

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED MASTER PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE, ARKANSAS RIVER WATERSHED LOGAN AND YELL COUNTIES, ARKANSAS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Engineering Regulation (ER) 1130-2-550 Change 07, dated 30 January 2013, and Engineering Pamphlet (EP) 1130-2-550 Change 05, dated 30 January 2013, require Master Plans for USACE water resources development projects having a federally owned land base. The revision of the 1975 Blue Mountain Lake Master Plan is being conducted pursuant to this ER and EP and is necessary to bring it up to date to reflect current ecological, socioeconomic, and outdoor recreation trends affecting the lake, as well as those anticipated to occur in the future.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, including guidelines in 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 230 and 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, the USACE Little Rock District has conducted an environmental analysis on the draft 2024 Blue Mountain Lake Master Plan. The draft master plan addresses the need for an updated comprehensive land management document for the Blue Mountain Project in Logan and Yell Counties, Arkansas. The final recommendation will be contained in the 2024 Blue Mountain Lake Master Plan.

The revision of the 1975 Blue Mountain Lake Master Plan is a framework built collaboratively to serve as a guide toward appropriate stewardship of USACE administered resources at Blue Mountain Lake over the next 25 years.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the draft 2024 Blue Mountain Lake Master Plan evaluated a “no action” plan and two action alternatives that would revise the 1975 Blue Mountain Lake Master Plan to meet current policy.

In addition to the “no action” plan, two alternatives that meet the project purposes were evaluated, including Alternative 2, the Preferred Alternative, and Alternative 3, the Limited Development Alternative. Chapter 2 of the draft Blue Mountain Lake Master Plan EA discusses the alternative formulation and selection as well as a summary of the new goals and objectives. Chapter 2, Table 2-1 of the EA summarizes the changes to the land classifications. The proposed plan is Alternative 2, the Preferred Alternative, and includes:

- Reclassifying lands to reflect current management practices including recreation, hunting, fishing, timber management, and habitat management, and responses to agency and public comments during the scoping phase;
- Reclassifying undeveloped High Density and Low Density Recreation land classifications (i.e., future or closed USACE parks) to Wildlife Management; and,
- Reclassifying more remote areas that contain islands, shoreline bluffs, narrow bands of isolated areas, and otherwise unique habitats to Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

The proposed plan includes coordination with the public, revisions to comply with USACE regulations and guidance, and reflects changes in land management and land uses that have occurred since 1975. Land classifications were refined to meet authorized project purposes and current resource objectives that address a mix of natural resources and recreation management

objectives that are compatible with regional goals, recognize outdoor recreation trends, and are responsive to public comments.

Table 1: Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Resource unaffected by action
Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquatic resources/wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invasive species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fish and wildlife habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered species/critical habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic properties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floodplains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous, toxic & radioactive waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hydrology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Public infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socio-economics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects have been analyzed and incorporated into the proposed plan. The proposed plan will not entail any ground-disturbing activities. Any future ground-disturbing activities on USACE property will be subject to all necessary environmental evaluations and compliance.

No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the proposed plan.

Public review of the draft Master Plan, EA, and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be completed on June 8, 2024. All comments submitted during the public review period will be responded to in the final Master Plan and EA.

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined that the proposed plan will have No Effect on federally listed species nor their designated critical habitat.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined that the proposed plan will have No Effect on historic properties.

All applicable environmental laws were considered and coordination with appropriate agencies and officials has been completed.

All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Based on the draft report, the reviews by other Federal, State and local agencies, Tribal Nations, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the proposed plan would not cause significant adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date

Damon Knarr
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander

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