

Benbrook Lake Draft Master Plan Online Public Review March 2021

Presented By Joshua Quiring
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Fort Worth District

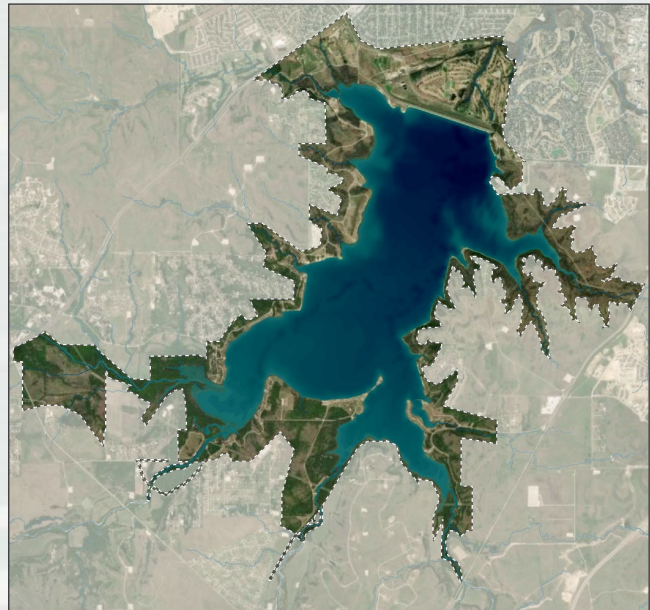


Hello, my name is Joshua Quiring I am the US Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager for the Benbrook Lake Master Plan. I have been working with a planning team for approximately two years to revise the Benbrook Lake Master Plan. We now have a draft revision ready for public review. Normally, we would hold face-to-face public workshops to announce the draft, but the COVID 19 virus has made it necessary to conduct our public involvement effort on-line.

Following the slide show, I urge you to read the draft 2021 revised Master Plan and the related Appendices, as well as the 1972 Master Plan to see where we have been - compared to where we are going. All the documents you will need for the review are posted on the USACE Fort Worth District website at the link provided later in this presentation. Thank you for taking time to view this website and listen to this presentation.

Purpose of this Presentation

- **Announce the availability of the draft revision** of the Benbrook Lake Master Plan and accompanying Environmental Assessment.
- **Highlight changes** proposed in the revised Master Plan compared to the previous 1972 version.
- The draft Master Plan with Environmental Assessment is **available for 30-day public comment period beginning March 5, 2021.**



Benbrook Lake



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The primary purpose is to publicly announce the availability of the draft Master Plan and related Environmental Assessment for public review and comment. This presentation will highlight the main proposed changes from prior master plan to the current draft. The draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment will be available for public comment for 30 days beginning March 5, 2021 and ending April 5, 2021. This presentation is available in the following formats:

- A pdf version on this website that can be read and
- A video that is posted to a YouTube link provided on this website.

The Process Followed to Date

- Initial public meetings held on August 21, 2019
- Workshops also held with City of Benbrook, TPWD, and a local nonprofit
- **All comments were considered.** See Chapter 7 and Appendix of the draft for comments and Government response
- Wildlife habitat evaluation and prairie assessment completed for entire lake area
- **A Draft Environmental Assessment is available in the Appendix of the draft)**



Benbrook Lake Master Plan



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The process to date included a public workshop held on August 21, 2019. The workshop was well-attended, with approximately 125 individuals attending meeting, and comments were received from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, the city of Benbrook, and 72 individuals.

Meetings were held with key stakeholders including TPWD, the City of Benbrook, and a nonprofit organization with interest in lands around Benbrook Lake.

All comments received following the initial public meeting and stakeholder meetings were considered in preparing the draft revised Master Plan. The comments and Government responses are included in Chapter 7 of the draft revised Master Plan.

The Corps conducted a Wildlife Habitat Appraisal of the Federal lands surrounding Benbrook Lake in April 2019 and included stakeholders from TPWD. Approximately 124 sample points were surveyed in the major habitat types found at Benbrook Lake. In addition, the Corps conducted an additional Prairie Assessment with stakeholders from TPWD, NRCS, and a local nonprofit group in October 2019 to gather additional diversity data in many of the grasslands and prairies around the lake. The results of the appraisals are included in the Appendix of the draft revised Master Plan.

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 (mowing firebreaks, paths, etc.)



