

DRAFT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**PROPOSED SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION
WEST POINT LAKE, GEORGIA**

PREPARED BY:



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Mobile District

**Planning and Environmental Division
Environment and Resources Branch
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This environmental assessment (EA) was prepared utilizing a systematic, interdisciplinary approach integrating the natural and social sciences and the design arts with planning and decision making. This assessment indicates the effects on the human environment are well known and do not involve unique or unknown risks. It is not anticipated that this is a precedent-setting action nor does it represent a decision in principle about any future consideration.

1.1 AUTHORITY

Congress authorized the construction of the West Point Lake project in the Flood Control Act of 1962. The project purposes are flood control, hydroelectric power, navigation, fish and wildlife, and general recreation. Federal actions (i.e. leasing of lands, significantly changing lakeshore management and shoreline management plans) require the preparation and consideration of National Environmental Policy Act documentation in order to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed action. In this case, the USACE's decision to revise the existing approved Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) to enhance operational efficiencies represents a federal action requiring such an evaluation via this EA.

ER 1130-2-406, Shoreline Management at Civil Works Projects, allows minor revisions to the SMP without a complete update of the plan. Implementation of these changes is needed and requires approval by the District Commander.

Section 4, 58 Stat. 887 (as amended), authorizes the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct, maintain and operate public parks and recreational facilities at (its) water resource development projects. Such development is also authorized by Section 460d of Title 16, United States Code; Section 209 of the Flood Control Act of 1954; Section 207 of the Flood Control Act of 1962; and by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (as amended). ER 1130-2-406, Shoreline Management at Civil Works Projects, dated 28 May 1999 provides policy and guidance on management of shorelines of Civil Works projects where 36 CFR Part 327 is applicable.

1.2 LOCATION

The proposed action will occur along the West Point Lake Shoreline. West Point Lake is formed by West Point Dam at Chattahoochee River Mile 201.4. The lake is located in the Lower Piedmont Region of Georgia and Alabama, about 50 air miles southwest of Atlanta. The largest city near the lake is LaGrange in Troup County.

The main body of West Point Lake is located in Troup County, Georgia, with the upper reaches extending into Heard County, Georgia. The southwestern portion of the lake extends into Chambers County, Alabama, with a very small portion of the lake located in Randolph County, Alabama.

1.3 BACKGROUND

The West Point Dam and Lake Project was authorized by the U.S. Congress to provide flood control, hydroelectric power, navigation, fish and wildlife, water quality and general recreation uses. In 1973, the USACE Chief of Engineers designated West Point Lake for development as a recreation demonstration project for the purpose of providing a wider variety of recreational facilities and opportunities for the public than are normally provided at Corps lakes. The entire West Point project consists of 58,129 acres. This includes a buffer of land around the lake ranging from 300 to 500 feet wide. Of the total project acreage, 11,298 acres are designated for recreation use divided among 44 specific areas scattered around the lake. Although 44 recreation areas consisting of day use areas, marinas, and campgrounds are designated for development on West Point Lake, to date only 39 of the areas have been developed. West Point Lake covers 25,900 acres at maximum power (i.e. normal operating) pool elevation of 635.0 feet mean sea level (msl). At that elevation, the lake has a shoreline of 525 miles. The shoreline is highly indented by numerous embayments that were formed when the lake was impounded, inundating the many tributary valleys that originally drained into the Chattahoochee River prior to impoundment. The drainage area of West Point Lake consists of the entire 3,440 square miles of the upper Chattahoochee River Basin.

1.4 PROPOSED ACTION

On 17 September 09, the West Point Operations Manager submitted a memorandum to the District Commander requesting to revise Paragraph 19.d. (3) of the 1993 West Point Lake Shoreline Management Plan. The following changes represent an effort to improve operational efficiencies and environmental stewardship measures at West Point Lake. These changes are minor and in accordance with the provisions of ER 1130-2-406, which provides for minor revisions of shoreline management plans on a periodic basis without a complete update. Specifically, the proposal is to revise Paragraph 19.d. (3) of the 1993 West Point Lake Shoreline Management Plan to read as follows:

(3) Size Limitations for Individual Floating Facilities. Floating facility dimensions are calculated exclusive of gangwalks. Less than maximum allowable sizes may be mandated by site conditions such as width of the cove or channel and density of development.

The maximum permissible size for a platform dock, with no slips, is 330 square feet. The minimum dimensions, not including gangwalks, are 8' x 8'.

The maximum allowable size for a boat slip dock, whether covered or uncovered, is 1024 sq. ft. Boat slip dock dimensions are figured on an overall basis, including boat slip(s) and any roof overhang. All boat shelter docks must be open sided; chain link mesh or similar material is permitted for security purposes.

