

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**NAME OF PROPOSED ACTION:** Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance (MAWA), Water Supply Storage Reallocation, Greers Ferry Lake, Arkansas.

**PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION:** This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) supplements the Little Rock District Corps of Engineers FONSI and agency decision dated 26 June 2007.

The Little Rock District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposes that 18,730 acre-feet (AF) of water in Greers Ferry Lake be reallocated from flood control storage to water supply storage to satisfy the municipal and industrial (M&I) water supply needs of the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance (MAWA). The Greers Ferry Lake project would provide a yield of 15.0 million gallons per day plus 174.0 AF of storage representing dependable yield mitigation storage (DYMS) required to provide constant yields for existing users. The proposed storage reallocation would raise the top of the conservation pool by 0.6 feet (7.2 inches) from elevation 461.44 feet to 462.04 feet.

The reallocation is authorized under the Water Supply Act of 1958 (WSA 1958) (Public Law 85-500, Title III, as amended). Under the WSA 1958, the Secretary of the Army is authorized to cooperate with local interests in providing storage space for M&I water supply in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects as long as the local interests agree to pay the costs associated with the storage space. The original proposed action identified in the Water Supply Storage Reallocation Report and Environmental Assessment (EA) dated March 2007 included a request from MAWA for reallocation storage at Greers Ferry Lake and Lake Ouachita. USACE signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on 26 June 2007, which included both lakes. The Water Supply Reallocation Report was subsequently updated in May 2009, and the proposed reallocation of water storage from Lake Ouachita was eliminated as an element of the proposed action due to dam safety concerns. If Lake Ouachita is considered for storage reallocation by MAWA, further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation will be required.

**ALTERNATIVES:** Initially several alternatives were considered to meet the demands for water supply. Alternatives included: groundwater withdrawal, stream withdrawal, and the construction of a new lake and pipeline. These alternatives were eliminated from further evaluation due to the lack of water resources, financial feasibility, and/or environmental impacts. In addition to the Proposed Action (reallocation from the flood control pool) to provide increased water supply, reallocation of storage from the conservation pool was also considered, as well as the No Action alternative.

**PUBLIC REVIEW COMMENTS:** The public review period was held between 21 August 2006 and 21 September 2006. During this time, the following three Public Meetings/Workshops were held within the project area: 1) Greers Ferry Lake on 12 September 2006, 2) Lake Ouachita on 13 September 2006, and 3) Little Rock on 14 September 2006. Revisions based on comments received during the public review process have been incorporated into the Final EA.

Most of the concerns dealt with technical data involving calculations of water supply benefits and benefits foregone. Southwest Power Administration expressed concern over the Corps

determination of the actual loss and value of hydropower capacity and energy, and the procedure used to determine hydropower credits. The Corps is undertaking continued dialog with all Power Marketing Agencies (PMA's) regarding the measurement and valuation of hydropower losses associated with water storage reallocations. In the case of reallocation of water storage at Greers Ferry, the Corps proposes to implement the water storage reallocation in accordance with USACE policy and procedures.

**ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:** As a result of the EA, all practical means to avoid and/or minimize adverse environmental impacts were considered during the plan formulation. To the extent practicable, these were incorporated into the proposed final action. With respect to this project, the action may result in both beneficial and adverse effects. The primary beneficial effect of the action is the increased water supply to central Arkansas residents. No adverse effects to public health or safety were found as a result of the proposed action due to the fact that no significant amounts of hazardous waste were found on the site of the proposed actions. Furthermore, the proposed action does not seem to pose the threat of a release of hazardous waste that could significantly impact the environment. Upon consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer, no unique cultural or historic features are present in the area of proposed action.

Due to the highly beneficial nature of this project for the residents of the surrounding area, this project is not deemed to be controversial nor does this proposed action involve unique or unknown risks. Reallocations, such as this, have occurred in the past with no significant impact and without establishing a precedent that could lead to future significant impacts. While this reallocation is slightly larger than those in the past, the future impacts of the proposed action are deemed to be insignificant with respect to disturbed soils, vegetation, and habitat loss. Furthermore, the cumulative result of the past reallocations does not pose a significant impact when considering this proposed action in light of past actions.

Finally, consultation with USFWS revealed that no significant impact to the environment of those threatened and endangered species located in the area of the proposed action would occur.

**CONCLUSIONS:** All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local governmental plans were considered in evaluating the alternatives. Based on review of the Greers Ferry Lake and Lake Ouachita Water Supply Storage Reallocation Report and final EA, it is my decision that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as required by NEPA is unwarranted and a FONSI is appropriate. The signing of this document indicates the Corps of Engineers' final decision of the proposed action as it relates to NEPA. The EA and FONSI will be held on file in the Planning and Environmental Division for future reference.



Donald E. Jackson, Jr  
Colonel, US Army  
District Commander

5 May 2010

Date