US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mobile District

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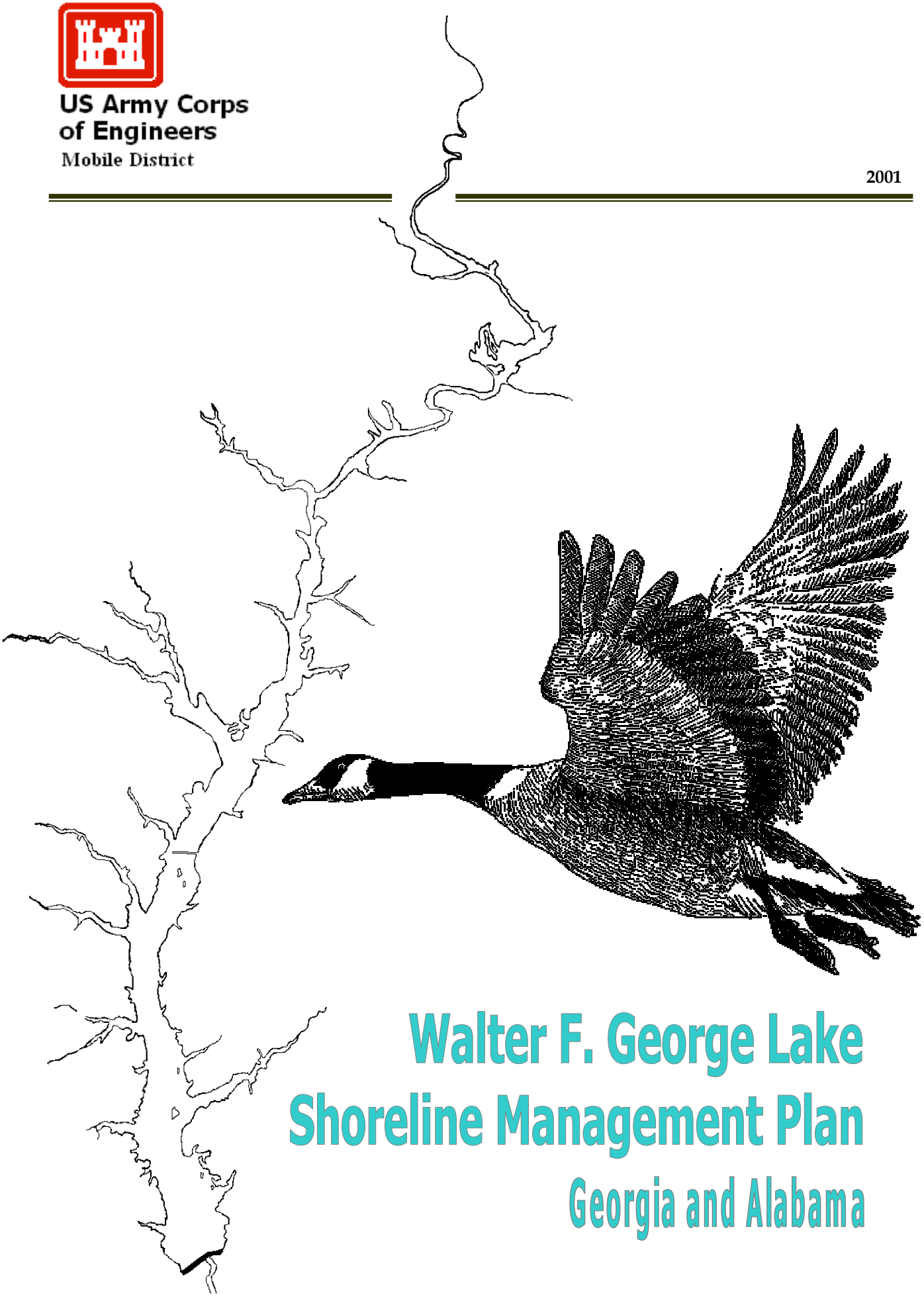

Walter F. George Lake
Shoreline Management Plan
Georgia and Alabama

Shoreline Management Plan

Walter F. George Lake

Purpose

This Shoreline Management Plan provides guidance and information for effectively managing the shoreline at Walter F. George Lake, including its adjacent public lands and waters. It also describes types of private uses that may be permitted on lands and waters managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Additionally, the plan addresses rules and regulations, shoreline allocations, and other information relative to the Walter F. George Lake shoreline management program.

Objective

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for managing the shoreline, and its adjacent public lands and waters, in a manner promoting safe and healthful public use. Management must strive to sustain quality natural resources for both present and future generations while accommodating general public access to all project lands and waters. Therefore, the objective is to maintain a balance between permitted minor private uses, long term resource protection, and public recreational opportunities.

Authority

This plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements directed in *Engineering Regulation (ER) 1130-2-406*, dated October 31, 1990, titled "*Project Operation - Shoreline Management at Civil Works Projects,*" as per change 1 dated September 14, 1992, and change 2 dated May 28, 1999.

Jurisdiction

It is the policy of the Chief of Engineers to protect and manage shorelines of all Civil Works water resource development projects under Corps jurisdiction. The term "project" refers to the water areas of any water resources development project administered by the Chief of Engineers, without regard to ownership of underlying land, to all lands owned in fee by the Federal Government and to all facilities therein or thereon of any such water resources development project. The states of Georgia and Alabama and their political subdivisions retain statutory responsibility to enforce state and local laws.

Project Description & History

The River and Harbor Act of 1946 and a resolution adopted in 1953 by the House Committee on Public Works, modified the comprehensive plan for development of the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint River basin. Provision was made for the authorization of the "Fort Gaines Project," a navigation dam and the development of a nine-foot navigation channel to extend upstream on the Chattahoochee River to Columbus, Georgia. This project was officially designated as the Walter F. George Lock and Dam by *Public Law 85-363*, approved in 1958. The impoundment of the lake began in November of 1962 and was brought up in stages, reaching its intended elevation the next year.

Walter F. George Lake, with a normal pool elevation at 190 feet above mean sea level *(MSL)*, has a water surface area of 45,181 acres. Although there is some fluctuation in pool elevation for power production and navigation, no storage for flood control is provided. It is a multi-purpose project for navigation, hydroelectric power production, recreation, and related uses. At normal pool there are 640 miles of shoreline, 318 miles of which are within an easement estate and 47 miles are within the Fort Benning Military Reservation.

The shoreline topography varies from nearly level to steep and rolling. The shoreline is irregular because of deep cut creeks and streams entering the lake. A number of the tributary streams have steep to almost vertical banks. The lake is deep in the lower portion where the shores extend back to the hillsides, shallow in the middle portion where the shores begin to recede to the river channel, and confined mostly within the old riverbanks in the upper reaches.

