

# Wallisville Lake Project Master Plan Revision Public Information Meeting March 12, 2019

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# Purpose of this Meeting

- Describe the purpose and intent of a Master Plan
- Describe the revision process
- Explain why the Wallisville Lake Master Plan is in need of revision and how it may affect nearby communities and the public at large
- Answer questions
- Ask for your participation



# The Corps' Vision for the Wallisville Lake Project

*The land, water surface and recreational resources of Wallisville Lake Project (WLP) will be managed to protect, conserve, and sustain natural and cultural resources, especially environmentally sensitive resources, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities that complement overall project purposes for the benefit of present and future generations.*



# Wallisville Lake Project Missions



- Salinity Control
- Navigation
- Water Supply
- Fish and Wildlife Stewardship
- Recreation





# Wallisville Lake Project History

- 1966 – WLP is authorized by Congress under the Rivers and Harbor Act
- 1971 – Lawsuit and injunction filed to stop construction of permanent pool
- 1983 – Project modified by Congress and WLP reauthorized
- 2002 – Wallisville Lake Project Office and Lock/Dam open to the public as a multi-use facility
- 2003 – Cooperative agreements signed to protect freshwater drinking supplies
- 2004 – Wallisville Lake recognized as a bird habitat area by the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory



# Wallisville Lake Project Facts

- WLP contains just over 23,000 acres of Federal land comprised of riparian bottomland forests, fresh and brackish marshes, cypress swamps, and other bodies of water
- Recognized as important bird habitat and part of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail
- Home to the Historic Wallisville Town Site and both a Spanish Presidio and Mission site
- WLP has an annual visitation of approx. 161,000 visits.
- Protect freshwater supplies for the City of Houston, the Coastal Water Authority, and others



# More Fun Facts

- 5 parks/recreational areas
  - ▶ 3 Managed by Corps
  - ▶ 2 managed by Chambers County
- 8+ miles of hiking & walking trail network
- One of the largest free-standing cypress swamps in the State of Texas at Lake Charlotte
- Home to approximately 2300 American Alligators
- Waterfowl hunting and fishing are the major recreational activities.



# Purpose and Intent of Master Plans

The Corps defines a Master Plan as...

“ The strategic land use management document that guides the comprehensive management and development of all project recreational, natural and cultural resources throughout the life of the water resource development project.”



Source: Chapter 3 of EP 1130-2-550 available at [www.usace.army.mil/library/publications](http://www.usace.army.mil/library/publications)



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# National Environmental Policy Act

- Applies to all Federal Actions that affect the environment such as Master Plan revisions
- Requires Federal agencies to *CONSIDER and DOCUMENT the environmental impacts of their proposed actions as part of an agency's OVERALL planning and decision-making process*
- Requires Federal agencies to cooperate with federal, state and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations and citizens during project planning
- Scoping is where the federal agency asks for initial input from other agencies, citizens and organizations regarding project area, resources and uses



# Key Points Regarding Master Plans

- Main focus is stewardship of natural and cultural resources and provision of quality outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities – seek a public and natural balance
- Proposed effective life of a Master Plan is 25 years
- Recreational use of the water surface is addressed



# Additional Key Points

- Key sections of the Master Plan Revision include
  - ▶ resource management objectives
  - ▶ revised land use classifications
  - ▶ conceptual management plan for each land classification
- Potential outcomes could be
  - ▶ designation of lands for utility corridors, environmentally sensitive areas...
- Protection of environmentally sensitive areas is given priority



# What Master Plans Are Not

- Master Plans **do not** address in detail the technical aspects of
  - ▶ Regional water quality
  - ▶ Water management for flood risk management
  - ▶ Water supply or water level management
  - ▶ Shoreline management (rules governing activities carried out by adjacent landowners such as vegetation modification)





# What About Drought/Flood?

- Master Plans cannot change how water in the river is managed – addressed in separate Water Control Plan
- Natural resources and recreation management must be implemented within the constraints of the primary missions of flood risk management and water supply



# Why Revise the Wallisville Lake Master Plan?

- Current Master Plan is dated August 1996 and has exceeded its useful life.
- Management of WLP and the Trinity River today differs significantly from management in 1996.
- Land classifications in the 1996 Master Plan need to be examined and revised in accordance with current USACE regulations
- Houston metro population has dramatically increased over the past 20 years
  - ▶ Chambers County 2000 population 26,070
  - ▶ Chambers County 2016 population 40,283 + 55% increase
  - ▶ City of Mont Belvieu 2000 population 2,324
  - ▶ City of Mont Belvieu 2016 population 5,584 + 140% increase
- The Master Plan must be revised to address current and future growth in the region

