



**Greers Ferry Lake
Shoreline Management
Plan Revision
Draft Plan Release Report**

June 2020



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Little Rock District

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Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EA	Environmental Assessment
EP	Engineer Pamphlet
ER	Engineer Regulation
MP	Master Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRRS	National Recreation Reservation Service
SMP	Shoreline Management Plan
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers

Section 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Little Rock District is proposing to revise the Greers Ferry Lake Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). The last public review and update was completed in 2004. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (P.L. 91-190), an Environmental Assessment (EA) of potential impacts of the draft plan will also be prepared.

USACE completed an update to the Master Plan (MP) for Greers Ferry Lake in May 2019. The MP is the guidance document that describes how the resources of the lake will be managed and provides the vision for how the lake should look in the future. The MP revision set the stage for this update of the SMP, which is how the MP vision is implemented. The MP does not address the details of how and where shoreline use permits may be issued; the SMP addresses these implementation specifics.

The SMP is a comprehensive plan for managing the shoreline, including effects of human activities on the shoreline. Preparation of and periodic revisions of an SMP are mandated by federal regulations found at Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 327.30, which also contains requirements for an SMP. The SMP regulates activities that may occur along the shoreline such as dock construction, access paths to docks, and vegetation management on the government lands. The SMP for Greers Ferry Lake establishes policy and furnishes guidelines to achieve a balance between permitted private uses and resource protection on project lands and waters while maintaining the shoreline for general public use.

The current Greers Ferry Lake SMP is 15 years old and with the recent update to the MP, it is important that the SMP be updated to reflect current conditions and management direction as described in the MP. Updates to the plan are expected to review current management practices of the lake and to take advantage of current technologies.

USACE will conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (as amended), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidelines (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and ER 200-2-2 Procedures for Implementing NEPA. The EA will evaluate the potential environmental effects of the SMP revisions.

The planning process will include an analysis of potential effects on the natural and social environment, including fish and wildlife, recreational opportunities, economics, land use, cultural and historic resources, aesthetics, and public health and safety.

1.2 Purpose and Need for Shoreline Management Plan Revision

The purpose of the project is to review and revise the Greers Ferry Lake SMP. Updates to the SMP are needed for the following reasons:

- The recent update to the MP requires that the SMP be updated as well to ensure both documents are cohesive.

- Visitation and resource demands continue to change.
- Recreational uses continue to change and grow.
- To align with current USACE policies/regulations and provide better public education.
- Use of new technology and maps for greater accuracy and efficiency.
- Respond to changing land uses.
- Balance resources with partner and stakeholder interests.
- Fiscal resources limit proper management of the current program.
- Sustainably manage the lake’s resources for future generations.

1.3 Project Area

Greers Ferry Lake is located about two miles northeast of Heber Springs, Arkansas, about 65 miles northeast of Little Rock, Arkansas, and about 132 miles northwest of Memphis, Tennessee on the Little Red River. Greers Ferry Lake is the last reservoir located in the five-reservoir system constructed in the White River Basin and was authorized by the Flood Control Act of June 28, 1938. Greers Ferry Lake was authorized for five missions: flood risk management, generation of hydroelectric power, recreational opportunities, fish and wildlife, and storage to provide water supply (municipal and industrial water supply). The project area encompasses about 41,194.5 acres of land and water, 31,206.6 acres of water at conservation pool, and 306.3 miles of shoreline at conservation.

The lake provides many recreational opportunities, along with fish and wildlife habitat. There are 18 public use areas around Greers Ferry Lake. There are 15 parks on the lake presently operated by USACE. Three public use areas are currently leased to others: Eden Isle, Fairfield Bay, and Sandy Beach. USACE lands around the lake also provide for other popular recreational activities, including hiking, hunting, swimming, and picnicking.

Nine full-service marinas are owned and operated by commercial concessionaires. Twenty-six boat ramps are licensed to local County or State Government. Four limited-motel/resorts have facilities on Government property and are owned and operated by lease agreements.

During high water events and flood periods, Greers Ferry Lake is operated in conjunction with other lakes in the White River Basin to reduce the risk of flood damage along the White and lower Mississippi Rivers. The power plant at the dam also generates electricity.

Revising the Greers Ferry Lake SMP allows for a public review of the existing SMP policies and for suggested changes or revisions to achieve a balance between permitted private uses and resource protection for general public use.

1.4 Purpose of this Report

This report summarizes the public participation process for, and the public comments resulting from, the Greers Ferry Lake SMP Revision draft plan release workshops and comment period that was held in February and March of 2020.