⁄⁄ Shoreline Allocations

To meet the objectives of *ER 1130-2-406* and the project's Master Plan, the Shoreline Management Plan classifies Walter F. George Lake's shoreline to promote its orderly use and development. The shoreline use permit program is an essential tool in managing activities on project lands and waters. Activities may include, but are not limited to, constructing and maintaining fixed and floating docks, utility lines, walkways, and modifying vegetation. There are 275 miles of project boundary at Walter F. George Lake allocated into the following four categories:

- Limited Development Areas
- Public Recreation Areas
- Protected Shoreline Areas
- Prohibited Access Areas

The shoreline allocation for Walter F. George Lake is shown by category, along with definitions, in *Table 1* on the following page. Maps showing more detailed information may be viewed at the Natural Resources Site Office.

Table 1 - Shoreline Allocation

Allocation Category	Map Color	Amount	Description
Limited Development	green	131 miles 47%	Certain specific private uses may be authorized in these areas if a permit is obtained. Applications are reviewed "first come/first served," and are based on individual merit. Several resource management considerations must be satisfied prior to approving or denying a permit including density of development, navigation, environment, safety, and site conditions. Access and site requirements are discussed under ***Shoreline Use Permit/Licenses*** *on page 5.*
Public Recreation	red	44 miles 16%	These areas are specifically designated in the project's Master Plan for present, or future, intensive recreational development. No permits for private uses are issued in areas with this designation.
Protected Shoreline	yellow	99 miles 36%	Areas designated to maintain or restore aesthetic values; to protect fish and wildlife habitat and other environmental values; to protect cultural, historical, and archeological resources; to protect channels for navigation; to restrict structures from water too shallow for navigation, subject to excessive siltation, erosion, rapid dewatering, or exposure to high wind, wave or currents are allocated under this category. No permits for new private structures or utilities will be authorized in these areas. However, permits may be granted for minor modifications to vegetation, such as creating a path to the shoreline if the Corps determines the activity will not adversely impact the environmental values or physical characteristics that required the area to be protected.
Prohibited Access	orange	1 mile 1%	Areas reserved for project operation are allocated under this classification and include lands located in the proximity of the dam, lock, hydropower structure, and operational areas.

Permits

Certain activities affecting the project waters of Walter F. George Lake and its tributaries such as, but not limited to, constructing docks and walkways; intake and discharge structures; stabilizing shoreline banks; and dredging may be authorized pursuant to Section 10 of the *River and Harbor Act of 1899*, *(33 U.S.C. 403)* and Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act*, *(33 U.S.C. 1344)*. Other activities affecting public lands such as installing utility rights-of-ways, constructing steps, walkways, undertaking erosion control, and performing vegetative modification may be evaluated and permitted through the Walter F. George Lake Shoreline Management Plan. *Permit activities require specific written approval prior to commencement of work. Requests originate at the Walter F. George Natural Resources Site Office.*

Regional/General Permit Authority

In the past, all activities affecting project waters on Walter F. George Lake were authorized by issuance of a Department of the Army Permit through the Corps regulatory Districts in Savannah, Georgia, and Mobile, Alabama as defined under their jurisdiction. Currently, the Savannah and Mobile Districts issue Georgia Regional and Alabama General permit authority to the Site Manager for minor work and structures in or affecting the waters of the United States within the limits of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walter F. George Lake, Georgia and Alabama. The scope of these permits include only those activities which are considered to be minor in nature and would cause only minimal individual and cumulative environmental impacts. These activities are identified as:

- Initial and Maintenance Dredging
- Intake Structures in Navigable Waters of the United States
- Discharge Structures in Navigable Waters of the United States where the Effluent from the Structures does not Require an NPDES Permit
- Construction and/or Maintenance of Fixed Structures

The first three activities listed above require a cultural resource assessment of the upland disposal areas if the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer, (SHPO), (GA & AL), determines that there may be a cultural resource concern for a particular project site. All proposals must be in accordance with the guidelines and limitations set forth in the conditions of the regional/general permits, the Walter F. George Lake Shoreline Management Plan, and be approved by Walter F. George Natural Resources Site Manager. These minor activities are administered through the Walter F. George Lake Shoreline Management Plan. Copies of the permit activities are available upon request by contacting the Walter F. George Natural Resources Site Office.

Nationwide Permits

Nationwide permits are a form of general permit designed to regulate activities with minimal impact on a nationwide basis. The authority to evaluate and authorize permits for activities of a minor nature relative to Section 10 and Section 404 is delegated to the field offices. Permits are implemented through the shoreline use or specified acts permit format. Currently, the most common activity permitted at Walter F. George Lake through the Nationwide Permit program is the performance of minor dredging, the construction of retaining walls, and the installation of rip-rap for bank stabilization.

// Shoreline Use Permit/License

Shoreline Use Permit/Licenses are instruments used to authorize private structures or activities of any kind affecting project lands or waters of Walter F. George Lake. Boats do not require a Shoreline Use Permit, however they may not be abandoned, stored or left unattended upon project lands or waters. Vessels may be moored at a permittee's dock facility, mooring post or mooring buoy. Dock facilities, adjacent to public property, include floating "flat-T" boat docks, boat docks with slip, and independent fixed docks where applicable. Fixed piers are permitted on waters adjacent to easement property. Permit/Licenses may also be issued for vegetative modification, specified utilities right-of-ways, improved steps/walkways, and other land based activities. Permit/Licenses may be issued for a term up to five years, are temporary in nature and have expiration dates, *(see Exhibit XVIII for Renewal Form).* Permit/Licenses contain specific conditions listed on the application. Other special conditions may be listed on the front of the permit in a space provided. Application procedures for Shoreline Use Permit/Licenses are described in *Exhibit II*. It is highly recommended that the applicant become familiar with all permit conditions prior to completing the application*, (Exhibit III).*

Only one Permit/License may be issued per adjacent landowner for a boat docking facility. Multiple persons listed on a deed or lease agreement will be considered as one adjacent landowner. An individual may have two Permit/Licenses for vegetation modification at two separate locations not to exceed 300 feet measured along the government property line. Current permit holders who purchase property that is associated with previously permitted facilities may be issued a permit for those facilities only. Further permittable activities may not be considered for approval. Permit/Licenses are not issued for commercial or speculative purposes in order to enhance the selling potential of adjacent private property. Permits will not be issued to minors.

