

Q.1 What is the purpose of the Master Water Control Manual?

A.1 The operations at each federal reservoir managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are described in a Master Water Control Manual which includes Water Control Manuals for individual water bodies. These individual 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 individual Water Control Manuals also outline the coordination protocol and data collection, management and dissemination associated with routine and specific water management activities such as flood control operations or drought contingency operations.

Q.2 Who provides authorization for Water Control Operations?

A.2. The authority for Water Control Operations for Corps of Engineers owned and operated reservoir projects is contained in legislative authorization acts and referenced project documents. These public laws and project documents usually contain provisions for the development of water control plans, and appropriate revision thereto, under the discretionary authority of the Chief of Engineers. In addition, Section 7 of the Flood Control Act of 1944 provides that: "On and after December 22, 1944, it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Army to prescribe regulations for the use of storage allocated for flood control or navigation at all reservoirs constructed wholly or in part with Federal funds provided on the basis of such purposes, and the operation of any such project shall be in accordance with such regulations:..." (33 USC 709). "Blanket" congressional authorizations which apply to 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

Corps regulation in support of Flood Control and Navigation for non-federal projects (FERC license, Memorandums of Agreement, etc.).

Q.3 What are the authorized purposes of the Corps of Engineers projects in the basin?

A.3 Project Purposes

Flood Damage Reduction

- Winter drawdown at several lakes
- Store water in lake during event

- Monitor downstream points
- Provide notification to Emergency Management Offices
- Evacuate water as quickly as practicable when downstream conditions allow

Navigation

- Make releases to maintain a desired stage for navigators, seasonal navigation periods, and special releases during other periods.

Hydropower

- Determine weekly generation based on monthly contract requirements
- Southeastern Power Administration (SEPA) makes actual schedule within range specified by the water management adjustments as needed.

Recreation

- Maintain reservoirs as full as possible according to the Water Control Plan while meeting downstream purposes

Environmental and Water Quality

- Support for fish spawning and other fish and wildlife conservation measures.
- Coordinate releases and levels to enhance water quality and environmental needs
- Provide release to meet downstream targets
- Provide gradual step-down of river levels where necessary

Water Supply

- Provide water supply for industries, municipalities, and domestic.

Q.4 Why is a Master Water Control Manual necessary?

Without a comprehensive updated Master Water Control Manual, the Corps runs the risk of, among other things: adversely affecting water quality downstream; not providing sufficient water where needed (when needed to meet the authorized purposes of the projects and the needs of stakeholders, whether domestic, municipal or industrial); adversely affecting endangered species; and expending water resources too early, which reduces the ability to maintain the system to meet project purposes and the needs of stakeholders; and flooding people and facilities that are now within flood plains.

This risk is due to changing conditions within the basin and at Federal reservoirs which, if not accounted for, can affect water management decisions. Hydrologists must consider and evaluate many factors to determine the appropriate management of water at each lake. In addition to the constraints of the authorized purposes, they must also consider power contract commitments, hydrologic and climatologic factors, downstream lake and basin wide conditions, potential threats of flood and drought, and lake levels.

Q.5 What will individual Water Control Manuals consist of?

A.5. Updated individual Water Control Manuals will 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 the Corps and other agencies

Q.6 Which laws mandate the updates of the Water Control Manuals?

A.6. The authority for Water Control Operations for Corps of Engineers owned and operated reservoir projects is contained in legislative authorization acts and referenced project documents. These public laws and project documents usually contain provisions for the development of water control plans, and appropriate revision thereto, under the discretionary authority of the Chief of Engineers. In addition, Section 7 of the Flood Control Act of 1944 provides that:

“On and after December 22, 1944, it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Army to prescribe regulations for the use of storage allocated for flood control or navigation at all reservoirs constructed wholly or in part with Federal funds provided on the basis of such purposes, and the operation of any such project shall be in accordance with such regulations:...” (33 USC 709). Updated Water Control Plans (WCPs) are done 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.

Q.7 What type of public involvement will be involved in the Water Control Manual update?

A.7. Public participation in the planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process promotes open communication between the public and the Corps and, consequently, better analysis and decision making. Public, federal, tribal, state

and local community involvement is a critical, early, and continuing part of the WCP update process.