1.5 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The West Point Lake Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) needs to be revised to provide consistency between projects along the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint River Basin (ACF) to promote operational efficiency. The new requested maximum allowable sizes are comparable to those authorized at Walter F. George Lake and at Lake Lanier. Further, the revision facilitates the installation of double-slip docks and Personal Watercraft “lifts” or docking stations. The current size limitations make it difficult to accommodate these features. The West Point Project Management Office has received a request from Mr. Dick Timmerberg, Executive Director of the West Point Lake Coalition, Inc., to increase the maximum size allowable for private docks at West Point Project.

1.6 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The preferred plan for the proposed action is summarized below, along with the No-Action alternative.

1.6.1 No-Action Alternative

The No-Action Alternative would keep the current size limitations contained in the 1993 Shoreline Management Plan. This alternative fails to meet the stated action objectives.

1.6.2 Preferred Plan

On 17 September 09, the West Point Operations Manager submitted a memorandum to the Mobile District Commander requesting to revise Paragraph 19.d. (3) of the 1993 West Point Lake Shoreline Management Plan to read as follows:

(3) Size Limitations for Individual Floating Facilities. Floating facility dimensions are calculated exclusive of gangwalks. Less than maximum allowable sizes may be mandated by site conditions such as width of the cove or channel and density of development.

The maximum permissible size for a platform dock, with no slips, is 330 square feet. The minimum dimensions, not including gangwalks, are 8' x 8'.

The maximum allowable size for a boat slip dock, whether covered or uncovered, is 1024 sq. ft. Boat slip dock dimensions are figured on an overall basis, including boat slip(s) and any roof overhang. All boat shelter docks must be open sided; chain link mesh or similar material is permitted for security purposes.

The above proposal is the recommended plan under consideration in this EA.

1.6.3 Alternatives Considered

No other alternatives were considered as the purpose is to bring the current shoreline management plan into alignment with other ACF project shoreline management plans. Further, the proposed new dock limits are sized to allow for double-slip docks and Personal Watercraft “lifts” which meets the purpose of the proposed change. Alternatives with reduced dock size limitations would fail to meet the stated action objectives, and were not given further consideration. Alternatives with increased dock size limitations would have potential for increased effects inconsistent with other ACF project Shoreline Management Plans. Therefore, this alternative was also not given further consideration.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) addressing the West Point Lake project was completed in 1977. West Point Lake’s recreation development program was initially addressed in the original Master Plan contained in Design Memorandum 37 prepared in 1981. The existing approved Shoreline Management Plan was addressed in a previous EA completed in 1993. These three documents provided much of the information used to describe the environmental resources characterizing West Point Lake.

2.1 WEST POINT LAKE

West Point Lake extends 35 river miles upstream from the dam site along the Chattahoochee River. West Point Lake covers 25,900 acres at maximum power (i.e. normal operating) pool elevation of 635.0 feet mean sea level (msl). At that elevation, the lake has a shoreline of 525 miles. The lake shoreline is highly indented by numerous embayments that were formed when the lake was impounded, inundating the many tributary valleys that originally drained into the Chattahoochee River prior to impoundment. The drainage area of West Point Lake consists of the entire 3,440 square miles of the upper Chattahoochee River Basin.

Lake levels are managed in a balanced fashion to satisfy the authorized project purposes. The West Point project controls flooding in the river downstream of the dam by managing seasonal variations in water flow. During the critical flood season (December through mid-April), the reservoir is lowered to provide storage for flood flows. During the last part of April and the first of part of May, the lake is allowed to rise to a target elevation of 635 feet msl for the summer months. Except during drought periods, the lake is maintained between an elevation of 633 feet and 635 feet msl between May 1 and September 30, to allow maximum use of the lake for recreation during the prime recreation season. After September 30, the seasonal drawdown cycle is repeated. The 5-year flood frequency of the lake is elevation 638 feet msl. The maximum flood pool elevation is 641 feet msl, and the minimum power pool elevation is 620 msl. At maximum flood pool, the size of the lake increases from 25,900 acres to 31,000 acres. Figure 8 shows the West Point Lake management target levels through the course of a year, and depicts the actual levels experienced through May 10, 2010.