Applicants will be billed for specified permitted activities prior to issuance of a Permit/ License according with *SADvR 1130-2-14*, dated 14 May 1985, or other appropriate regulations. A fee schedule, *(Exhibit XII),* published separately, is available from the Natural Resources Site Office and is also provided during the application process. Fees are subject to change. Fees will be prorated for Permit/License items which are issued for periods less than five years, with a minimum charge of $10.00 for a single item Permit/License, *(see Exhibit XVIII for Add-on Form).*

The issuance of Shoreline Use Permit/Licenses does not convey any personal property rights or private exclusive use rights of project lands or waters. The permittee may take lawful

precautions to protect their personal property from theft, vandalism, and trespass. The public's right to legitimate and lawful use of project lands and waters will in no way be precluded by the permit holder.

Permit/Licenses are non-transferable and become null and void upon sale or transfer of the permittee's adjacent private property, sale or transfer of the permittee's permitted facility or death of the permittee and legal spouse. If ownership of adjacent private property or permitted facilities is sold or transferred, the permittee or prospective new owner must notify the Natural Resources Site Office prior to the finalization. The new owner must apply for a Shoreline Use Permit/License within 14 days after finalization or remove the facility and restore the use area within 30 days from the date of ownership transfer. Recommendations made by Corps field personnel relative to the issuance of permits are subject to review by management personnel. All applications for Permit/Licenses on Walter F. George Lake must be approved by the Natural Resources Site Manager or a designated representative prior to beginning of any work on project lands/waters. If the applicant desires to discuss or appeal a decision, the individual should follow the process shown in *Exhibit XV*.

All Shoreline Use Permit/Licenses are issued on a first come basis in accordance with Title 36, *Code of Federal Regulations*, *Chapter III, Part 327, and ER 405-1-12, Chapter 8*.

"Grandfather" Activities, Structures & Facilities. "Grandfather" status allows activities, structures and facilities authorized under previous policies and prior permits to remain even though permits for new activities, structures, or facilities of the same type no longer are issued. These previous commitments will be honored by the Corps. However, they will be reviewed to determine the conditions for complying with their "grandfather" status at either the time of renewal; when ownership changes; if a permit is revoked; following the death of a permittee and spouse; at anytime the structure is found in disrepair; or if the activity ceases. "Grandfather" items include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Docks & Appurtenant Structures.** *Public Law 99-662* prohibits forced removal of previously authorized docks and appurtenant structures, *(improved walkways, utility lines, boat ramps, etc.)*, which were at their originally authorized locations on or before November 17, 1986, providing they are maintained in usable and safe condition; they do not occasion a threat to life or property; and the holder of the Permit/License substantially complies with the terms of the existing Permit/License. However, replacement flotation must meet all current requirements, handrails must be installed as required, and electrical systems must meet the requirements described under the National Electric Code. The "grandfather" status can be overridden when deemed necessary for public purposes, for navigational use, or for flood control. The public law does not exempt the permittee from complying with the conditions of the permit or any permitting requirements.

Access Requirements. Applicants for Shoreline Use Permit/Licenses must have unrestricted direct access from private property to project lands and/or waters. Public roads do not serve as legitimate access. Proof of access must be satisfied by submitting a copy of the

recorded deed or lease agreement with the application package.

Site Requirements. Newly permitted activities must conform with the shoreline management allocation map, *(Exhibit I),* and be located on project lands/waters which are allocated as "Limited Development." Permits will not be issued in areas determined to be wetlands, to be environmentally sensitive, or to have cultural, historical, or archaeological significance. The location of the activities must not cause a safety hazard to the applicant/user or general public. Specific site requirements for permittable activities and structures are defined under their respective sections.

Designs For Persons With Disabilities. Special deviations from the design requirements for dock structures, walkways, ramps and steps, or limited access to the shoreline, may be permitted to accommodate disabled members of the adjacent landowner's household. To qualify for special consideration, the individual must be eligible for federal or state assistance or have other justifying documentation. Every effort will be made to grant permits to those who meet the eligibility requirements. However, site conditions may limit the Corps' ability to accommodate every applicant.

Dock Facility Definitions & Requirements.

Permit/Licenses may be approved for boat dock facilities to be used for mooring a vessel and storing gear essential to the use of that vessel in accordance with *ER 1130-2-406*. Dock structures over easement and fee waters may be fixed or floating. Fixed dock surfaces, under normal pool conditions, 190 feet M.S.L., should be no less than 2 feet above the waters surface. During low pool conditions, 185 feet M.S.L., a fixed dock can be situated 7 feet above the waters surface. Docks shall be limited to either a square or rectangular configuration. Standard planning forms are illustrated in *Exhibit IV*. For the purposes of consistent measurements, width is the portion of the dock parallel to the shoreline, and length is the portion of the dock perpendicular to the shoreline. All docking facilities must be walkway accessible from the shoreline.

Boat Dock with Slip: a structure with a boat mooring slip*(s),* with (or without) a roof, without sides/walls, and with (or without) a second level deck. As a standard, the maximum dimensions shall not exceed 680 square feet, including the slip. If the permittee can show justification, and only if shoreline space permits, dimensions of a boat dock with slip can be increased, not to exceed 900 square feet. Applicants must submit a copy of their boat registration indicating the size of their boat to determine the boat slip dimensions. Installing chain-link fencing, or similar material, around the slip for security purposes may be approved. Finger walkways surrounding the boat slip may have a maximum width of 8 feet on one side and a minimum width of 4 feet on the other two sides, not to exceed 6 feet.

Flat-T Boat Dock*:* an open sided structure, with (or without) a roof, and without a boat mooring slip. The minimum dimensions for length and width is 8 feet by 8 feet; 64 square feet. As a standard, the maximum dimensions shall not exceed 240 square feet. If the permittee can show justification, and only if shoreline space permits, dimensions of a flat-T boat dock can be

increased not to exceed 360 square feet.

- **Location.** The location for any proposed new dock structure must be at the point of the shoreline nearest the center of the adjacent landowner's property. Deviations left or right from the center of the adjacent landowners property may be considered if water depth, spacing or other site conditions are a problem. Cross-over situations or the placement of facilities on public property past the left or right of the permittee's lot*(s)* are strongly discouraged and generally not permitted. Only under the most extenuating situations may a cross-over be approved by the Natural Resources Site Manager.

- **Spacing.** The area considered for a new dock structure must provide for a 50-foot buffer spacing between the proposed dock and any existing dock or mooring buoy at 190 MSL. This buffer is from the nearest point of the proposed dock to the nearest point of other existing dock or mooring buoy. The entire dock and walkway must not extend over 100 feet without prior approval, or over 1/3 the distance across the tributary stream, measured from the 190 foot elevation mark on the shoreline of both sides. The length of any dock, including any moored vessel, must not interfere with the navigation channel of any tributary stream at any time. Approved new docks shall be placed so as to have the least impact on navigation.

