

Belton Lake Master Plan Revision Public Information Meeting May 25, 2017

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Purpose of this Meeting

- Describe the purpose and intent of a Master Plan
- Describe the revision process
- Explain why the Belton Lake Master Plan is in need of revision and how it may affect nearby communities and the public at large
- Answer questions
- Ask for your participation



The Corps' Vision for Belton Lake

The land, water surface and recreational resources of Belton Lake will be managed to protect, conserve, and sustain natural and cultural resources, especially environmentally sensitive resources, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities that complement overall project purposes for the benefit of present and future generations.



Belton Lake Missions



Belton Lake - Construction Began 1949
Completed 1954

- Flood Risk Management
- Water Supply
- Environmental Stewardship
- Public Outdoor Recreation



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Facts about Belton Lake

- At conservation pool elevation (594' NGVD) the lake covers 12,300 acres
- At conservation pool, there is 20,139 acres of public land above the pool
- At the 100-year flood pool elevation (631' NGVD) the lake covers 23,620 acres
- The federal property boundary line is 158 miles long
- The shoreline at normal pool is 136 miles long



More Fun Facts

- Belton Lake has an annual visitation of over 1.7 Million visits.
- 16 parks with 2,155 acres designated for recreation
- 2,700 acres of Wildlife Management Areas
- \$50 Million Local Economic Impact within a 30 mile radius
- Since its completion in 1954, the Belton Dam has prevented more than an estimated \$323 Million in flood damages downstream through 2016.



Purpose and Intent of Master Plans

The Corps defines a Master Plan as...

“ The strategic land use management document that guides the comprehensive management and development of all project recreational, natural and cultural resources throughout the life of the water resource development project.”



Source: Chapter 3 of EP 1130-2-550 available at www.usace.army.mil/library/publications



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National Environmental Policy Act

- Applies to all Federal Actions that affect the environment such as Master Plan revisions
- Requires Federal agencies to *CONSIDER and DOCUMENT the environmental impacts of their proposed actions as part of an agency's OVERALL planning and decision-making process*
- Requires Federal agencies to cooperate with federal, state and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations and citizens during project planning
- Scoping is where the federal agency asks for initial input from other agencies, citizens and organizations regarding project area, resources and uses



Key Points Regarding Master Plans

- Main focus is stewardship of natural and cultural resources and provision of quality outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities
- Proposed effective life of a Master Plan is 25 years
- Recreational use of the water surface is addressed



Additional Key Points

- Key sections of the Master Plan Revision include
 - ▶ resource management objectives
 - ▶ revised land use classifications
 - ▶ conceptual management plan for each land classification
- Potential outcomes could be
 - ▶ designation of lands for utility corridors, environmentally sensitive areas...
- Protection of environmentally sensitive areas is given priority



What Master Plans Are Not

- Master Plans **do not** address in detail the technical aspects of
 - ▶ Regional water quality
 - ▶ Water management for flood risk management
 - ▶ Water supply or water level management
 - ▶ Shoreline management



What Will Not be Addressed

- Shoreline policy governing mowing, removal of vegetation and debris, pedestrian paths, electrical submergible pumps or other recreational management items will not be addressed.
- National policy places strict limitations on the proposed construction of new public roads on Corps lands. With few exceptions road proposals that would cross Federal land will not be addressed



What About Drought/Flood?

- Master Plans cannot change how water in the lake is managed – addressed in separate Water Control Plan
- Natural resources and recreation management must be implemented within the constraints of the primary missions of flood risk management and water supply



Why Revise the Belton Lake Master Plan?

- Current Master Plan is dated June 1970... has exceeded its useful life. The way the Lake is managed today is different from the vision set forth in 1970 plan.
- Land classifications have not been updated since the 1970 Master Plan
- Population in the area has grown significantly:
 - ▶ Bell County 1970 population 125,108
 - ▶ Bell County 2016 population 340,411 172%+
 - ▶ City of Belton 1990 population 12,476
 - ▶ City of Belton 2010 population 18,216 46%+
- The Master Plan must be revised to address current and future growth in the region