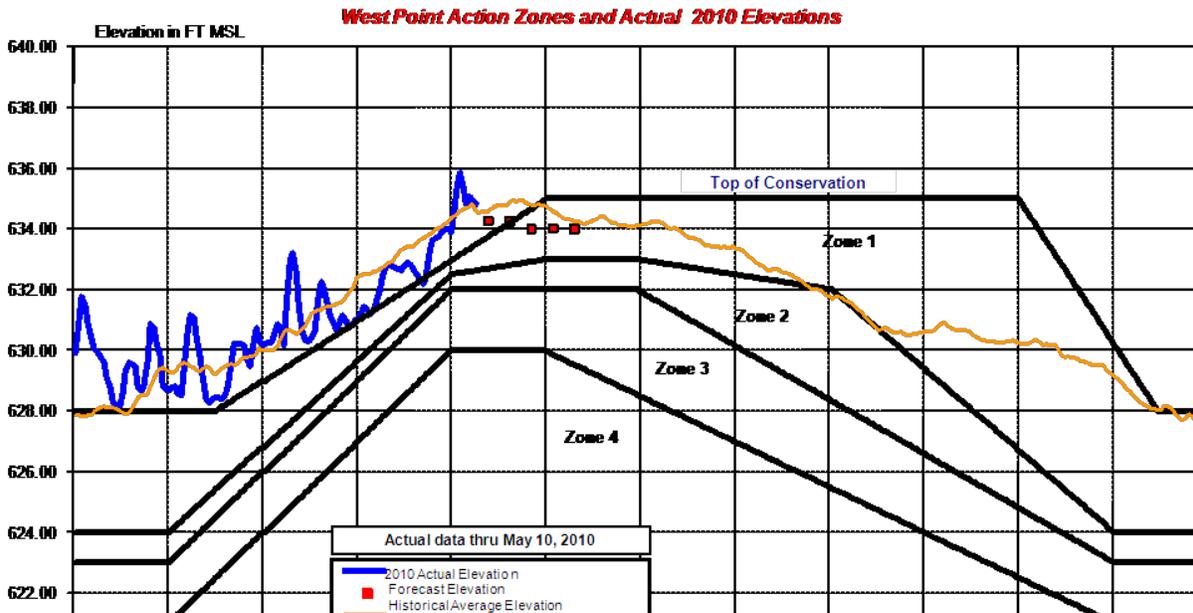


Figure 2. West Point Lake Water Management Target Levels and Actual 2010 Lake Levels Through May 10, 2010

The entire West Point Lake project consists of 58,129 acres. This includes a buffer around the lake ranging from 300 to 500 feet wide. Of the total project acreage, 11,298 acres are designated for recreation use divided among 44 specific areas scattered around the lake. A total of 39 day use parks, marinas and campgrounds have been developed for use to date.

2.2 CLIMATE

Short mild winters, long warm summers, and gradual transitions between seasons characterize the climate which makes West Point Lake conducive for long season recreational use. The mean annual temperature is 63° Fahrenheit (F). The average monthly temperature ranges from a low of 45.9° F degrees in January to a high of 90.9° F in July. The growing season is frost free 240 days.

Characteristic of the southeastern United States, rainfall varies seasonally, with the heaviest rains occurring during the winter and the lightest in the fall. Intense flood producing storms occur mostly in winter and spring, and are usually of a frontal type. The storms that occur in the summer and early fall are usually of the convective thunderstorm type, with high intensities occurring over small areas. Occasional tropical systems pass through the project area producing copious rainfall quantities. Snowfall may occur each year, but heavy snows are rare.

2.3 AIR QUALITY

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) monitors seven stations in the northern half of the State on a daily basis from which an Air Quality Index (AQI) is computed. The AQI converts measured pollutant concentrations in a community's air to a number on a scale ranging from 0 to 500. An AQI level in excess of 100 means that a pollutant is in the unhealthful range on a given day, while an AQI level below 100 means that a pollutant reading is in the satisfactory range. The nearest of the seven air quality monitoring stations to West Point Lake is located at Columbus, Georgia in Muscogee county to the south. The AQI data indicate that the air quality of Columbus generally occurs within a satisfactory range.

The area is classified as being in attainment for all criteria pollutants. Although not experiencing air quality problems itself, the area is on the border of the North Georgia region that has chronically experienced significant air quality problems related to the 13-county Atlanta Metropolitan Area and its surrounding counties.

Pollutants generated by automobile exhausts emissions are of primary concern in the counties to the northeast of the Project. Ozone is a primary pollutant of concern, along with sulfur, nitric oxides, volatile organic compounds (i.e. carbon monoxide, etc.), and fine particulate matter. Ozone is formed when volatile organic compounds combine with nitrogen oxides in the presence of sunlight.

Since the average Metro Atlanta citizen drives 34 miles each day (the highest average in the nation), the daily commuting distance for individual drivers can extend for a considerable distance from the center of Atlanta, reaching areas as far away as the Project. Carbon monoxide emissions have been shown to be increasing each year in the Atlanta region. The increase is attributed to the increasing amount of driving and the associated increases in traffic congestion that are occurring each year. Traffic congestion is a particular problem because emissions are greater at slower speeds, particularly under 40 mph. Emissions are also higher when vehicles accelerate, decelerate, or idle which happens often in congested traffic. It is estimated that emissions are 250 percent higher under congested conditions than during free-flowing traffic.

Because air quality does not recognize political boundaries, the air quality problems occurring in the neighboring counties influence specific activities within Troup County, which encompasses most of the Project. Although Troup County is presently in air quality attainment, the Georgia EPD has included Troup County among the 32 counties surrounding the Atlanta Metropolitan Area in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds. The SIP is aimed at reducing ozone levels in north central Georgia. Under the SIP, gasoline distributed in these 45 counties is required to meet specific formulation requirements.