- **Water Depth.** Docking facilities may be allowed in less than 4 feet of water provided that the permittee understands that the water fluctuates five feet and that the dock may be on or over dry land during low water periods. A statement must be written on the Permit/License to this effect and the permittee must initial beside the statement. Site evaluations will be based on the normal pool elevation of 190 MSL.

- **Structural Support System.** The permittee is responsible for assuring that the dock is designed, constructed, and maintained to ensure safety and structural integrity. Any material used in the construction of the dock facility must be noted on the plans and approved by the Corps before construction begins. Construction materials commonly used for joist, rafters, studding, and decking are wood and/or metal. All wood construction shall be either pressure treated or decay resistant. Creosote, arsenic, or penta treated wood is not acceptable. Marine plywood may be used for decking. Metal should primarily be used for support functions, not decking. If used, metal decking must have a non-slip tread. All hardware *(nails, bolts, screws, etc.)* must be galvanized or stainless steel. All nails, bolts, or screws must securely fasten supports and decking to maintain structural stability.

  Unsafe dock conditions include, but are not limited to, protruding nails, bolts, or screws; partially decayed or slick materials; ripped, jagged, sharp, pointed and splintered materials; loose or missing supports and decking; and loss of structural strength due to rust or broken joints. These and other unsafe conditions require correction in accordance with current standards. *Facility maintenance requirements are described on page 14*.

- **Dock Flotation**. Float and the flotation material for all docks and boat mooring buoys shall be fabricated of materials manufactured for marine use. The float and its flotation material shall be 100% warranted for a minimum of 8 years against sinking, becoming waterlogged, cracking, peeling, fragmenting, or losing beads. All floats shall resist puncture and penetration and shall not be subject to damage by animals under normal conditions for the area. All floats and the flotation material used in them shall be fire resistant. Any float which is within 40 feet of a line carrying fuel shall be 100% impervious to water and fuel. The use of new or recycled plastic or metal drums or non-compartmentalized air containers for encasement or floats is prohibited. Existing floats are authorized until it or its flotation material is no longer serviceable, at which time it shall be replaced with a float that meets the conditions listed above. For any floats installed after the effective date of the specification, repair or replacement shall be required when it or its flotation material no longer performs its designated function or it fails to meet the specifications for which it was originally warranted.

  It is recommended that permittees and applicants obtain manufacturer's specifications to determine if a product meets the above criteria. Once obtained, this information should be submitted to the Natural Resources Site Office for review.

- **Safety Reflectors.** Owners of new, reassigned or reissued boat dock facilities are required to supply, install and maintain at least four, three inch diameter orange reflectors. These reflectors are to be placed on each side of the front corners of the dock, visible at night to vessel spotlights. Reflectors must be replaced when they become missing or damaged beyond their effectiveness.

- **Dock Anchorage.** Floating facilities shall be securely attached to the shore in accordance with the approved plans by means of mooring which do not obstruct general public use of the shoreline or adversely affect the natural terrain or vegetation. Fixed docks are anchored by the very nature of their construction. As the lake fluctuates, floating docks glide up and down, , on guide pilings set in the lake bottom. This piling must be driven to the minimum depth of 4 feet into the lake bottom. The tops of these pilings must be at an elevation of 196 MSL or higher. Minimum piling size permitted is four inches inside diameter. In conjunction with or in place of the guide pilings, floating docks may be anchored by a cable to a wooden or metal post set in the ground above 190 MSL on the shoreline. Trees or other natural features shall not be used as anchors. Cables must be galvanized or stainless steel and shall not obstruct use of the shoreline or otherwise create a safety hazard.

- **Dock Walkways.** Unless otherwise approved, walkways shall not be more than six feet wide or less than four feet wide. Handrail requirements must be met for all walkways accessing a boat dock facility. Fixed docks and fixed walkway must be constructed and maintained in accordance with Alabama General Permit ALG07 or Georgia Regional Permit RP0045. Fixed docks and fixed walkways must be a minimum of 2

feet above 190 MSL *(Mean Sea Level)*.

Floating docks shall have a minimum 14 foot hinged section walkway between the fixed walkway section and the floating dock section. The hinged section of the walkway allows for fluctuations in the water level.

All walking surfaces associated with the dock shall be kept free of obstructions that could create a slipping or tripping hazard. Carpeting may not be used on walking surfaces.

- **Handrail.** Due to safety considerations, existing and new walkways one foot or higher above the ground, or over water surfaces, shall have a standard 39-42 inch high continuous and solid rigid handrail with an intermediate rail at 19-22 inches high on both sides of the walkway/steps. Handrails shall be able to withstand 200 pounds of pressure in any direction at any point. Handrails are required on all steps. Vertical posts *(spindles),* can be used in place of mid-rails if they are 12 inches or less apart.

- **Boat Dock Roofs & Sundecks.** Roofs may be gabled *(recommended)* or flat and may overhang the back portion of the dock up to 18 inches. The lowest portion of the roof should be a minimum of 7 feet and a maximum of 8 feet, unless special conditions exist. Construction materials may include either wood and shingle, or metal. If a second level sundeck is constructed, it shall not have a roof and must be encircled on the outer edge by an approved handrail with an intermediate rail, or seating that is a minimum of 36 inches high. A certified engineer or licensed professional within this field of expertise must certify the maximum load limit the structure will support. Access steps leading to the deck shall not be in spiral or ladder form. A plate showing the weight capacity and maximum number of persons must be clearly displayed.

- **Dock Storage Locker.** Enclosed storage will be limited to the maximum dimensions of eight feet by four feet by three feet, or 96 cubic feet. The storage locker may not interfere with walking space. Storage is authorized for keeping water related recreation equipment, not chemicals, paints, flammable liquids, batteries, etc.

- **Dock Furniture, Household Items, etc.** Although dock facilities are permitted for the purpose of providing moorage for vessels, it is recognized that docks may be used for other leisure activities where furniture is desired. Permanently mounted chairs and/or benches are permitted on boat docks, however, such items may not impede safe access on the structure. Each item must leave a minimum of four feet of clear walkway on all sides.

  Indoor furniture or household type items that denote habitation (*such as, but not limited to, couches, stoves, sinks, and refrigerators*) are prohibited. Decorative items, house and garden plants, ornamental lights, and other similar items are prohibited on dock facilities and project lands/waters. Only one ladder for access to and from the water or boat is permitted on a dock. One flag pole is permitted on a dock. Diving boards, slides or other playground type equipment are not permitted on docks.

