

Glory Hole

The Monticello Dam features a morning glory spillway. This type of spillway is basically a giant cement funnel. Rather than spilling over the dam, high waters spill into the funnel. Morning glory spillways are also known as bell-mouth spillways. For many people who see The Glory Hole, the question that arises is why this hole, and not a more typical spillway? The answer is space.

The Monticello Dam sits at the Devil's Gate in a narrow canyon. While the site was a good spot to build the dam, it did not have enough space to build a big channel and overflow berm. So, engineers decided the best way to get water to the other side of the dam was to dig down. They tunneled through rock to reach a tunnel that had already been built to divert Putah Creek during dam construction. That original tunnel now acts as the spillway for The Glory Hole.

The Monticello Dam's spillway is otherwise (and affectionately) known as The Glory Hole. The glory hole is located about 200 feet from the dam. Water spills over its lip when the lake reaches 1,551, 300 A-F and a reservoir elevation of 440 feet above mean sea level (MSL). The funnel's largest diameter is 72 feet and narrows to about 28 feet. It is designed to handle a maximum of 362,000 gallons of water per second (48,400 cubic feet per second or 96,000 acre-feet per day), which occurs in the unlikely event that the lake level rises to 15.5 feet above the level of the funnel - which is almost the height of Monticello Dam (456 feet above mean sea level - msl).





