

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q.1. Why is USACE looking to reallocate water from Allatoona Lake for the State Georgia?**

**A.1.** USACE did not address Georgia's request for additional water supply storage when the ACT Master WCM was last updated in 2015. In a lawsuit following that WCM update, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia issued an order directing USACE to take final action on Georgia's request by March 2, 2021.

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### **Q.2. Why have the easements at the Weiss and Logan Martin projects not been obtained?**

**A.2.** APC owns and operates the Weiss and Logan Martin projects and is responsible for obtaining any necessary property interests incident to project operation. APC has proposed that the Corps approve revised flood control operations, eliminating the need for additional easements upstream of both projects. As noted in the draft Feasibility Report and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FR/SEIS), APC may need to obtain additional easements downstream if the proposed operational changes are approved.

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### **Q.3. Follow-up: Is this proposed change by APC going to affect my property?**

**A.3.** APC has proposed operational changes that would reduce the maximum flood pool during flood operations at the Weiss and Logan Martin projects, but increase the expected downstream flow during certain flood events. The Draft FR/SEIS evaluates potential impacts of this change in operation.

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### **Q.4. What is the role of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)?**

**A.4.** The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the licensing/regulatory authority for non-Federal hydropower projects. The outcome of this study process will recommend a flood operation at these two projects. Based on that recommendation, APC may be required to purchase flowage easements by FERC.

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### **Q.5. What type of environmental impacts are anticipated with this effort?**

**A.5.** The preliminary analysis described in the FR/SEIS has not identified significant environmental impacts resulting from the Tentatively Selected Plan. USACE is continuing to evaluate the environmental impacts and welcomes public comments on this and other alternatives.

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### **Q.6. Will a decrease in the flood storage at the Allatoona project increase the risk of flooding at my house on the lake or downstream?**

**A.6.** According to our analysis, no additional structures will be impacted.

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**Q.7. What kind of endangered species are in the area?**

**A.7.** Table 3.5 of the Draft FR/SEIS lists the federally protected species of plants and animals in the ACT Basin that could potentially be affected by operational changes. USACE has prepared a Biological Assessment indicating that the Tentatively Selected Plan is not likely to adversely affect any listed species or critical habitat. USACE has engaged in informal consultation with USFWS addressing any impacts to endangered species from the Tentatively Selected Plan.

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**Q.8. How long is this effort going to take?**

**A.8.** USACE expects to release a Final Feasibility Report and Integrated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in Fall 2020 and to issue a Record of Decision by March 2021, subject to the availability of funds.

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**Q.9. How will the impacts from the proposed changes be determined?**

**A.9.** USACE evaluated the proposed changes through a variety of engineering, environmental, and economic analyses to identify potential impacts to ACT basin resources. Proposed changes were compared to a baseline condition to show any differences across the various resources.

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**Q.10. Will climate change be considered in light of the current administration's policies?**

**A.10.** Yes.

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**Q.11. Will Allatoona Lake experience lower levels while meeting the water supply request from the State of Georgia?**

**A.11.** Preliminary analysis in the Draft FR/SEIS (Sec. 5.1.1.2) indicates that the average pool level at Allatoona Lake would be slightly higher under the Tentatively Selected Plan than under the no action alternative (current operations).

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**Q.12. Who is paying for this study?**

**A.12.** The study has been fully federally funded to date.

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**Q.13. Are the lake residents more important than people downstream of the projects?**

**A.13.** No. USACE values the perspectives of all persons with an interest in the ACT Basin and gives equal consideration to all public comments.

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**Q.14. [Is this study going to affect my flood insurance rates?](#)**

**A.14.** Flood insurance rates are determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or your insurance carrier.

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**Q.15. [What is the purpose of a Water Control Manual?](#)**

**A15.** The operations at each federal reservoir managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are described in water control plans and/or manuals. These manuals typically outline the regulation schedules for each project, including operating criteria, guidelines and rule curves for varying conditions; and specifications for storage and releases from the reservoirs. The water control manuals also outline the coordination protocol and data collection, management and dissemination of information associated with routine and specific water management activities such as flood control operations or drought contingency operations.

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**Q.16. [What are the authorizations for Water Control Operations?](#)**

**A16.** The authority for Water Control Operations is provided by congressional authorization for federal reservoir projects. Below is a list of congressional authorizations that apply to the operation of all federal reservoir projects.

- Flood Control Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-534)
- Water Supply Act of 1958 (P.L. 85-500)
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958 (P.L. 85-624)
- Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (P.L. 92-500)
- Endangered Species Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-205)
- Water Resource Development Acts

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**Q.17. [Why would you sign a Record of Decision with such significant comments from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Alabama regarding water quality?](#)**

**A17.** The authorized project purposes and commonly used methods to achieve them:

*Flood Risk Management (Formerly Referred to as Flood Control)*

- Winter drawdown at specific lakes
- Store water in lake during flood events
- Monitor downstream points for river levels
- Provide notification to Emergency Management Offices
- Evacuate water as quickly as practicable when downstream conditions allow

## Navigation

- Make releases to maintain an authorized stage for commercial navigation, navigation periods, and special releases for commercial navigation during other periods.

## Hydropower

- Determine volume of water available for generation on a weekly basis. Southeastern Power Administration (SEPA) makes actual schedule within range specified by the water control manuals.

## Recreation

- Allowing recreation at reservoirs according to the Water Control Plan while maintaining other authorized project purposes.