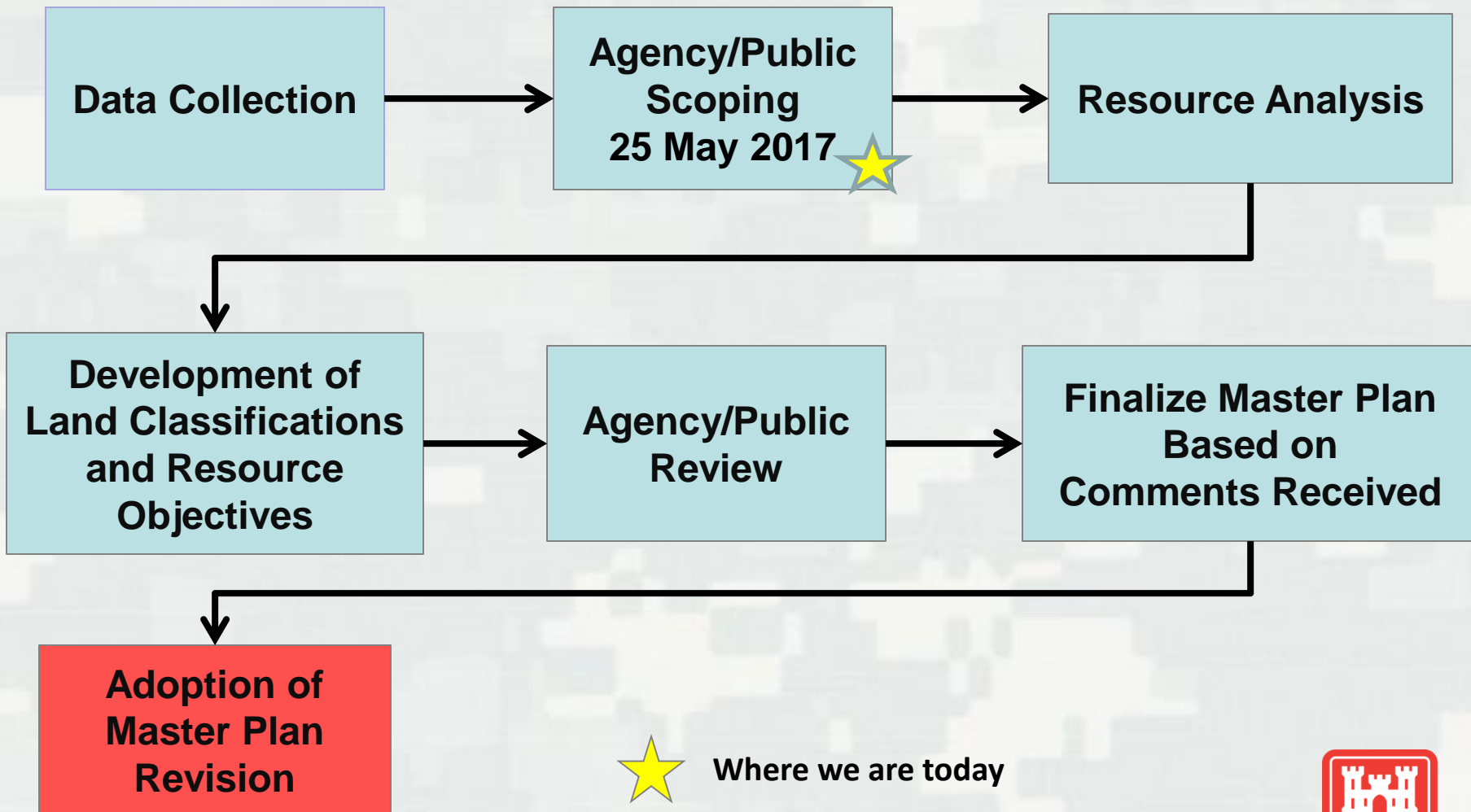


Master Plan Revision Process

- Accomplished by a team of Corps employees with input from other agencies
- Public and stakeholder input will be carefully considered
- An Environmental Assessment of the Master Plan will be prepared and included as an appendix



The Master Planning Process



What Major Changes Are Needed in the Current Master Plan?

- Re-examine the classification of all project lands and water surface
 - ▶ Some currently designated parks (those that are closed or were never developed) may be reclassified as wildlife or low intensity recreation lands
 - ▶ New or expanded high density recreation areas could be designated
 - ▶ Anticipate some lands being classified as environmentally sensitive areas, especially areas with Endangered Species Habitat
 - ▶ Possibly designate utility corridors
- Prepare New Resource Management Objectives



Additional Major Changes

- Prepare new Resource Objectives
 - ▶ Need current recreation objectives that reflect major trends identified by TPWD and through public input (Specify types and number of facilities and related amenities needed to meet demand)
 - ▶ Need current natural resource objectives that reflect major habitat and open space needs identified by TPWD, USFWS, and public input



Belton Lake Land Classification

Current Land Classifications	Proposed New Land Classifications
Operations and Maintenance	Project Operations
Public Access Areas(priority 1)	High Density Recreation
	Environmentally Sensitive Areas
Aesthetic and Multiple Use Recreation (priority #2-4)	Multiple Resource Management -Low Density Recreation -Wildlife Management -Vegetation Management -Future/Inactive Recreation
	Water Surface



