



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Mobile District

An Update on the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for Updates to the Master Water Control Manual for the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin

July 2009



The purpose of this newsletter is to update interested stakeholders concerning developments associated with the preparation of updates to the Master Water Control Manual and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River basin.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District, has initiated an Environmental Impact Statement for the update of the Master Water Control Manual for the ACF River Basin in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. The ACF Master Water Control Manual serves as the Corps' roadmap for managing the ACF River Basin flows. Along with updating the Master Water Control Manual, the water control manual for each individual water resource project, which includes the reservoir specific water-control plans, will also be updated. Since the purpose for updating the Master Water Control Manual is to capture current operations of the basin, and current operations include water supply withdrawals from Lake Lanier, the update effort must also include a study to examine the possible reallocation of water storage at Lake Lanier. Accordingly, the Corps is also conducting a reallocation study for current water supply withdrawals at Lake Lanier. Based on the reallocation study's findings, the Corps will determine whether a reallocation of storage for water supply for current withdrawals is warranted. As a necessary component to a comprehensive ACF Master Water Control Manual, the reallocation study will be considered in the EIS as well.

The Corps held five scoping meetings in October of 2008, to solicit input from stakeholders throughout the basin regarding the range of issues to be considered in the EIS and to identify the significant issues to be analyzed in depth. The Corps reviewed all of the comments submitted and published a Scoping Report in January 2009. The Scoping Report can

be found at www.sam.usace.army.mil/pa/acf-wcm/FinalScoping.htm.

After completing the Scoping Report, the Corps began development of the ACF Master Water Control Manual and accompanying EIS. The EIS will evaluate the impacts of any proposed management changes in the operation of Corps projects within the basin on hydropower, navigation, flood control, recreation, water quality, fish and wildlife conservation, threatened and endangered species, and other resources. Since many of the controversies associated with the ACF River Basin are currently subject to litigation, the Corps is prepared to adjust its plans for updates to the ACF Master Water Control Manual, reallocation study, and EIS in support of any judicial rulings that might be forthcoming.

During the scoping process, stakeholders suggested a variety of alternatives to the current operations at Federal projects throughout the basin. Some of these suggested operational changes, as well as, others developed by the Corps are currently undergoing modeling by the Corps' Hydrologic Engineering Center to determine their feasibility. Some of the measures being modeled include changes in the drawdown and refill periods for reservoirs and changes in action zones. Based on the outcomes of the modeling scenarios, the Corps will identify feasible alternatives for consideration in the EIS. Measures to be considered in the Master Water Control Manual update and in the EIS may include modified flow regimes for environmental purposes, current water withdrawals, and implementation of a basin-wide drought contingency plan.

The Corps will provide periodic newsletters to keep stakeholders informed of progress on the update to the Master Water Control Manual and EIS process. The information contained herein is for general informational purposes only and is subject to change.

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Corps Support

To facilitate the update, support contracts have been awarded to TetraTech, Inc. for preparation of the EIS; Brockington and Associates for cultural resources surveys and support, the Corps' Hydrologic Engineering Center for water resource modeling, and the Corps' Hydropower Analysis Center for socioeconomic analysis of impacts of the recommended alternative to hydropower. Initial kickoff meetings with these contractors and Centers have been held and work is progressing.

Also, based upon stakeholder requests, the Corps contracted with the National Academies of Science Water Science and Technology Board (WSTB) to conduct a workshop to discuss a range of water science and planning issues associated with the ACF River Basin. The workshop was held on April 3, 2009 in Washington, D.C., and engaged a group of nearly 50 water resources experts, stakeholders, and political officials. The objective of the event was to identify the key management issues in the ACT-ACF River Basins, and to identify study topics and questions that might be pursued as a means to support better water management decisions. More information on the workshop and the WSTB's recommendations for further study can be found online at www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12693.

Visit www.sam.usace.army.mil/pa/acf-wcm for the most recent updates on the project.