## Environmental and Water Quality

- Support for fish spawning and other fish and wildlife conservation measures.
- Provide gradual step-down of river levels where necessary
- Provide minimum releases from reservoirs according to authorization language

## Water Supply Storage

- Provide water supply storage for municipalities and industries.

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### **Q.18. [What do the Water Control Manuals consist of?](#)**

#### **A.18.** Updated water control manuals capture:

- Project/system operations refined over the years due to changes in basin hydrology and withdrawals/consumption that resulted from years of growth/development
- Drought contingency requirements to account for new data and operational changes
- Updated data reflecting current basin conditions
- New/rehabilitated project structural features
- Environmental requirements for water quality, endangered species and fish spawns
- Procedures for capturing/using real-time data provided by additional gages and monitoring devices installed since last manual updates
- Latest computer models and techniques to evaluate and establish guidelines for project operations.
- Improved and streamlined methods for data exchange between USACE and other agencies

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**Q.19. [Which laws mandate the updates of the Water Control Manuals?](#)**

**A19.** Updated Water Control Manuals (WCMs) are compiled in accordance with statutory (Flood Control Act of 1944) and regulatory requirements (Engineering Regulation (ER) 1110-2-240 and ER 1110-2-8156), and in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and account for demographic, hydrologic, environmental, and technological changes that have occurred within the basins. The Water Resources Development Acts of 1988 and 1990 also provide for public involvement of all interested stakeholders during the development of new or revised water control plans to reflect the current public interests within the basin.

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**Q.20. [What type of public involvement will be available in the study?](#)**

**A20.** Public participation in the study and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process promotes open communication between the public and USACE. Feedback was sought during Public Scoping and will continue at the Draft FR/SEIS and Final FR/SEIS stages.

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**Q.21. [Why is USACE involved with Alabama Power Company projects?](#)**

**A21.** Pursuant to Public Law 83-436, approved June 28, 1954, USACE has oversight of four APC projects in the ACT Basin for the authorized purposes of Navigation and Flood Risk Management. These projects are: H. Neely Henry Dam and Lake, R.L. Harris Dam and Lake, Logan Martin Dam and Lake and Weiss Dam and Lake.

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**Q.22. [Will I be negatively impacted by the proposed changes at Alabama Power Company projects?](#)**

**A22.** Under certain scenarios, there are decreased levels of flood risk management benefits depending on your specific location in the basin. Based on our analysis, there would have to be a storm event bigger than any previous event recorded since the construction of these projects to have a negative impact on downstream properties.

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**Q.23. [Will the Storage Accounting Methodology for Water Supply Change at Allatoona Lake?](#)**

**A.23.** The Tentatively Selected Plan would address Georgia's water supply needs through a combined reallocation from conservation and flood control storage, while retaining the current USACE storage accounting practices at Allatoona Lake. The Draft FR/SEIS also evaluates several alternatives that would adopt Georgia's proposed storage accounting practices at Allatoona Lake. Although the existing Allatoona water supply contracts and current WCM do not provide for the alternative storage accounting method proposed by Georgia, no other law or regulation precludes the Corps from modifying those documents to adopt a different method of storage accounting at Allatoona Lake.

As noted in the Draft FR/SEIS, the Corps has published a proposed rule that could govern storage accounting methodologies at all Corps reservoirs (81 Fed. Reg. 91556 (Dec. 16, 2016), available at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=COE-2016-0016>). A final rule, if adopted, could affect the storage accounting practices for any new or modified water supply agreements at Allatoona Lake after the effective date of that rule. However, a final rule is not a prerequisite to adopting any alternative evaluated in the Draft FR/SEIS.

Several alternatives will be fully evaluated in the Final FR/SEIS and available to the decisionmaker, including alternatives that use the State of Georgia's proposed storage accounting methodology. After reviewing the Final FR/SEIS, assuming no intervening change in law or regulations, the Record of Decisionmaker could choose an alternative that utilizes Georgia's proposed storage accounting methodology.

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**Q.24. Are any of the alternative evaluated in the Draft FEIS beyond USACE's authority to implement?**

**A.24.** During the initial screening process, described in section 4.5 of the Draft FR/SEIS, USACE eliminated from further consideration certain alternatives that were clearly impractical or in conflict with applicable law. Based on the preliminary analysis conducted to date, USACE considers each of the alternatives evaluated in the Draft FR/SEIS to be a potentially viable alternative that could be implemented, consistent with applicable law.

Further analysis may be required to ensure that, for example, the Tentatively Selected Plan would not involve major structural or operational changes or serious effects to authorized purposes, and that the proposed operational changes at the APC projects would be consistent with P.L. 83-436 (the Coosa Power Act). If the Record of Decision were to adopt an alternative that required further Congressional approval, USACE could select that alternative and submit a report to Congress recommending authorization.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Table 4.3 of the Draft FR/SEIS includes a column with the heading, "Implementable by current law, USACE policy and practice." Based on initial screening and preliminary evaluation, USACE considers each of the alternatives carried forward for evaluation in the Draft FR/SEIS to be implementable under currently applicable law and regulation. However, as noted in Table 4.3, certain alternatives (those utilizing Georgia's alternative storage accounting) are not consistent with current USACE *practice* at Allatoona Lake. Additionally, it is conceivable that the Final FR/SEIS could include alternatives that would require Congressional approval, and those alternative could be selected and submitted to Congress for approval. However, based on the preliminary analysis set forth in the Draft FR/SEIS, USACE believes that each alternative evaluated in the Draft FR/SEIS could be implemented consistent with currently applicable law. The heading in Table 4.3 was not intended to suggest otherwise.

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