Section 2

Draft Plan Release Process

2.1 Overview

In accordance with NEPA and ER 200-2-2, USACE initiated the environmental compliance and review process for the Greers Ferry Lake SMP revision project. A Draft EA was prepared to identify potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts related to implementation of the SMP. The comment period was held from February 10 to March 13, 2020.

As part of the draft plan release phase of the environmental process, two workshops were hosted on February 24 and February 25 to gather comments on the Draft Revised SMP, the Draft EA and the Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Workshop attendees were provided a comment card that asked them to provide general comments about the plan and the environmental review.

USACE published notice of the workshops through an email blast, a direct mail postcard, news releases, and announcements on the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage and the Little Rock District Facebook page. The postcard notice, and email blast were sent to landowners adjacent to USACE-owned lands around the lake, permit holders, marina and resort owners, and dock builders, National Recreation Reservation Service (NRRS) customers, and local fishing license holders. Postcards were sent to those for whom only a postal address was available; all others received the email blast.

2.2 Public Comment Period

Notification of the review comment period and workshops was completed via several forms of media as described further in this section. Four workshops were held as described in Section 2.2.3.

2.2.1 Notification Database

USACE maintains a database of stakeholder groups interested in activities around Greers Ferry Lake, which includes resort and marina owners. Other databases maintained by USACE include shoreline use permit holders, dock builders, NRRS campers, and local area fishing permit licensees. In addition, USACE developed lists of adjacent property owners based on the databases maintained by the county assessors of the surrounding counties.

2.2.2 Public Notification Activities

Strategies to engage the public to participate in the SMP and environmental review process and to encourage people to attend workshops included (1) providing multiple convenient and accessible locations for the workshops, (2) providing easy-to-understand information that helps people provide informed comments, (3) providing multiple ways to obtain information and submit comments, and (4) ensuring that stakeholders are aware of the planning process and understand how public input will be used.

Invitations to the public workshops were mailed directly to people in the notification database, and email invitations were sent to persons and organizations when email addresses were available. Additionally, a

Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage was used to provide information about the process and workshops. Facebook was also used to distribute project information before, during, and after the workshops.

Each notification medium was assigned a unique short uniform resource locator (URL) to direct recipients to the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage for more information. This allowed USACE to track how people heard about the workshops and the planning processes and to evaluate the effectiveness of various notification methods for future projects.

2.2.2.1 Direct Mail Notification

On February 14, 2020, 6,646 postcards were mailed to those listed in the notification database without email addresses.

The postcard notification included information on the four workshop locations and dates, how to provide comments, the comment period closing date, and the Greers Ferry Lake SMP web address. The direct mail postcard is included in Appendix A. The postcard resulted in 197 visits to the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage during the comment period.

2.2.2.2 Email Notification

An email blast inviting participation and including information on the workshops was sent on February 11, 2020, to 4,862 email addresses. These emails were sent to persons in the notification database for whom email addresses were available. The information in the email blast was the same as the information on the postcard notification. The email blast resulted in 249 visits to the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage during the comment period.

2.2.2.3 Greers Ferry Lake SMP Webpage

A webpage, <https://www.swl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Planning/Greers-Ferry-Lake-Shoreline-Management-Plan/>, was developed for the SMP revision project. The site included information about Greers Ferry Lake, the SMP revision process, and the Draft SMP and Draft EA. Information on the site included the dates and locations of the workshops, how to submit comments, and who to contact for more information. The website also contained an online interactive map, an online comment form, the SMP revision timeline, and the workshop information boards. For the draft release review period, the website went “live” on February 10, 2020.

Short URLs or specific web addresses were developed for each notification method (e.g., postcard, email) as described in Section 2.2.2.7. These short URLs made it easier for the public to access the webpage and allowed USACE to evaluate the effectiveness of each notification method. Between February 10 and March 13, 2020, the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage was visited 1,038 times.

2.2.2.4 Social Media

The Little Rock District Facebook pages were used to distribute project information. Facebook posts included information like that found on the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage: information about Greers Ferry Lake, the SMP revision process, and the draft plan release process. Information on the draft plan release process included the dates and locations of the workshops, how to submit comments, and who to contact for more information.

In addition, during the week of the workshops, the Facebook pages were updated with status reports, photos, and information from the workshops.