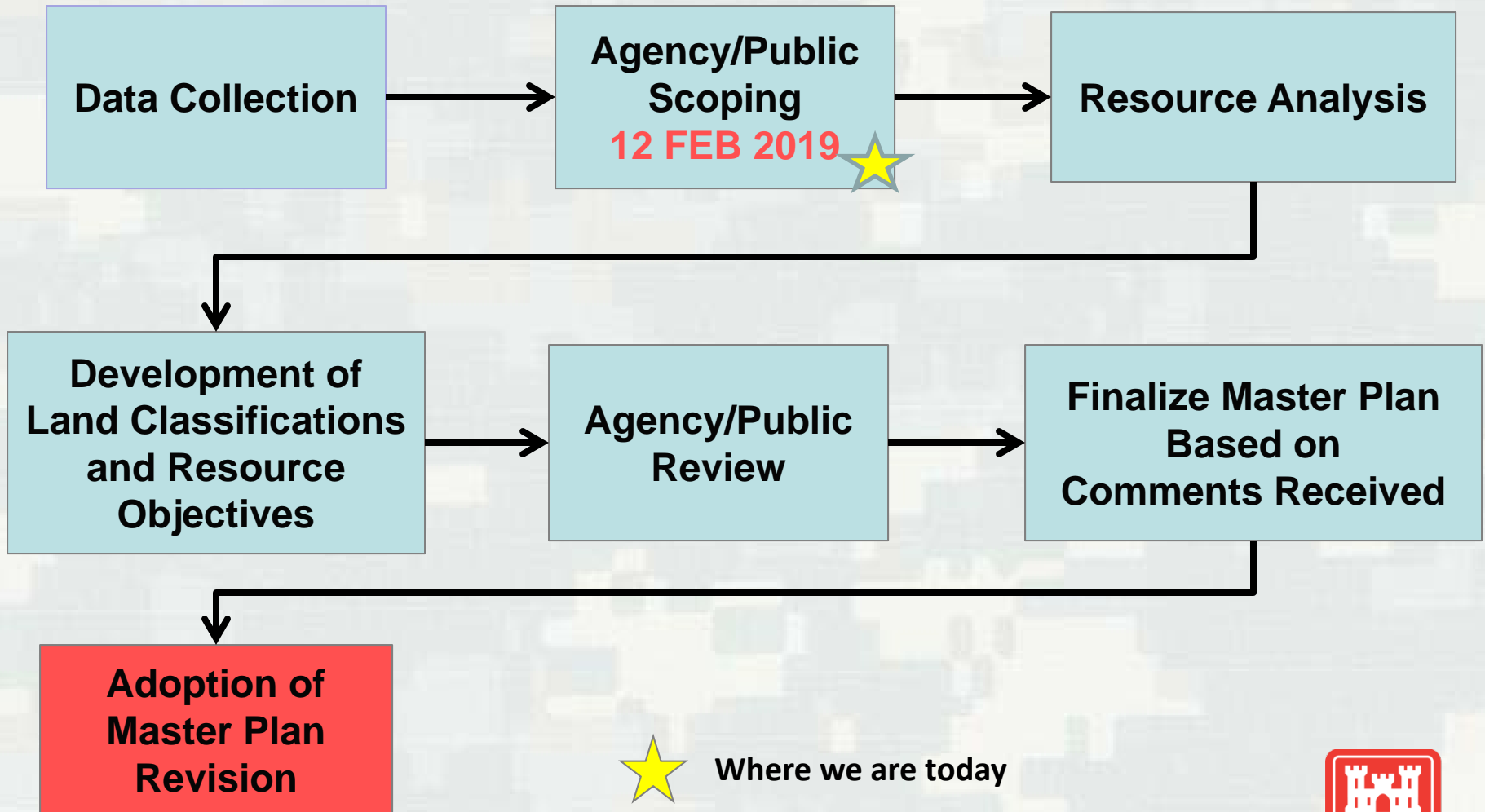


# Master Plan Revision Process

- Accomplished by a team of Corps employees with input from other agencies and public
- Public and stakeholder input will be carefully considered
- An Environmental Assessment of the Master Plan will be prepared and included as an appendix



# The Master Planning Process





# What Major Changes Are Needed in the Current Master Plan?

- Re-examine the classification of all project lands and water surface
  - ▶ New or expanded high density recreation areas could be designated
  - ▶ Anticipate additional lands being classified as environmentally sensitive areas.
  - ▶ Possibly designate utility corridors
  - ▶ Clear and concise Land Classification Maps are needed



# Additional Major Changes

- Prepare New Resource Management Objectives
  - ▶ Need current recreation objectives that reflect major trends identified by TPWD and through public input (Specify types and number of facilities and related amenities needed to meet demand)
  - ▶ Need current natural resource objectives that reflect major habitat and open space needs identified by TPWD, USFWS, and public input