Flood risk management is not addressed in the Master Plan



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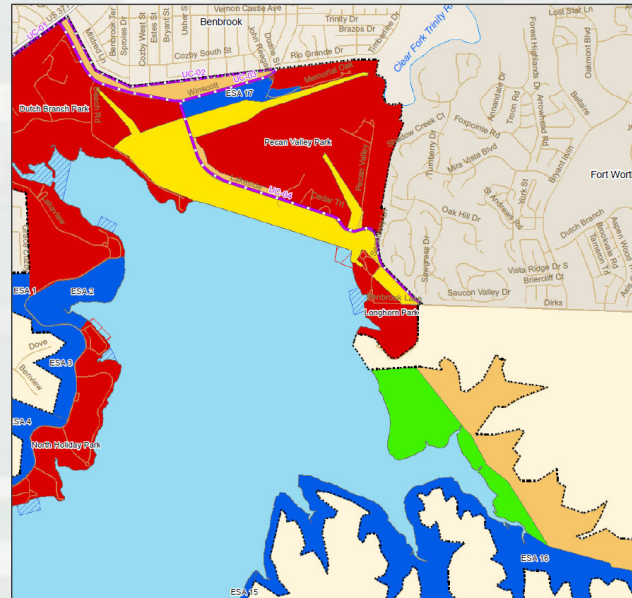
Master Plans do not address all things at a lake. As was explained at the initial public workshops, the Corps defines a Master Plan as a plan that addresses land and recreation program management. The management of Corps lands, including the developed parks and concession sites, must adapt to changing lake conditions resulting from primary project missions of flood risk management, water supply, and in some cases hydroelectric production.

Master Plans do not address:

- Regional water quality
- Water management related to flood risk management
- Water supply or water level management
- Shoreline Management Policy...which is developed by the Corps to address the management of allowable private activities such as mowing firebreaks and pedestrian paths. The Shoreline Management Policy for Benbrook Lake is briefly mentioned in Chapter 6 of the draft revised Master Plan.

Principal Changes from Current Master Plan to Revised Plan

- **Changes to Land Classifications**
 - ▶ Project Operations
 - ▶ High Density Recreation
 - ▶ Environmentally Sensitive Areas
 - ▶ Multiple Resource Management Areas
- **Comprehensive new land management objectives**
- **Utility Corridors**



Benbrook Lake
Land Classifications



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Listed on the slide are the principal changes from the 1972 Master Plan to the draft revised Master Plan. While these are the primary changes, it is important to read Chapters 4,5, and 8 of the draft revised Master Plan to understand the full scope of proposed changes.

- The areas designated as Project Operations changed to better match the areas used for Project Operations including the footprint of the dam.
- The 1972 Plan had a general Recreation land classification, Special Use Recreation Area, and Multiple Use Aesthetic and Recreation Areas. These areas were changed to match current land classifications, and include High Density Recreation, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and Multiple Resource Management Areas.
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas are a separate Land Classification used to designated areas with unique scientific, natural resource, aesthetic, or other features to be protected and preserved.
- Multiple Resource Management Areas include Vegetative Management lands and Wildlife Management lands at Benbrook Lake.
- The new Master Plan also designates new Management Goals and Resource Objectives.
- And lastly, 12 Utility Corridors were designated at Benbrook Lake. These corridors generally follow existing roads and utility lines and are meant to consolidate the locations where utilities cross Corps property and results in the least environmental damage.

Land Classification Definitions

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
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	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
Multiple Resource Management Land	Vegetative Management: These lands are designated for the stewardship of forest, prairie, and other native vegetative cover.
	Wildlife Management: Lands managed primarily for fish and wildlife management and conservation.



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The draft revised Master Plan includes a new Land Classification scheme with four dominant classifications and two sub-classifications as described on the slide. These are Project Operations, High Density Recreation, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and Multiple Resource Management Lands which includes the two sub-classifications Vegetative Management and Wildlife Management. The Land Classification Maps in the Appendix of the draft revised Master Plan show the location and extent of each of the proposed Land Classifications.

Changes in Land Classification Acreage

Prior (1972) Land Classifications	Acres	New Land Classifications	Acres
Operations and Maintenance	176	Project Operations	234
Recreation Areas	2,896	High Density Recreation	1,761
Special Use Areas	146	--	--
--	--	Environmentally Sensitive Areas	1,122
Aesthetic and Multiple Use Recreation Areas	1,254	Multiple Resource Management – Vegetative Management	1,129
Wildlife Areas	193	Multiple Resource Management – Wildlife Management	128
TOTAL Land Acres	4,665	TOTAL Land Acres	4,375
Flowage Easement	2,823	Flowage Easement	3,200

Total Acreage differences from the 1972 total to the 2021 totals are due to improvements in measurement technology, deposition/siltation, and erosion. As real estate boundaries are researched, acreages may change slightly to reflect more precise boundary mapping. The fee simple and easement acreage identified in this Master Plan was obtained from the Real Estate Management Information System and is subject to change as the acquisition documents are audited. All areas measured with lake at Conservation Pool of 694.0 feet NGVD29.