- **Boat Hoists.** Regulatory guidance from the Mobile District Office on the use of boat hoists dated August 13, 1987, states that boat hoists may be permitted if the hoist lifts its load independently with no additional stress to the dock, or if documentation is provided by a certified professional engineer that the dock and hoist mechanism are specifically designed to support the additional weight of the specific boat to be hoisted. Hoists previously certified will not require re-certification at renewal unless the hoist mechanism or the support structure has been modified, replaced or is in need of major repair. The applicant will be required to submit a statement verifying the initial certification and that no changes or alterations have been made. See *Exhibit V* for the boat hoist certification form.

  Since the Mobile District did not have specific regulatory guidance in effect prior to August 13, 1987, and certification by professional engineers is not probable for many older structures on Walter F. George Lake, the current policy is to grant "grandfathered" status to hoists installed prior to this date. This status will remain in effect unless the hoist is in a state of major disrepair, it creates a safety hazard, or it is no longer functional.

- **Personal Watercraft Lifts *(PWC).*** Two lifts may be approved per boat dock facility.

  - **Facility Dependent Lifts:** This type lift is dependent on the boat dock structure itself, meaning it has to be lifted out of the water and pivot onto the dock for dry storage. The Personal Watercraft will not be permitted to remain suspended, from a lift, over the water unless it is within a slip. The "structure dependent" lifts are allowed to sit on walkways that are a minimum of eight feet wide. In addition to increasing the flotation or additional support, there must exist adequate deck space. Proper certification by a licensed professional, certifying that the structure can support the weight of the vessels, must be submitted for approval. *(See Boat Hoists)*.

  - **Independent Floating Lifts:** This type lift is only permitted to float on the shoreline side of floating dock structure and must be securely fastened to the floating section. This particular type lift is not permitted to be attached to any stationary structures, including but not limited to the access walkway leading to a floating facility.

- **Mooring Buoy.** A mooring buoy will be permitted in limited development areas. Only one buoy will be allowed per individual, and will be in addition to any dock facility the permittee may have at that site. Mooring buoys must comply with the "Uniform State Water Safety Marking System" which requires all mooring buoys to be white with a blue band and float a minimum of 18 inches above the water surface. Also, flotation type requirements apply. *Exhibit XIII*.

- **Group Owned/Community Docks.** A group owned/community dock is defined as a flat dock for courtesy mooring only. The goal is to limit the proliferation of dock facilities on the shoreline. Property owners of a specific subdivision may establish a homeowners association for the purpose of obtaining a Permit/License of a jointly

owned courtesy docking facilities. Common access to project lands/waters from the subdivision must exist. A copy of the recorded deed and plat must be submitted to show the common access. Applications must include a copy of the homeowners association agreement with names and addresses of each member. One or more members will be listed as the surveillance party on the application to be available for short-notice call. Normally only one dock may be permitted per association within the subdivision. Requests for additional docks may be authorized, if justified, on a case by case basis. Applications for group owned/community docks are subject to the same general access and site requirements as Shoreline Use Permits/Licenses.

Landbased Facility Requirements.

Proposed landbased activities will be considered on public property from the common boundary shared by the project and the adjacent landowner to the shoreline. Cross-over of adjacent neighboring facilities will not be approved. *See page 6 for information on the "grandfather" status.*

- **Electrical Service.** Installation of electric service on project lands and waters at Walter F. George Lake must comply with the "National Fire Protection Codes" and the "National Electric Code", with particular attention to the Marinas, Boatyard and Wet Locations sections, (*Ref: Article 555 of NFPA 70, and NFPA 303*). *Exhibit VI* reflects current requirements that may have minor changes made by the Corps of Engineers to either meet or exceed the NFPA and NEC requirements.

  Regardless of age, condition, or "grandfather" status, all electrical service must be certified by a state-licensed electrician to meet the NEC which includes installing ground fault interruption (GFI) protection. Electrical service extended to the dock, including any receptacles on public property, must be weatherproof and have ground fault protection as described in *Exhibit VI*. All electric line plans must be signed by a state licensed electrician or electrical engineer or equivalent, certifying that the plan meets all specified requirements and the electric line has been installed according to the plan. The certifying individual must provide a copy of their "Class I, Class II or higher Georgia License" or "Alabama General or Electrical Contractor License" with the Permit/License. The electrical system must be certified by an approved electrician upon initial installation, change of ownership, or at which time the system is modified, tampered with, or damaged in any way. The system can be self-certified at re-issuance, by the owner, if the electrical system has remained unchanged. A Corps representative may request, at whatever time, the electrical system be certified by an approved electrician if the system shows the slightest visible sign of damage or alteration.

  The Natural Resource Site Office will require immediate removal or disconnection of any electrical service or equipment that is not certified, does not meet code, or is not safely maintained.

- **Water Lines, Pumps & Drain Lines.** Waterlines must be installed underground or securely attached underneath walkways. The waterline must not exceed two inches in diameter. Only one water faucet and one shower nozzle is permitted on a boat dock facility. Shower nozzles are not permitted under covered docks. Water faucets should be low profile and inconspicuous. More the one water faucet, on public property, may be approved upon request. Permanent sprinkler systems are not permitted on government property. The use of hoses with portable sprinklers is permitted in support of authorized vegetative modification on public property.

  Pumps associated with waterlines must be electric and may not exceed 110 volts, two horsepower. Pumps can be installed on the dock, off to the side of a walkway, or on a small ground platform. Pumps are not to be submerged.

  Drainage pipes for handling surface run-off will be reviewed on a case by case basis. All such pipes must be buried; open ditches are not permitted, *(Exhibit XIV)*.

- **Other Utilities.** Telephone lines, jacks, intercoms, etc., may be authorized for use on the dock structure. Telephone lines must be installed in the same trench as the electrical line. The use of cordless phones is encouraged. Satellite dishes are not permitted on public property

- **Improved Access.** Improved access is defined as the installation of steps and/or walkway to provide normal safe access to the shoreline on public property. Improved access is needed when steep slopes or consistently wet areas make it unsafe to walk to the shoreline by using a natural pathway. Submittal and approval of plans will be required before work begins. *Exhibit VII* illustrates standards for improved access.

  All steps/walkways should be constructed as near to the ground as practical and less than one foot high if possible. Steps/walkways, unless otherwise approved, shall not be more the six feet wide and no less than four feet wide, and they must comply with the handrail regulations if they are higher than one foot above the ground. Building materials may consist of redwood, cedar, cypress, pressure treated pine, brick, pea gravel, or minimum 3-inch thick concrete. Creosote, arsenic, or penta treated wood is not acceptable.

  Footbridges may be authorized if existing conditions warrant their use for safety reasons such as crossing ditches, gullies, streams, etc., if it is necessary in order for the permittee to gain access to the shoreline.