# Wallisville Lake Project Land Allocation and Classification

Current Land Classifications	Potential New Land Classifications
Operations	Operations
Low Density Recreation	Multiple Resource Management Lands
Fish and Wildlife	
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	Environmentally Sensitive Areas



Land Classification	Definition
Project Operations	Those lands required for the dam, operations center, office, maintenance compound and other areas that are used solely for project operations
High Density Recreation	Land developed for intensive recreational activities by the visiting public, including developed recreation areas and areas for marinas and related concessions, and resorts
Multiple Resource Management	<b>Recreation –Low Density:</b> Activities such as hiking, primitive camping, wildlife observation, and hunting
	<b>Wildlife Management General:</b> Fish and wildlife management activities
	<b>Vegetative Management:</b> Management activities for the protection and development of a specific vegetative cover
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	<b>Inactive and/or Future Recreation Areas:</b> Recreation areas planned for the future or that have been temporarily closed
Mitigation	Areas where scientific, ecological, cultural or aesthetic features have been identified. These areas must be considered by management to ensure they are not adversely impacted
Mitigation	Lands that were specifically acquired for the purpose of offsetting losses associated with development of the project





## Water Surface Classification

## Definition

Restricted

Water areas restricted for project operations, safety, and security purposes

Designated No-Wake

To protect environmentally sensitive shoreline areas, recreational water access areas from disturbance, and for public safety

Fish and Wildlife Sanctuary

Annual or seasonal restrictions on areas to protect fish and wildlife species during periods of migration, resting, feeding, nesting, and/or spawning

Open Recreation

Those waters available for year round or seasonal water-based recreational use



# Land Classifications

**Project Operations** - This category includes those lands required for the dam, spillway, powerhouse, switchyard, levees, dikes, offices, maintenance facilities, and other areas that are used solely for the operation of the project





# Land Classifications

**High Density Recreation** - Lands developed for intensive recreational activities for the visiting public including day use areas and/or campgrounds. These could include areas for concessions (marinas, comprehensive resorts, etc)



# Land Classifications

**Environmentally Sensitive Areas** - Areas where scientific, ecological, cultural or aesthetic features have been identified. Designation of these lands is not limited to just lands that are otherwise protected by laws such as the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act or applicable State statutes. These areas must be considered by management to ensure they are not adversely impacted

Examples may include mature bottomland forests, river and stream corridors, scenic bluffs, and native prairie.





# Land Classifications

**Low Density Recreation** - Lands with minimal development or infrastructure that support passive public recreational use (e.g. primitive camping, fishing, hunting, trails, wildlife viewing, etc.)



# Land Classifications

**Wildlife Management** - Lands designated for stewardship of fish and wildlife resources



# Land Classifications

**Vegetative Management** - Lands designated for stewardship of forest, prairie, and other native vegetative cover



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# Water Classifications



## Possible Water Surface Classifications

- Water Surface - Restricted
- Water Surface - Designated No Wake
- Water Surface - Fish and Wildlife Sanctuary
- Water Surface - Open Recreation



# Utility Corridors

- Linear strips of Federal land used for consolidation of multiple utility lines
- Establish only where no viable alternative to crossing Federal land exists
- Main purpose is to reduce negative environmental impacts
- Generally follow existing roads or utility lines





# Examples of Resource Objectives

- **Recreation Objective:**
  - ▶ Expand existing trails and create new trails for a variety of users
  - ▶ Extend key boat ramps to accommodate low or high lake levels
  - ▶ Leasing Corps operated parks to other entities
  
- **Natural Resource Objective:**
  - ▶ Restore degraded prairie sites to support a diversity of native grasses and forbs
  - ▶ Implement invasive species control programs
  - ▶ Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas
  - ▶ Refine wildlife management programs
  
- **General Objective:**
  - ▶ Protect resources by reducing encroachments and trespass through improved boundary marking and surveillance



# How Can I Participate?

- Attend Meetings
- Visit our website at:  
(<https://www.swg.usace.army.mil/Locations/Wallisville-Lake-Project-Office/>)
- Send us an e-mail:  
([WallisvilleMasterPlan@usace.army.mil](mailto:WallisvilleMasterPlan@usace.army.mil))
- Visit with our lake staff at the main project office
- Tell your friends
- Fill out a comment card now or take it home and send later  
(30 days)



# Master Plan Next Steps

- Typical lake master plan update will take 24 to 36 months to finalize. The Wallisville Lake Project Master Plan update is in the early stage of development
- First 30 day public comment – 12 March – 13 April 2019
- Wildlife Habitat Assessment – Completed May 2018
- Draft MP / EA public meeting in Spring 2020\*, followed by another 30 day Public/Agency comment period
- Final document: 6 - 8 months (Fall 2020\*)

\* Pending funds availability in FY2020



# The End

Please feel free to visit with staff members, view the maps, ask questions and help us produce an excellent Master Plan



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