2.2.2.5 Webpage Statistics

Each type of notification (e.g., display ads, postcard, email, Facebook page) provided a different URL or specific web address to link to the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage. This was done to gather information on how people found out about and accessed the webpage. The following list details the number of people who accessed the webpage by the media notification web address used. In total, between February 10 and March 13, 2020, the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage was visited 1,038 times.

- News releases: 443
- Email blast: 249
- Postcard notification: 197
- Comment cards: 97
- Fact Sheet: 14
- Agency notification letter: 3
- Flyer: 23
- Poster: 12

2.2.3 Public Workshops

USACE hosted two public workshops to gather input on the Draft Revised SMP, the Draft EA, and the Draft FONSI. Workshops were scheduled in compliance with NEPA guidelines, and locations were selected to reflect an equitable geographic coverage. The locations were all within the project area and were accessible in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The public workshops were held in the first half of the public comment period. To provide the greatest opportunity for community participation, workshops were held in different locations surrounding the lake over two separate evenings.

A total of 70 people signed in at the two public workshops (**Figure 2-1**). A total of 2 comment cards or letters were returned at the public workshops. An additional 18 comment submittals were received via letters, email, fax, and mailed comment cards by the close of the public comment period. In total, 20 comment submittals were received from members of the public by the end of the comment period.

Workshop 1: Heber Springs

Monday, February 24, 2020

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Heber Springs Community Center

201 Bobbie Jean

Heber Springs, Arkansas

Attendees: 40 people signed in

Comments: 1 comment card collected

Workshop 2: Fairfield Bay

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Fairfield Bay Lions Club

365 Dave Creek Parkway

Fairfield Bay, Arkansas

Attendees: 30 people signed in

Comments: 1 comment card collected



Figure 2-1. Public Workshop in Heber Springs, AR

2.2.3.1 Public Workshop Format

The purpose of the public workshops was to provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions about the proposals and to get feedback on the Draft Revised SMP and the Draft EA, and the Draft FONSI. During each workshop, participants had the opportunity to view project display boards, which highlighted the SMP revision process, and ask questions or raise concerns directly to project team members stationed around the room. Computers were set up during the workshops with access to the online interactive map showing the current and proposed shoreline allocations to facilitate responses to questions about the lake and the SMP revision process.

Written comments were collected at each workshop in the form of the comment cards and were accepted by mail, fax, and email until the close of the comment period on March 13, 2020.

2.2.3.2 Public Workshop Materials

Each public workshop attendee was offered a two-page fact sheet (Appendix C) and a comment card (Appendix C). The fact sheet provided a brief overview of the proposed SMP revisions, information about Greers Ferry Lake, the proposed schedule for SMP revision process, and the alternatives. The comment card included information on how to comment and allowed attendees to either submit written comments at the workshop or mail them in later during the comment period. The comment card was designed as a self-mailer so that individuals could easily mail comments to USACE if they wanted more time to develop their comments after attending the public workshops. The comment cards also contained information on how to submit comments via email or through the website.

Several display boards were developed and used during the workshops. The boards provided information on the SMP revision process and provided a backdrop for one-on-one questions and answers with USACE staff. The boards included:

- How to Comment
- Why Revise the Shoreline Management Plan?

- Relationship between the MP and the SMP
- Environmental Assessment
- Issues Evaluated in the Environmental Assessment
- Alternative 2: Major Proposed Changes
- Descriptions of Master Plan Land Classifications and Shoreline Management Plan Shoreline Allocations

The display boards are included in Appendix D.

2.3 Comments Received

The public comment period was held from February 10, 2020 to March 13, 2020. All interested people were provided opportunities to submit written comments at the two workshops as well as via email, fax, or mail. The comment cards distributed at the public workshops were designed to facilitate return of written comments either at the workshop or via mail later during the public comment period. Editable comment forms were available on the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage and could be directly submitted upon completion on line. Email comments could be sent to a project-specific email address, which was included on the Greers Ferry Lake SMP webpage as well as on all the notice materials distributed and the comment cards. Some workshop participants took multiple comment cards to distribute to friends and family who were not able to attend a workshop in person.

In total, 20 comment submittals (letters, emails, and comment card comments) were received from members of the public by the end of the comment period. Copies of all the public comments submitted during the comment period are included in Appendix E. There were no agency submitted comments during the public comment period.

Section 3

Draft Release Comment Summary

This section presents a summary of comments received during the public comment period in 2020. The actual comments may be found in Appendix E.