  To insure safe access to a dock facility from the shoreline edge, a minimum number of steps, determined on a case by case basis, may be permitted with no administrative fees charged. However, one or more steps extending landward from those necessary for safe access will require a separate charge.

- **Bank Stabilization.** Bank stabilization is defined as minor shoreline protection necessary to prevent erosion by using vegetative planting techniques, installing rip-rap material, or constructing retaining walls. Permits may be authorized by the Natural Resources Site Office for bank stabilization, as defined under the Nationwide Permit Program, *Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations, part 330*. Plans for bank stabilization must be submitted and approved prior to commencement. For requirements and illustrations, *(Exhibit VIII)*. Types of typical erosion control structures and methods used on this lake are:

    - Revetments *(Rip Rap)*
    - Wooden, Vinyl, Segmental Block or Steel Retaining Walls
    - Minor Earthwork *(for severe cases)*
    - Vegetative Planting

- **Mooring Post.** Mooring posts will be permitted in limited development area when there is a need to secure a vessel safely. Only one post will be allowed per individual. The post must be installed above 190 MSL and consist of a minimum 4 X4 pressure treated wood or 4 inch steel post. The 50 foot rule that applies to the minimum distance between floating facilities does not apply to mooring posts *(Exhibit XIII)*.

Facility Maintenance.

All permitted facilities must be used and maintained by the permittee in a safe condition at all times. Unsafe conditions shall be corrected immediately. If deficiencies are not corrected, the owner may be required to remove the facility at his/her expense.

- **Minor Repair.** Minor repair does not require replacement or removal of the facility from the project. Using the facility without maintenance should not be life threatening and can be repaired with minimal effort.
- **Major Repair.** Major repair normally requires removal of the facility from the project. Using the facility without maintenance is life threatening and usually has severe structural damage. If the facility was "grandfathered," authorization for a new facility will be permitted under the current standards.

Vegetative Modification.

A healthy, uneven aged forest capable of supporting recreational use and adequate understory vegetation for forest regeneration is essential to the water quality and natural beauty of Walter F. George Lake. *Public Law 86-717, Forest Conservation Act*, requires that, "reservoir areas owned in fee under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Engineers be developed and maintained so as to encourage, promote, and assure fully adequate and dependable future resources of readily available timber through sustained yield programs, reforestation, and accepted conservation practices." These are the management objectives of the

vegetative modification plan at Walter F. George Lake. Adjacent landowners are encouraged to assist the Natural Resources Site Office in maintaining the natural environment and abundant resources of the project.

To be eligible for a vegetative modification permit, Shoreline Use Permit/License requirements as described on pages 5 & 6 must be met. Vegetative modification includes, but is not limited to, cutting, pruning, removal, or planting of vegetation. New permit requests on public lands owned in fee simple by the Corps of Engineers are subject to current policy and regulation.

- **Limited Underbrushing.** The purpose of limited underbrushing is to provide safe access to the shoreline with minimal alteration to the existing vegetation. Permits are not issued to create vistas, for speculative purposes, etc. Limited underbrushing is defined as selective removal of shrubs, brush, vines, or small trees five inches or less in diameter at the ground level, and periodic maintenance removal of re-growth. Spacing between trees will not exceed 8 feet. No native "ornamentals" such as dogwood, magnolia, etc., may be removed unless specified in the permit. Low hanging limbs within underbrushed areas may be pruned up to one third of the tree's height or to 10 feet high, whichever is less. Leaf litter is essential to erosion control and soil moisture conservation, therefore removal of mulch is discouraged. Hand tools, including power hand tools, and small riding mowers, may be used to accomplish the underbrushing. Vegetative matter resulting from authorized modifications may be removed or left in place to decompose. Permits will not be issued for prescribed burning on public property, although natural material removed through authorized underbrushing or special permits may be burned on site in small piles. Such burning must comply with all current state regulations. The use of herbicides and pesticides on government property is prohibited unless prior approved through the Natural Resources Site Office under a Specified Acts Permit.

- **Vegetative Planting.** Permittees may plant native species of trees and shrubs with prior approval, provided they are located in a random fashion, native to the site, and would not negatively affect the surrounding resource. Any seeding, sprigging or sodding of grass must be approved, under a Specified Acts Permit, for species and planting method prior to planting, *Exhibit XVII*

  Non-native or exotic species may not be planted on public land. Flower or vegetable gardens are not authorized. See *Exhibit IX* for a list of vegetation native to the Walter F. George Lake area.

- **Permit Authorization.** As with any activity on public property, vegetative modification must be authorized by the Natural Resource Site Office and an approved permit received by the applicant prior to commencement of the work. The permit process will be initiated through an on-site meeting with a park ranger to develop a proposed vegetative modification plan and to identify where underbrushing can be authorized. Applicants may be required to submit a site plan drawing *(8 ½" x 11"),* showing the

relationship of the proposed activity to the common boundary and the shoreline. A permit does not convey private exclusive use privileges, and public property is open for use by the general public.

Shoreline Management Violations.

Rules and regulations governing the shoreline management program are enforced through *Title 36, part 327, Code of Federal Regulations*. Violations will require corrective action and may result in revocation or modification of permit privileges, payment of collateral forfeiture, mandatory appearance before a U.S. Magistrate or stronger enforcement action. Generally, violations are noted and addressed when facilities/activities are inspected prior to either renewing the permit or reassigning the permit to a new owner. However, permitted facilities and activities are subject to periodic inspection by authorized Corps representatives. The Natural Resource Site Office will notify the permittee of any deficiencies and establish a schedule for their correction. No deviation or changes from approved plans will be allowed without prior written approval of the Natural Resource Site Office. Existing violations not yet identified will be noted and addressed as manpower and work priorities allow.

Specified Acts Permits

The Specified Acts Permit is a non-fee, short-term permit issued for a specified one-time act for minor activities on project lands/waters. The permit will detail the authorized work including methods to be employed; types of equipment to be used; and time frames for completing, locating and restoring public land. Drawings, plans, or photographs may be required to process the permit. Specified Acts Permits are not issued for activities that will damage, destroy, or significantly alter public lands or features. Each request will be reviewed based on current environmental laws and regulations, *(Exhibit XI)*.