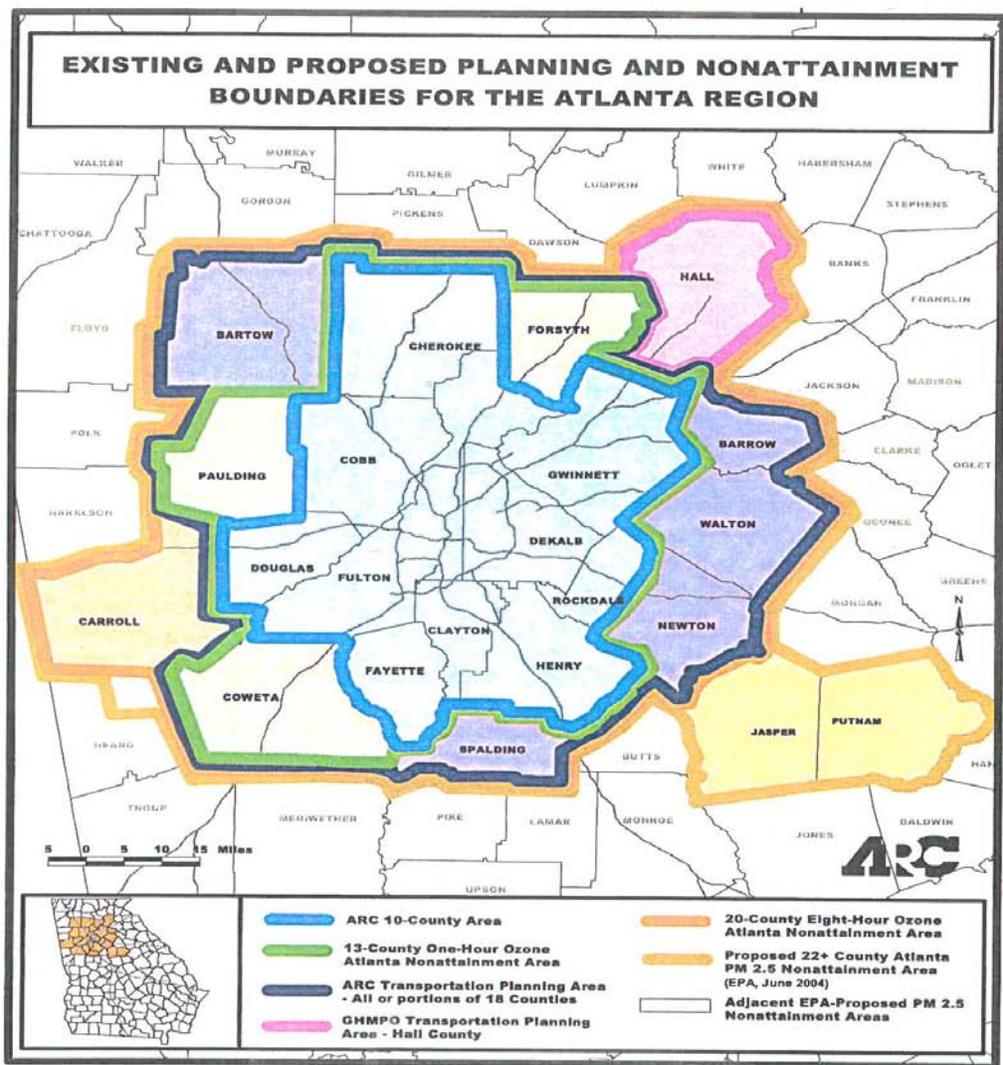


Figure 3. Atlanta Metropolitan Area and Surrounding Counties Northeast of Troup County Experiencing Air Quality Problems

2.4 TOPOGRAPHY

When West Point Lake reached full pool level in 1975, the narrow floodplains associated with the valleys of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries were permanently impounded. This resulted in only the higher slopes of the surrounding hills being exposed above the lake. This modified the landscape by producing the appearance of gentle hills rising from 100 to 150 feet above the lake's surface.

2.5 GEOLOGY

Three geological formations underlay the West Point Lake project area: (1) the Ashland mica schist; (2) the Wedowee formation, and (3) a composite of igneous schist and gneiss. The Ashland mica schist is composed of two types of sedimentary rocks – garnetiferous biotite schist and siliceous muscovite schist. The Wedowee formations consist of slate, phyllite, quartzite, and schist. Those formations were deposited as sediments, some of which were carbonaceous. The composite of igneous schist and gneiss, which underlies most of the area, is composed of hornblende gneiss, granite, and gneiss. The result is a complex geological pattern, in which it is difficult to separate strips and areas of basic rocks, gneisses, and schists.

2.6 LAND USE

Two important factors are considered in determining the land use of a specific parcel of land: (1) land cover (i.e. vegetation, type of human development, etc.); and (2) the dominant type of activity occurring on the parcel (agriculture, wildlife, urban, industrial, etc.). These two factors work in combination and influence one another in assigning land use classifications.

At the time the West Point Lake project was completed, the upland areas surrounding the lake were characterized as predominantly cutover pine, with large areas of second growth mixture of pine and hardwood. Old fields were well into succession and natural reforestation was underway. Associated with the larger species of trees remaining from prior timber harvest activities were a variety of smaller trees and many shrubs and herbs.