3.1 Introduction

USACE accepted comments on the Greers Ferry Lake SMP Revision throughout the draft release comment period from February 10 through March 13, 2020. Community groups, members of the public, and other interested parties submitted 20 letters, emails, and comment cards. The summary table (**Table 3-1**) provides a tally of the topics discussed in the comments.

It should be noted that the combined numbers of comments listed in the following subsections and the summary table will be greater than the total number of comment submissions because most people discussed multiple topics in their submission.

This section presents a summary of comments received during the scoping period. The actual comments may be found in Appendix E.

3.2 Overview of Comments

All comments were reviewed and categorized. The full text of each comment is included in Appendix E (public comments). On many topics, there were conflicting viewpoints, with some people indicating a desire for a change and others stating that there should be no change on that issue. The summary in Section 3.3 highlights these points of divergence.

Table 3-1 provides a summary of the comments received during the scoping comment period. While this table does not include every comment received, it provides a general summary of the topics most frequently submitted during the comment period. A more detailed summary of comments follows in Section 3.3. The full text of all comments submitted by members of the public or stakeholder organizations is provided in Appendix F.

The comment card did not ask any specific questions about Greers Ferry Lake or the SMP, but rather directed participants to *“provide comments and suggestions about how you would like to see the Greers Ferry Lake Shoreline Management Plan revised.”*

Table 3-1. Summary of Comments Received

Comments and suggestions on items in the Greers Ferry Lake SMP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific Request (5) ▪ Natural Lake/Shoreline (2) ▪ Clean Water/Water Quality (1) ▪ Access to Water/Docks (1) ▪ More Boat Docks (1) ▪ Keep Current Plan/Alternative 1 (1) ▪ Keep Lake the Way It Is (1) ▪ Alternative 2 – Preferred Alternative (1) ▪ Too Restrictive/Too Many Regulations (1) ▪ Path Permit Concerns (1) ▪ No Floating Toilets/Move Floating Toilets (4) ▪ Allow ATVs to Docks (1) ▪ Remove Invasive Species (2) ▪ Protect Native Species (1) ▪ Wildlife (1) ▪ Mowing/Increase Mowing Limitations (2)

3.3 Summary of Comments on Items to Update in the SMP

The most frequent comments were requests for specific land classification or shoreline allocation (zoning) at a specific location on the lake (**Table 3-1**). There were a total of 5 requests for location-specific actions such as dock permits and Letters of Permission (LOP).

Beyond the specific requests, the most numerous comments were those related to either not allowing floating toilet facilities on Greers Ferry Lake or moving these floating toilet facilities away from views of adjacent landowners. The floating restroom facilities are facilitated by the Arkansas Department of Health and are not a part of the shoreline management plan.

3.4 Agency Comments

No resources agencies submitted comments during the draft release comment period (February 10 – March 13, 2020).

3.5 Previous Public Involvement

USACE accepted comments on the Greers Ferry Lake SMP Revision throughout the scoping comment period from August 14 through September 30, 2019. Agencies, community groups, members of the public, and other interested parties submitted 28 letters, emails, comment cards, and faxes or made oral comments at agency and public workshops during this period. A scoping report is included as a part of the Environmental Assessment (Appendix A). All comments received during the scoping comment period are located in this report.

Section 4

Next Steps: SMP Revision Process

The purpose of the Greers Ferry Lake SMP revision draft plan release workshops and comment period were to provide an opportunity for the public and agencies to learn about the draft alternatives and provide input on the Draft Revised SMP, Draft EA, and Draft FONSI that were prepared to help guide future management at Greers Ferry Lake.

USACE will consider the comments and issues identified during the comment period as the Final Revised SMP and Final EA are developed. Both the Final Revised SMP and the Final EA will be made available to the public. It is anticipated that this will occur in late summer 2020.

Individual responses to comments provided during the draft release comment period are not developed in the preparation of the final EA. Where consistent with the purpose of an SMP and where possible under the planning mechanisms available for a SMP, USACE will incorporate the feedback and suggestions provided through the comments.

Appendices

Appendix A Notification Materials
Direct Mail Postcard
Email Blast
Press Releases

Appendix B Media Coverage
Appendix C Workshop Materials
Fact Sheet
Comment Card

Appendix D Workshop Display Boards
Appendix E Public Comments

Appendix A

Notification Materials

Direct Mail Postcard
Email Blast
Press Releases

Appendix B

Media Coverage

News Articles

Appendix C

Workshop Materials

Fact Sheet
Comment Card

Appendix D

Workshop Display Boards

Appendix E

Public Comments