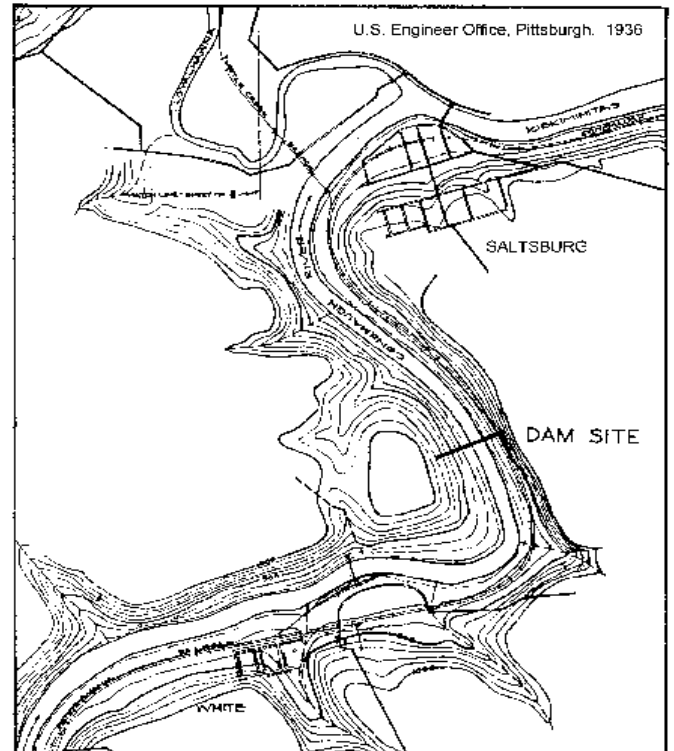
WEST PENN TRAIL at MOWEEN DAM SITE

In 1936, when a search was being made for a site suitable for a flood-control dam, the engineers employed by the government examined this place because here the river valley is narrow and the valley walls high – features that would make possible a dam that would be high, to impound a large volume of water, yet minimal in width, to reduce cost of construction.

A dam was not built at this site, for a number of reasons, but primarily because the pool of water behind the dam would have flooded several large coal mines: the Bowman and Watson mines, near White; Tunnelton mine, six miles upriver; the Moween mine, just above the dam site. The cost of buying the mines would have been 3.24 million dollars, or one-third the cost of the dam itself, 11.3 million.

Another disadvantage of this site was the fact that the west end of the dam would have been tied into a hill perforated with many mine passages (leakage pathways) that would have to be plugged, at high cost.

To avoid the expense of purchasing mines (to compensate mine owners, in the age when "coal was king"), and plugging the Moween mine, a less expensive, less troublesome dam site was



chosen, six miles upriver (at Bow Ridge), but that move resulted in a much smaller reservoir, smaller by the loss of six miles of valley volume for the storage of flood water.

Another dam site considered was just below Saltsburg. A dam there would have necessitated dismantling and relocation of the entire town, and the Kiski Prep School, also.