Purchase of the lands for the West Point Lake project placed them under the protection and oversight of the Federal government and allowed the timber resources to be managed by the USACE to accommodate multiple resource objectives. As a result, over the last 35 years a viable and attractive forest has developed on much of the project lands surrounding the lake.

A total of 31,534 acres of fee owned lands surround the lake and are managed by the USACE to meet multiple resource objectives. Project lands are intensively managed for recreation, wildlife, and/or timber, normally in that order.

2.7 NOISE

Noise levels vary around the project depending upon specific activities in that specific vicinity. Activities such as marinas and recreational use areas tend to produce higher noise levels than the recreational piers located at private residences.

2.8 AESTHETICS

The acquisition policy that guided the purchase of lands for the West Point Lake project resulted in over 31,000 acres of lands being bought above the normal pool elevation of 635 msl. Much of the upland lands were concentrated in large blocks to support the development of future recreation areas and as buffer strips ranging between 300 to 500 feet in width to screen the lake from the surrounding private property and the various land uses that would occur on the adjacent non-project lands.

In the years since West Point Lake was impounded, a conscientious effort has been made to establish and manage the forest resources occurring on project lands to further screen the lake and to create a visually pleasing natural setting for recreation purposes. The continuity of the shoreline forest setting is broken only by the occasional private boat dock extending into the lake from the forest boundary; the limited recreation facilities located within the day use areas, marinas, and campgrounds around the lake; highway bridge crossings; and the extensive earthen dam that forms the lake.

Each fall and winter, the lake is lowered to provide storage capacity to detain winter and spring flood flows. During that period, a continuous band of unvegetated, red-tinted sediments is exposed, serving as a separation boundary between the lake and the forested shoreline. The width of the exposed drawdown zone varies around the lake, depending upon local slope conditions. The annual drawdown is an outward and visible demonstration of the important flood control purpose for which West Point Lake was authorized and is operated.

2.9 WATER QUALITY

The 1977 FEIS for West Point Lake contains an extensive discussion of water quality issues and parameters that existed at the time the reservoir project was being constructed. Prior to impoundment, inadequate treatment of industrial and municipal discharges throughout the Chattahoochee River Basin upstream of West Point Dam adversely affected the aquatic environment.

To respond to the early concerns about the effects of pollution on the impending lake, a series of water quality investigations were conducted. Pre-impoundment water quality studies were made in 1970 and 1971 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Because of the great concern about possible effects of pollution from the Atlanta area on the new West Point Lake, a preliminary post-impoundment water quality study was also conducted in 1975 by the EPA in cooperation with the Georgia EPD and the U.S. Geological Survey's Chattahoochee River Study. Based on those studies, sources of pollution were identified and measures were taken to eliminate contamination prior to full impoundment of West Point Lake. A water quality study

completed in 1995 indicated that significant improvement in West Point Lake's overall water quality had occurred since the pre-impoundment studies conducted in the early 1970s, with the lake being comparable in quality to other impoundments on the Chattahoochee River. West Point Lake is classified for recreational use in accordance with Georgia water quality standards.

2.10 FISHERY RESOURCES

A total of 52 species of warm water fish species are reported from the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries. The principal sportfish harvested from West Point Lake are largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), spotted bass (*Micropterus punctulatus*), crappie (*Pomoxis* spp), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), and other sunfishes (Centrarchidae). A fishery also exists for striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) and hybrid bass (*Morone saxatilis* x *M. chrysops*).

2.11 WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Approximately 50 game and non-game species of wildlife exist on West Point Lake project lands. Wildlife species are sought by hunters, and enjoyed by non-consumptive users. In the 30 years since the project was completed, management efforts undertaken by the USACE and the state game and fish agencies have contributed to an overall improvement in wildlife habitat on project lands for both game and non-game species.

2.12 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The West Point Lake project area is located within the historic range of the following federally listed threatened and endangered species: Bachman's warbler (*Vermivora bachmanii*); red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*); American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*); and bluestripe shiner (*Cyprinella callitaenia*). Of these species, none are known to occur in the environs of West Point Lake. The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), while not federally listed, is still a protected species and may be seen along the lake margins. Several eagle nests are located on public land at West Point Lake.

2.13 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Early investigations for cultural resources completed both before and after the impoundment of West Point Lake located approximately 1,008 cultural properties on fee-owned Government land. Of these, nine properties were found to possess sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and one site is currently listed.

2.14 SOCIOECONOMICS

West Point Lake is located in portions of four counties in the States of Georgia and Alabama (Troup and Heard Counties, Georgia, and Chambers and Randolph Counties, Alabama. For that reason, the four counties immediately bordering the lake are considered in the socioeconomic analyses conducted for the EA.