Q.8 What are the communication goals for Public Involvement?

A.8. There is a heightened sense of awareness within the general public of the importance of Water Control Manuals due to the severity of the drought that has prevailed in this basin during 2007-2008 and its impact on people's everyday lives and livelihoods.

The following goals for public outreach and involvement for the Water Control Manual update process have been identified:

- Increase awareness and understanding for the Water Control Manual update process – its goals, limitations, purposes and integration with other basin operations (i.e. Hydro Power Projects). Provide timely information to the public regarding the Water Control Management Team's efforts.
- Provide and promote effective intra- and interagency communication at the local, state and federal level.
- Provide extensive opportunities to involve public and stakeholder participation in the Water Control Manual update throughout the decision-making process.

Q.9 How will the information be assimilated among interested public?

A.9. A key component of this process will be a communications plan to outline the approach for transmitting information from the team to the public, receiving information from stakeholders and the public, informing the media, local governments, state, tribal and federal partners, Congress and other important decision makers.

Q.10 What communication tools will be used to keep the public and stakeholders informed?

A.10.

- Section 310 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1990 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) both require public involvement. The NEPA process requires public scoping meetings to ascertain the interests of various publics and stakeholders as to their thoughts on what should be analyzed, reviewed, changed or considered during the process. These public scoping meetings will be conducted throughout the basin in an open house format to allow for full public participation, input and understanding of the process and timelines.
- Routine or Professional Coordination by Water Control Manual Project Delivery Team – Members of the team have long-time and effective working relationships established during normal water resource activities conducted by

the District with stakeholders and state and federal agencies. These relationships have been fostered during the extreme drought conditions in the basin. These personal and professional relationships are very important in maintaining an effective public and agency involvement status. This high level of professional trust must be maintained and strengthened in all Water Control Manual actions. First hand contact with local constituents will be pursued as a necessary and productive means of identifying needs and opportunities in the basin.

- Outreach to communities, public officials, interested parties, governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations – The Water Control Manual team will provide briefings/updates as necessary to elected and appointed officials at all levels of government, stakeholder groups, community organizations and others. In addition, report-specific information will be provided to officials and government agencies in order to keep them informed and involved.
- Web-Site – A Web-site will be established and maintained as a repository of WCP update information. This will include an overview of the process, actions and needs. It will include all press releases, fact sheets or other informational items to meet the needs of the public and media to stay informed. As particular study elements are completed (i.e., hydrologic models, flood control analysis, pool level changes, etc.) they will be posted for public review/information.
- PowerPoint Presentations – A Water Control Manual update presentation will be developed for public speaking engagements. This presentation will be developed as a generic tool for team members, Command personnel and Operations Project Managers to use. Specific modules will be inserted as products are produced/analyzed for Command personnel presentations to elected officials or targeted interest groups. Electronic copies of the presentation along with suggested text will be distributed to all team members and other interested parties.
- News Releases – All news releases will be issued by the Mobile District Public Affairs Office to ensure consistency and accuracy. These will include notices of public meetings, new postings to the web site, and other information deemed necessary to keep the media apprised of activities and issues.
- Exhibits and Displays – A number of visual tools will be needed for public scoping engagements, public speaking forums and other venues. These will be developed as part of the public outreach in both a large and small portable format to use as necessary at conferences, meetings, and other venues.
- Opportunities for public hearings – WRDA 1990 requires that opportunities for public hearings be provided, with informational materials provided to the public in advance of any hearings.

Implementing the public outreach and involvement plan for the Master Water Control Manual update will require a team effort on multiple levels. Effective communication among federal, tribal, state and local agencies as well as stakeholder organizations

will be necessary to accomplish the outreach and involvement required to achieve the desired goal of updating the Master Water Control Manual in an open, inclusive environment.

Q.11 What team from the Corps will provide the Master Water Control Manual?

A.11. The Corps has formed an interdisciplinary Project Delivery Team (PDT), in Mobile District to undertake the planning, analysis and tasks necessary to develop an updated water control plan for the ACF rivers system. A similar team will be formed for the ACT basin.

Q.12 What is the anticipated timeline and cost for completing the Master Water Control Manuals?

A.12. The timeline to complete the Master Water Control Manual is approximately three years and \$5 million.