

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED 2026 SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF LAKE DARDANELLE, ARKANSAS RIVER WATERSHED FRANKLIN, POPE, LOGAN, JOHNSON AND YELL COUNTIES, ARKANSAS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Engineering Regulation (ER) 1130-2-406, dated 31 October 1990, require Shoreline Management Plans (SMP) for USACE lakes where private shoreline is allowed. The update of the 2012 Lake Dardanelle SMP is being conducted pursuant to this ER 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, the USACE Little Rock District and Southwestern Regional Planning and Environmental Center (RPEC) have conducted an environmental analysis on the draft 2026 Lake Dardanelle SMP. The draft SMP addresses the need for an updated shoreline management document for the Lake Dardanelle Project in Franklin, Pope, Logan, Johnson and Yell Counties, Arkansas. The final recommendation will be contained in the 2026 Lake Dardanelle SMP.

The update of the 2012 Lake Dardanelle SMP is a framework built collaboratively to serve as a guide toward appropriate stewardship of USACE administered resources at Lake Dardanelle over the next 5 years.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the 2026 Lake Dardanelle SMP evaluated a “no action” plan and two action alternatives that would revise the 2012 Lake Dardanelle SMP to meet current policy.

In addition to the “No Action” Alternative, two alternatives that meet the project purposes were evaluated, including Alternative 2, the Preferred Alternative, and Alternative 3, the Conservative Growth Alternative. Chapter 2 of the draft Lake Dardanelle SMP EA discusses the alternative formulation. The proposed plan is Alternative 2, the Preferred Alternative, and includes:

- New boat dock permits would only be permitted to adjoining property owners whose access is within 200 ft from an LDA shoreline allocation.
- New vegetation modification permits would only be allowed out to 200 feet from the foundation of the home and in between the lot lines.
- Mowing and/or underbrushing would not be permitted across any natural or manmade break in vegetation such as a road or railroad right-of-way.
- Perpetual access easements would not be recognized as legal access for new slips or dock placement.
- Existing easements would still be approved as long as the permit is maintained in accordance with the *Shoreline Use Permit Conditions*, even if not in compliance with the current SMP.
- Underbrush, which consists of non-flowering trees or shrubs that are two inches or less in diameter at ground level, would allowed to be removed through a permit.

- No new foot path or vegetation modification permits in Wildlife Management (WM), Project Operations, High Density Recreation (HDR), and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Master Plan classifications.
- Maximum width for foot paths would be 6 feet.
- Generally, no new steps/stairs requests would be approved.
- New Public Recreation Areas would be allocated on a case-by-case basis.
- Navigation Channel, Scenic, and Natural Protected Shoreline Areas would be combined under Protected Shoreline Areas.
- Low Density Recreation re-zoning requests would be considered.
- Park buffers would be reallocated on a case-by-case basis to accommodate for existing grandfathered dock facilities and previous SMP and MP dock zone requests and vegetation permits.
- No new power lines to private floating facilities would be licensed. Existing power line licenses at private floating facilities would be allowed to renew as long as the dock permit is in compliance with the Shoreline Use Permit Conditions, even if not in compliance with the current SMP. All new electric service to private floating facilities must be provided by an alternative power source (i.e. wind, solar, etc.).
- No new outgrants would be issued for tramways, embayments, and mooring buoys.
- No permits would be issued within the Federal recommended distance of a known federally protected, threatened, or endangered species location and/or habitat.

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 2012. Shoreline reallocations were refined to meet authorized project purposes and current Master Plan 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic properties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Terrestrial resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hydrology and Groundwater	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socio-economics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incorporating the Needs and Considerations of All Communities At Risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Topography, Geology, Soils, and Prime Farmland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Resource unaffected by action
Water quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate and Changing Conditions	<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 Shoreline Management Plan Plan, EA, and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be completed on June 3, 2026. All comments submitted during the public review period will be addressed in the Final SMP 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.

There is potential to affect cultural resources with an updated Shoreline Management Plan. Individual requests for use of project lands would be evaluated on an undertaking-by-undertaking basis to ensure compliance with the NHPA.

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

DRAFT
ERIC R. SWENSON
Colonel, EN
Commanding