Table 5 presents selected population demographic data for all four counties. Examination of the data shows that Troup County has the largest population base of the four counties, with Chambers County being a distant second. The pattern of population growth experienced by the four counties surrounding the lake over the period 1990 to 2000 varied considerably. Troup County's population expanded by 5.8 percent over that 10-year period, which is representative of the steady increase in growth the county has experienced since 1970 as shown in Table 1. On the other hand, the much smaller population base of upstream Heard County grew by 27.6 percent during the same 10-year period – a rate that slightly exceeded the explosive growth experienced by the entire State of Georgia over that same period. Between 1990 and 2000, Randolph County's population expanded by 12.6 percent - an increase that exceeded the overall population growth experienced by the entire State of Alabama. Only in Chambers County did the population fail to grow between 1990 and 2000, showing a -0.8 percent decrease in population over that 10-year period.

Executive Order (EO) 12898 entitled *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low Income Populations* (dated February 11, 1994) requires that Federal agencies conduct their programs, policies, and activities that substantially affect human health or the environment in a manner that ensures that such programs, policies, and activities do not have the effect of excluding persons or populations from participation in, denying persons or populations the benefits of, or subjecting persons or populations to discrimination under such programs, policies, and activities because of their race, color, or national origin. All management activities undertaken by the USACE at West Point Lake are to consider the requirements of this EO.

Executive Order (EO) 13045 entitled *Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks* (dated April 21, 1997) recognizes the growing body of scientific knowledge that demonstrates children may suffer disproportionately from environmental health and safety risks. These arise because children's bodily systems are not fully developed; they eat, drink and breathe more in proportion to their body weight; and their behavioral patterns may make them more susceptible to accidents. Based on these factors, the EO directs each federal agency to (1) make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children and (2) assure that its policies, programs, activities, and

Table 1. Selected Demographic Data for Four Counties Bordering West Point Lake and the States of Georgia and Alabama

Political Unit		Population Data								Income Data	
State	County	2000 Census	Percent Change From 1990	Percent Under 5 Years Old	Percent Under 18 Years Old	Percent White	Percent Black	Percent Other Racial Groups	Percent Latin	1999 Median Household Income (\$)	Percent of Population Below Poverty Level
Georgia		8,186,453	26.4	7.3	26.5	65.1	28.7	3.8	5.3	42,433	13.0
	Troup	58,779	5.8	7.2	27.9	65.8	31.7	1.5	1.7	35,469	14.8
	Heard	11,012	27.6	7.9	28.7	87.5	10.8	1.2	1.1	33,038	17.3
Alabama		4,447,100	10.1	6.7	25.3	71.1	26.0	1.7	1.7	34,135	16.1
	Randolph	22,380	12.6	6.6	25.1	76.4	22.2	0.9	1.2	28,675	17.0
	Chambers	36,583	-0.8	6.6	24.6	60.9	38.1	0.7	0.8	29,667	17.0

standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental or safety risks. Again, all management activities undertaken by the USACE at West Point Lake are to consider the requirements of this EO.

Table 5 also contains 2000 Census data identifying the racial makeup and the percentage of the population under 5 and 18 years of age, respectively, in each of the four counties bordering West Point Lake. In 2000, the population of Troup County was comprised of 65.8 percent white, 31.7 percent black, and 1.5 percent other racial groups, with 1.7 percent of the population being Latin. Comparison of the demographic data contained in Table 5 indicates that of the four counties, Troup County proportionally had the smallest white population, while having the largest populations of blacks, other racial groups, and individuals of Latin origin. The proportion of the Troup County population under 5 and 18 years of age is 7.2 percent and 27.9 percent, respectively. The age make-up of the younger members of the population is similar for all four counties.

At \$35,469, Troup County had the largest 1999 median household income of the four counties. Although Troup County's median household income was considerably less than the Georgia statewide average of \$42,433, it slightly exceeded the average of \$34,135 for the entire State of Alabama, but was considerably below the National median household income of \$41,994.

The 2000 Census used 1999 income levels to determine the percentage of the population considered to be living in poverty. The poverty threshold was determined to be \$16,895 for a family of four that consisted of two adults and two children. Based on that criterion, approximately 14.8 percent of the Troup County population was considered to be living in poverty. That level is slightly higher than the overall State of Georgia level of 13.0 percent and the national average of 12.4 percent, but lower than the statewide average of 16.1 percent for neighboring Alabama. Table 5 indicates Troup County had the lowest poverty rates in 2000 of the four counties bordering West Point Lake, while Heard County had the highest poverty levels.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is the revision of the 1993 West Point Lake Shoreline Management Plan. The West Point Operations Manager is requesting to revise Paragraph 19.d. (3) of the 1993 West Point Lake Shoreline Management Plan to increase the maximum permissible size for a platform dock to 330 square feet. The "No Action" alternative would have no beneficial or detrimental effects to the human environment as nothing would change. However, the stated action objectives would remain unfulfilled. Therefore, the "No Action" alternative will not be considered further in this document. The potential effects of the proposed preferred alternative or proposed action are discussed below. Generally, no adverse impacts to the human environment were identified from this administrative change.