Land Classification	Definition
Project Operations	Those lands required for the dam, operations center, office, maintenance compound and other areas that are used solely for project operations
High Density Recreation	Land developed for intensive recreational activities by the visiting public, including developed recreation areas and areas for marinas and related concessions, and resorts
Multiple Resource Management	Recreation –Low Density: Activities such as hiking, primitive camping, wildlife observation, and hunting
	Wildlife Management General: Fish and wildlife management activities
	Vegetative Management: Management activities for the protection and development of a specific vegetative cover
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	Inactive and/or Future Recreation Areas: Recreation areas planned for the future or that have been temporarily closed
Easement Lands	Areas where scientific, ecological, cultural or aesthetic features have been identified. These areas must be considered by management to ensure they are not adversely impacted All land for which USACE holds an easement interest but not fee title. Planned use and management of easement lands will be in strict accordance with the terms and conditions of the easement estate acquired for the project



Water Surface Classification

Definition

Restricted

Water areas restricted for project operations, safety, and security purposes

Designated No-Wake

To protect environmentally sensitive shoreline areas, recreational water access areas from disturbance, and for public safety

Fish and Wildlife Sanctuary

Annual or seasonal restrictions on areas to protect fish and wildlife species during periods of migration, resting, feeding, nesting, and/or spawning

Open Recreation

Those waters available for year round or seasonal water-based recreational use



Land Classifications

Project Operations - This category includes those lands required for the dam, spillway, powerhouse, switchyard, levees, dikes, offices, maintenance facilities, and other areas that are used solely for the operation of the project



Land Classifications

High Density Recreation - Lands developed for intensive recreational activities for the visiting public including day use areas and/or campgrounds. These could include areas for concessions (marinas, comprehensive resorts, etc)



Land Classifications

Environmentally Sensitive Areas - Areas where scientific, ecological, cultural or aesthetic features have been identified. Designation of these lands is not limited to just lands that are otherwise protected by laws such as the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act or applicable State statutes. These areas must be considered by management to ensure they are not adversely impacted

Examples may include mature bottomland forests, river and stream corridors, scenic bluffs, and native prairie.



Land Classifications

Low Density Recreation - Lands with minimal development or infrastructure that support passive public recreational use (e.g. primitive camping, fishing, hunting, trails, wildlife viewing, etc.)



Land Classifications

Wildlife Management - Lands designated for stewardship of fish and wildlife resources



Land Classifications

Vegetative Management - Lands designated for stewardship of forest, prairie, and other native vegetative cover



Water Classifications



- Water Surface - Restricted
- Water Surface - Designated No Wake
- Water Surface - Fish and Wildlife Sanctuary
- Water Surface - Open Recreation



Utility Corridors

- Linear strips of Federal land used for consolidation of multiple utility lines
- Establish only where no viable alternative to crossing Federal land exists
- Main purpose is to reduce negative environmental impacts
- Generally follow existing roads or utility lines



Examples of Resource Objectives

■ Recreation Objective:

- ▶ Expand existing trails and create new trails for a variety of users
- ▶ Expand low density areas by converting closed recreation areas
- ▶ Extend key boat ramps to accommodate low or high lake levels
- ▶ Leasing Corps operated parks to other entities

■ Natural Resource Objective:

- ▶ Restore degraded prairie sites to support a diversity of native grasses and forbs
- ▶ Implement invasive species control programs
- ▶ Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas
- ▶ Refine wildlife management programs

■ General Objective:

- ▶ Protect resources by reducing encroachments and trespass through improved boundary marking and surveillance



How Can I Participate?

- Attend Meetings
- Visit our website at:
(www.swf.usace.army.mil/About/LakesandRecreationInformation/MasterPlanUpdates/Belon.aspx)
- Send us an e-mail:
- ceswf-od-bn/sh@usace.army.mil
- Visit with our lake staff at the two designated stations
- Tell your friends
- Fill out a comment card now or take it home and send later (30 days)



Master Plan Next Steps

- Typical lake master plan update will take 24 to 36 months to finalize. Belton Lake Master Plan update is in the early stage of development
- First 30 day public comment – 25 May thru 25 June
- Draft MP / EA public meeting in Spring of 2018, followed by another 30 day Public/Agency comment period
- Final document: 6 - 8 months (Fall 2018)



The End

Please feel free to visit with staff members, view the maps, ask questions and help us produce an excellent Master Plan



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