Dredging/Silt Removal. As described under Permits on *page 4*, requests for initial or maintenance dredging on Walter F. George Lake may be approved provided conditions of the Georgia regional or Alabama General permit, and the Shoreline Management Plan are met. Requests for initial or maintenance dredging of material will be considered in shoreline areas allocated as limited development to improve navigation to the shoreline, an existing dock structure or boat ramp. All work must be performed within that portion of the waterway adjacent to the applicant's property. "Piecemeal" dredging activities are specifically excluded from this authorization. The activity must be a single and complete project. The dredged material shall not be placed on Corps managed lands *(easement or fee)*. The dredged material shall be deposited in an upland area and properly confined in such a manner that the sediment will not re-enter the waterway or interfere with natural drainage. No dredging or deposition of dredged material may be authorized in wetlands or submersed grass beds.

Hazardous Trees. Dead trees play an important role within the natural element by providing habitat for wildlife. However, if the location of a dead tree endangers life or property, a permit may be issued to the adjacent landowner to cut and/or remove the tree from public property. These permits may also be issued, on a case by case basis, in restricted and protected

classified areas.

Vehicle Operation on Public Property. In order to provide a means of hauling debris or litter from public property, or installing or maintaining permitted facilities, tranportation onto public property can be authorized by the Natural Resources Site Manager or their representitive, on a case by case bases. Proper measures must to taken to ensure that public property is not adversely affected.

Herbicide Applications. A Specified Acts Permit may be issued to adjacent property owners, retaining a current Permit/License to underbrush, to apply an EPA and Corps of Engineers approved chemical to government land or water for weed control. A Ranger will determine application areas before a permit issued.

Other Activities. Other activities authorized by the Specified Acts Permit may include, but are not limited to, installation of wildlife structures, temporary tent structures for gatherings on public property, or temporary BBQ pits, as long as the property is restored to it's previous condition.

⁄⁄ Boundary Management & Encroachment Resolution

The boundary line does not uniformly follow a specific contour, but consists of straight lines between surveyed points. It is maintained in accordance with standard survey techniques currently used by licensed surveyors. The boundary line is marked by placement of monuments in the ground and "witnessed" by red paint on trees. *The witness trees marked in red do not represent the exact boundary line, but simply indicate that the line is nearby.* Boundary line markings are illustrated in *Exhibit III*. Since the boundary line is a common boundary between the Corps and the adjacent landowner, both parties assume responsibility for the line.

The Corps, however, does not assume responsibility for identifying the line upon request. The Corps recommends that private surveys be obtained by using a licensed surveyor prior to purchase of property adjacent to government land. If discrepancies with the boundary line are identified, contact the Natural Resources Site Office to pursue resolution. The alteration of any kind to monuments or other government boundary line markings is a violation of *Title 36*, *Code of Federal Regulations*, *Part 327.*

An "encroachment," as defined in *ER 405-1-12*, pertains to a structure or improvement built, installed or established which interferes with a real estate interest of the United States, either a fee interest or an easement if such is prohibited in the deed. An encroachment has occurred where the structure or improvement extends over, across, in or upon lands in which the Government owns a real estate interest which would prohibit such, and the structure or improvement has not been approved. Encroachments are generally classified as either minor or major.

Minor Encroachments. Minor encroachments are those items of unauthorized personal

property that are mobile and moveable, not attached to a structure. Minor encroachments include but are not limited to swings, grills, picnic tables, benches, gardens, and hammocks, parked vehicles, firewood, lumber, etc

Major Encroachments. Major encroachments are those items of unauthorized real property that are fixed and include but are not limited to any portion of a residence, shed, barn, or building. Other examples include septic tanks, drain fields, decks and porches, outhouses, and storage buildings.

Adjacent landowners are encouraged to build structures a distance sufficiently away from the boundary line to allow proper maintenance and to reduce the possibility of subsequent encroachments when adding decks, steps, porches, patios, etc. Deed restrictions and county ordinances should be checked to determine if set back requirements exist. Prudence should be exercised to insure that structures and related items do not extend over or onto public property.

Easements

In addition to lands purchased in fee title, the United States *(Corps of Engineers*) purchased easements on some portions of private land surrounding the Walter F. George Lake. The most common easements in place give the United States Government the right to either perpetually or occasionally overflow, flood, and submerge properties which lie below the easement contour. The acquired easement estate specifically prohibits structures for human habitation and requires a permit for all other structures/improvements. Permits for specific items are required in order to insure that the intent of the flowage easement estates is not compromised, *(Exhibit XVI)*.

Other types of easements do exist and landowners around Walter F. George Lake are encouraged to investigate any restrictions that may encumber private property before purchasing or beginning construction activities. Information on easements is available at the Natural Resources Site Office.

Natural Resources Management

Management of all natural resources is integrated with other project activities within a multiple use concept. The Walter F. George Natural Resource Management Staff will initiate progressive natural resource programs wherever feasible to maintain the project in a productive state.

Aquatic Plant Management. It is the policy of the Natural Resources Site Manager at Walter F. George Lake to manage aquatic plant communities in ways that protect project purposes and benefits. The goal, therefore, is to provide an environment favoring native aquatic plant species and controlling exotic specie problems. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary to reduce exotic species to the background, or non-problematic levels, eventually returning the aquatic plant community to one dominated by desirable native species.

Forest Management. *Public Law 86-717*, as described on *page 15*, directs all land management objectives at Walter F. George Lake. The program gives emphasis to the enhancement of wildlife habitat and the development of natural, native forest ecotypes. Harvesting of timber will be designed to further these objectives.

Wildlife Management. Populations of both game and non-game wildlife species are present throughout the Walter F. George Lake project. Hunting areas located on Walter F. George Lake consist of Corps and the State of Georgia managed lands that are not expressly closed to hunting. Examples of areas closed to hunting are developed recreation areas, marinas, operations areas, areas immediately adjacent to subdivisions, and other high-use areas. When hunting, caution must be greatly exercised while immediately adjacent to the above named areas.

Fisheries Management. Walter F. George Lake contains a variety of fish species classified in one of three categories: game, commercial, and others. Fish attractors are in place and managed in a joint effort between the State of Georgia and the Corps within Georgia waters.

Water Quality. Water quality in Walter F. George Lake has a direct bearing on all facets of lake management. The goal is to promote water quality adequate for safe and healthful public use and of a quality to enhance desirable aquatic life.

The Resource Management Staff complies with all applicable federal and state water quality laws, regulations, and standards as they relate to Walter F. George Lake. Uniformed Corps personnel are authorized to enforce provisions of *Title 36, CFR, part 327.9* which prohibits the discharge of pollutants into project waters or onto project land. Jurisdiction and enforcement of water quality is entrusted to multiple governmental agencies having different and overlapping regulatory responsibilities. Pollution findings are and shall be forwarded to agencies with appropriate jurisdiction when this office is notified of possible violations.

The States of Georgia and Alabama have the authority and responsibility to enforce State water quality laws. The States are also authorized by the Environmental Protection Agency to enforce the Federal Clean Water Act.