3.1 RECREATION PROJECT PURPOSE

Recreation is a major authorized purpose of the West Point project. In November 1973, the USACE Chief of Engineers identified West Point Lake as a recreation demonstration project, the

development of which was to provide a wider variety of recreational facilities and opportunities for the public than are normally provided at Corps lakes.

The Preferred Plan will increase recreational use of the Lake by allowing for improved water access by lakeside residents. The new size limits will result in more of the Lake being covered by docks rendering that covered area unsuitable for navigable use. However, the percentage of Lake being covered is less than one percent of the Lake and will have no significant effect to recreational or navigational use of the Lake. The covered docks also provide habitat for fish and therefore enhance the recreational use of the Lake by anglers. No detrimental effects to recreational use were identified.

3.2 WEST POINT LAKE

The proposed action would be consistent with the manner in which West Point Lake is operated. The detailed design of the covered docks would require no modifications to the project's operational regimen.

3.3 CLIMATE

The proposed alternative considered would not have any influence on climatic conditions

3.4 AIR QUALITY

Implementation of the proposed action should have no measurable long-term influence on air quality conditions within project area which has been classified as being in attainment for all critical pollutants. Also, there should be no discernable difference in air quality as a result of the larger docks.

3.5 TOPOGRAPHY

The proposed alternative considered would have no effect on topography as the docks will be constructed within the lake. Minor grading may be necessary to access docks constructed under this administrative action, but would be minor in nature and would also occur under the existing Shoreline Management Plan (No Action Alternative).

3.6 GEOLOGY

The proposed alternative considered would not have any influence on Geology.

3.7 LAND USE

Land use will not be modified by the proposed administrative action. All requirements and guidance regarding placement of covered docks will remain the same.

3.8 NOISE

Under the preferred plan, the individual covered docks may receive more use by their owners which could result in minor localized increases in noise levels.

3.9 AESTHETICS

An evaluation of the aesthetic effects attributable to an action or structure can be quite challenging. That is because the perceptions of individuals as to what is pleasing and/or displeasing vary depending upon their personal value systems, past experiences, and expectations. What some may consider to be a remarkable structure worthy of praise and enjoyment, can be considered by others to be inappropriate and unattractive. However, in this instance no substantive change in aesthetic perception is anticipated as covered docks are allowed under the existing Shoreline Management Plan. Allowing the structures to be slightly larger should result in no appreciable change to the perception of onlookers.

3.10 WATER QUALITY

The Preferred Plan has the potential to create minor short-term indirect impacts on water quality within West Point Lake during construction of the covered docks. Construction activities could temporarily expose the soil and make it more susceptible to runoff generated erosion until adequate vegetative cover could be established on the disturbed areas. Further, placement of structures into the Lake bottom may result in minor short-term increases in turbidity. The preferred plan has a somewhat higher opportunity to create indirect water quality problems for the lake resulting from increased use by lake residents. This increased use could potentially result in increased input of hydrocarbons and other contaminants common to recreation lake use. This input is expected to be insignificant given the minor increase of lake use relative to the overall recreational use of the Lake. The construction affects could be ameliorated by pursuing appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the construction activities.

3.11 FISHERY RESOURCES

Implementation of the Proposed Action should have no measurable effects on the fishery resources of West Point Lake. The larger dock sizes would provide increased habitat for some Lake species.

3.12 WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Implementation of the Proposed Action should have no measurable effects on the wildlife resources of West Point Lake area.

3.13 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Since no threatened and endangered species are known to occur within the vicinity, the proposed action would have no adverse effects on federally designated species. It is possible that some

bald eagles may nest along the shoreline (recognizing that bald eagles are protected under other federal statutes). All provisions of the existing Shoreline Management Plan relative to this issue shall remain unchanged. Due considerations shall be given to avoidance of known eagle nesting sites during permitting of the docks. The mere increase in size of a proposed dock would not affect the perception of the structure from the bald eagle's perspective. The Corps finding of "no effect" is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of this Draft EA coordination.

3.14 TRAFFIC

Implementation of the Proposed Action should have no measurable effects on traffic in the vicinity of West Point Lake.

3.15 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural properties will be avoided as ascribed in the existing Shoreline Management Plan. Merely increasing the size of the dock has very little potential to affect cultural resources. Most of the cultural properties have been identified in previous surveys and are located in areas where docks will not be located (i.e. uplands). Known cultural sites are familiar to the Corps personnel reviewing individual dock applications and potential for effect will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

3.16 HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS/WASTES

The presence of hazardous and toxic materials will be evaluated by Corps personnel reviewing individual dock applications and potential for effect will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. However, no known hazardous or toxic materials are known to exist in the Lake.

3.17 SOCIOECONOMICS

The Preferred Plan would not have any influence in existing or future demographic patterns in the four counties bordering West Point Lake. The racial make-up, age distribution, and income levels of the populations in these counties are influenced by much larger economic and societal factors that are at work on a regional basis.