Endangered Species. The *Endangered Species Act of 1973*, as amended states in part, "all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered and threatened species and shall utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act." The goal of the Walter F. George Lake Natural Resource Management Staff is to provide protection and special habitat management for federally listed endangered and threatened plant and animal species identified on the project. No permits will be issued that conflict with the enhancement or preservation of the habitat of endangered and/or a threatened plant and animal species. Any permit issued in violation of the Endangered Species Act, either past or present, will be modified or rescinded. For a list of endangered species known to exist or range in the proximity of Walter F. George Lake at the date of this plan, *Exhibit X.*

Wetlands. *Executive Orders 11988, Floodplain Management, and 11990, Protection of Wetlands,* address the actions Federal agencies must take to:

- identify and protect wetlands and floodplains.
- minimize the risk of flood loss and destruction of wetlands.
- preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of floodplains and wetlands.

Wetland areas may occur both above and below 190 feet MSL *(normal pool elevation)*. Activities in these areas could significantly impact the natural ecosystem and may be prohibited. Contact the Natural Resources Site Office for information on jurisdiction and delineation of wetlands.

Cultural/Historical/Archaeological Resources

The *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, the *Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974* and the *Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979* were enacted by Congress mandating that federal agencies protect cultural, historical, and archaeological sites and to provide for proper recovery of site data if warranted. If determined that a previously issued permit infringes upon or impacts one of these sites, the permit may be rescinded. Permits will not be issued in areas determined to have cultural, historical or archaeological significance. The use of metal detectors or other land-based electronic or non-electronic detection devices are prohibited except by written permission from the Natural Resources Site Office.

Administrative Review

In order to resolve situations relative to permit issues not specifically addressed in this Shoreline Management Plan, an administrative review will be conducted by the Walter F. George Natural Resources Site Office. Determinations will be made based on current public laws, policies, and other regulatory guidance and standard practices at other similar projects.

Conclusions

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is charged to protect and manage the Walter F. George Lake project within its scope of authority while providing recreational opportunities for the entire public. It is the intent of this Shoreline Management Plan to provide the maximum benefit to the public within the physical limitations of the project. This intent must be balanced within the authorized purposes of the project and existing operations. The Natural Resources Site Office will continue to monitor the needs of project users and recommend revisions to minimize conflicts between various interests. This plan will be evaluated for major revision as needed. In advance of recommending any major revision to this Plan, additional public workshops will be held as required.

The Walter F. George Natural Resources Site Office staff is available to address any questions concerning the Shoreline Management Plan and its policies.

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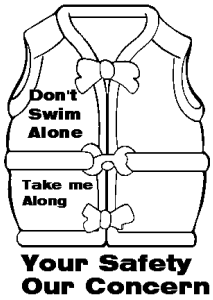
US Army Corps of Engineers
Mobile District



The Mobile District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepared this plan.

Written correspondences should be directed to: Walter F. George Natural Resources Site Office
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Rt. 1 Box 176
Fort Gaines, Georgia 31751-9722

Telephone inquires can be made by calling (229)768-2516 or (334)585-6537.

Facsimile (Fax) communications should be transmitted to (229)768-2809.

Web Site Address: http://www.sam.usace.army.mil/sam/op/rec/wfg/

Office opens March - September: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. E.T.
Saturday and Sunday, 9:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. E.T.

Natural Resources Site Office located two miles north of Fort Gaines, Georgia via Georgia State Highway 39.

— Table of Contents —

title **page**

Purpose 1

Objective 1

Authority 1

Jurisdiction 1

Project Description & History 2

Shoreline Allocations 2

Permits 4

Regional/General Permit Authority 4

Nationwide Permits 5

Shoreline Use Permit/License 5

"Grandfather" Activities, Structures & Facilities 6
Docks & Appurtenant Structures 6

Access Requirements 7

Site Requirements 7

Designs For Persons With Disabilities 7

Dock Facility Definitions & Requirements 7
Location 8
Spacing 8
Water Depth 8
Structural Support System 8
Dock Flotation 9

title **page**

Safety Reflectors 9
Dock Anchorage 9
Dock Walkways 10
Handrails 10
Boat Dock Roofs & Sundecks 10
Dock Storage Locker 10
Dock Furniture, Household Items, etc 10
Boat Hoists 11
Personal Watercraft Lifts 11
Mooring Buoy 12
Courtesy/Community Docks 12

Landbased Facility Requirements 12
Electrical Service 12
Water Lines, Drain Lines & Pumps 13
Other Utilities 13
Improved Access 13
Bank Stabilization 14
Mooring Post 14

Facility Maintenance 14
Minor Repairs 14
Major Repairs 15

Vegetative Modification 15
Limited Underbrushing 15
Vegetative Planting 16
Permit Authorization 16

Shoreline Management Violations 16

Specified Acts Permits 16

Dredging/Silt Removal 17

Hazardous Trees 17

Vehicle Operation on Government Property 17

Herbicide Applications 17

Other Activities 17

Boundary Management & Encroachment Resolution 17

title **page**

Minor Encroachments 18

Major Encroachments 18

Easements 19

Natural Resources Management 19

Aquatic Plant Management 19

Forest Management 19

Wildlife Management 19

Fisheries Management 19

Water Quality 19

Endangered Species 20

Wetlands 20

Cultural/Historical/Archaeological Resources 20

Administrative Review 21

Conclusions 21

References Cited 22

Other Pertinent References 24

Exhibits

number **title**

Exhibit I ..... Shoreline Allocation Maps

Exhibit II ..... Application and Permit/License for Lakeshore Use

Exhibit III ..... "Guidelines for Permit Applicants"

Exhibit IV ..... Standard Dock Plans and Requirements

Exhibit V ..... Boat Hoist Certification and Personal Watercraft Lift Plan

Exhibit VI ..... Electrical Service Plans and Requirements

Exhibit VII ..... Improved Walkway/Step Plans and Requirements

Exhibit VIII ..... Bank Stabilization Plans and Requirements

Exhibit IX ..... Mooring Buoy and Post Plans

Exhibit X ..... Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species

Exhibit XI ..... Permit to Perform Specified Acts

Exhibit XII ..... Facility Fee Schedule

Exhibit XIII ..... Native Vegetation of Walter F. George Lake

Exhibit XIV ..... Water/Drain Line Plan and Requirements

Exhibit XV ..... Chain of Authority for Shoreline Management

Exhibit XVI ..... Easement Permit

Exhibit XVII ..... Underbrushing and Mowing Requirements

Exhibit XVIII ..... Supplemental Agreements to Add On and Renew