Although the construction activities associated with implementation of the preferred plan would be expected to have some localized beneficial effects in short-term employment and the local economy, the magnitude of the effects would not be measurable when viewed from a regional perspective. From a relative standpoint, the Preferred Plan is anticipated to be slightly more beneficial than the No-Action Alternative because of the additional improvements that would be provided by the Preferred Plan. The improvements would provide additional recreation opportunities to area residents.

The Preferred Plan would not disproportionately adversely impact minorities, low income groups, or children. Therefore, the proposed action complies with the requirements of EOs 12898 and 13045.

3.18 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

Both of the alternatives would be expected to positively contribute to West Point Lake project's authorized recreation purpose. However, because of the larger recreational benefit of the Preferred Plan, the positive benefits to the recreation purpose would be greater for that plan compared to the No-Action Alternative.

Other insignificant impacts associated with the Preferred Plan are similar, if not identical to those associated with the existing dock construction provisions of the current Shoreline Management Plan (i.e. No-Action Alternative). This review did not identify any special concerns associated with the administrative change to allow larger covered docks.

3.19 MITIGATION CONSIDERATIONS

None of the adverse impacts are judged to be significant; therefore, no mitigative measures beyond those currently found in the shoreline management plan are proposed.

4.0 ANY IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS WHICH WOULD BE INVOLVED SHOULD THE PREFERRED PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED

Consideration was given to identifying any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that would be involved in implementing either the No-Action Alternative or the Preferred Plan. As this is simply an administrative change, the Shoreline Management Plan revision (Preferred Alternative) could be readily reversed should the situation dictate. However, should the proposed action be approved, then reversed, it would be difficult to force changes to private residential structures authorized under the revised Shoreline Management Plan.

5.0 ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED

Potential adverse effects associated with construction of either the No-Action Alternative or the Preferred Plan are judged to be insignificant and unavoidable.

6.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The Preferred Plan to implement the proposed action constitutes a local short-term use of man's environment and is anticipated to positively affect the long-term productivity of the recreation potential of West Point Lake by enhancing the recreational use provided at the Project. West Point Project currently has 750 private docks under permit, with 55% being individual, or platform docks, and the remaining 45% being boat shelters, or slip docks. It is likely that less than 15% of the current dock owners will elect to increase the sizes of their docks if this change

is implemented. Also, the amount of undeveloped shoreline allocated for limited development will accommodate an estimated 900 additional docks, and it is likely that no more than 20% of them will be built to the maximum sizes allowable. Therefore, no significant secondary or cumulative effects were identified in association with this action. Further, the proposed changes would simplify the permits issued at West Point Lake and make them consistent with similar request at USACE projects along the ACF river system.

7.0 COORDINATION

This EA is being coordinated with the relevant State and Federal Agencies as well as the general public through issuance of a public notice of availability. All parties which have expressed an interest in review of our projects will be included. Tribes will be consulted as appropriate through typical communications. The following Agencies are included in the public notice distribution:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

- Environmental Protection Division
- Historic Preservation Division
- Wildlife Resources Division

Alabama Department of Environmental Management

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Alabama Historical Commission

8.0 LITERATURE CITED

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Appendix A
West Point Lake Coalition Correspondence

West Point Lake Coalition, Inc.



Non-Profit Organization
P.O. Box 3677 • LaGrange, Georgia 30241
706-884-5916
www.westpointlakecoalition.org

Mr. Steve Logan
Operations Manager
West Point Project
500 Resource Management Dr.
West Point, Ga. 31833

August 27, 2009

Dear Steve,

The West Point Lake Coalition would like to recommend the following enhancements to the 1993 Shoreline Management Plan re: size limitations for individual floating facilities as currently defined in Section 19 . d . (3):

Increase the maximum size for all slip docks, whether covered or not, to 1024 square feet.

Increase the maximum size for docks without slips to 330 square feet.

Re: docks with slips, West Point Lake property owners are and have been at a disadvantage vs. the other ACF Projects, namely, Lake Lanier, Lake Walter F. George, and Lake Seminole, none of which were specifically authorized for recreation and sport fishing/wildlife development:

Lake Lanier:	Maximum size for boat dock w/ boat slip - 1024 square feet
Walter F. George:	Maximum size for boat dock w/ boat slip - up to 900 sq. ft.
Lake Seminole:	Maximum size for boat dock w/ boat slip - 1024 square feet

It is our understanding that 1024 square feet will accommodate two 10' X 24' slips and two PWC lifts. This larger size also enhances safety as it allows for a 4' walkway between slips.

2.

Many boat owners now have two boats, one for recreation and one for fishing; and the number of PWC's is growing annually. The Corps' approval of this recommendation will match West Point Lake's dock specifications with the other reservoirs on the ACF system, provide consistency, and better align this part of the Shoreline Management Program with the authorized purpose of recreation.

If you need any additional information, please advise. We look forward to your positive response.

Regards,



Dick Timmerberg
Executive Director
West Point Lake

CC: Mr. Bob Chitwood
CC: Ms. Samantha Walker