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This slide is important and shows the proposed acreage changes from the Prior (1972) land classifications to the new land Classifications. These proposed changes are described in more detail in Chapter 8 of the revised Master Plan. Rather than listening to the type and extent of each change, I urge you to read the pdf version of this presentation posted on this website for more detailed descriptions and to read Chapters 4, 5 & 8 of the draft revised Master Plan to gain a full understanding of the proposed land classification changes. Briefly, the changes are as follows:

Project Operations (PO): An increase of acreage accounts for areas used for operations that are not currently classified as Project Operations. The new area expands to include the entire dam, uncontrolled spillway, and discharge channel. The area also classifies operations by others which includes municipal water operations near the dam and along Old Granbury Road.

High Density Recreation (HDR): The previous Recreation Areas and Special Use Recreation Areas date back to 1972 and did not account for types or intensity of recreational use. Since 1972, the recreational demand and usage has changed to include many well-developed parks. The new HDR classification includes areas with existing intense recreational development and many undeveloped acres that have the potential to meet future recreation needs. The City of Benbrook has expressed interest in expanding facilities, and there is ample undeveloped acreage within Dutch Branch Park, North Holliday Park, and Baja Beach to accommodate their future needs. There are also many undeveloped acres in Mustang Park and Rocky Creek Park to accommodate future demand as residential developments continue to expand in areas East and South of Benbrook Lake.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA): The Environmentally Sensitive Area classification did

not exist when the 1972 plan designated land classifications. The new areas classified as ESA include unique or sensitive prairies, woodlands, wetlands, and aesthetic areas. In Holiday Park, most of the acreage west of Lakeview Drive was reclassified as ESA from the original Recreation Area classification. Much of the riparian and wetland acreage associated with the Clear Fork Trinity River was changed from Wildlife Area and Recreation Area to ESA. On the east side of the lake, several sensitive prairies and aesthetic areas were changed from Wildlife Area and Recreation area to ESA. See Table 5.1 for a complete description of each Environmentally Sensitive Area.

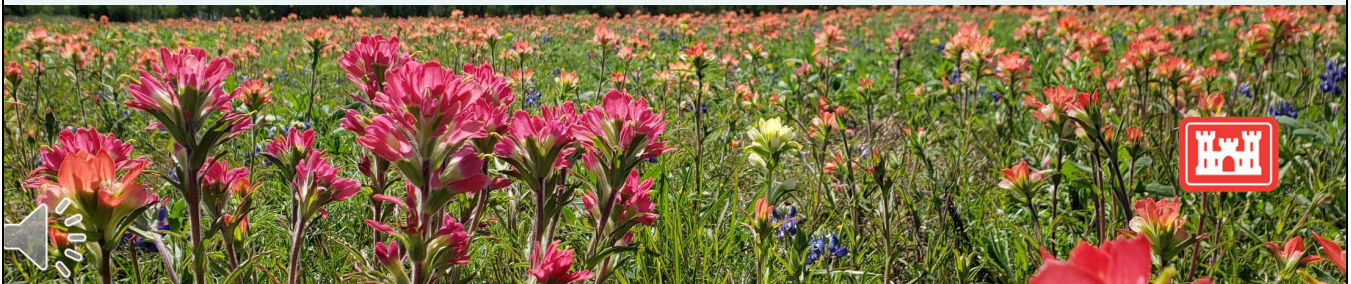
Multiple Resource Management Lands (MRML): The land previously classified as Wildlife Area along Clear Fork Trinity River has been reclassified as ESA. A new area has been classified as Wildlife Management along the shoreline of Longhorn Park. This area currently allows hunting but also acts as an important corridor for wildlife. // In designating Vegetative Management Areas, parcels were selected to recognize current and future native prairie restoration efforts. Efforts to date have required clearing of woody species on select parcels that are good candidates for prairie restoration. These areas are periodically burned to promote the native grasses and forbs already present on the sites. Other Vegetative Management areas includes frequently flooded hardwood and herbaceous wetlands as well as former grazing land undergoing early succession to mixed shrub and forest habitats and demonstrates significant signs of browsing by wildlife. Also included in Vegetative Management Areas are some narrow and isolated pockets that are often mowed, maintained as grasslands, or are contiguous to neighboring grasslands but were not unique enough to be designated as an ESA.

Total Land Acres were reduced since the 1972 Plan: This reduction was due in part to lands not needed for project purposes that were reconveyed to former owners, new lands created by sediment deposition, and improved accuracy of current measurement technology. After reconveyance, most of the acreage was changed from total fee acres to flowage easement acres. These acres are still undergoing audits to improve the accuracy of the project boundary and acreages.

Flowage Easement: Flowage Easements are not a land classification but are mentioned in the MP for informational purposes. Flowage easements are acquired by USACE to allow lands to be periodically inundated during flood events, but USACE does not own fee simple title to these lands. The 1972 MP listed 2,823 acres of flowage easements, but the acreage mentioned in the revised MP will be 3,200. The changes in flowage easement lands is a result of disposal of some fee-owned lands, changes from erosion and sedimentation, as well as more precise measurement technologies. These flowage easement acres are also undergoing audits to improve the accuracy of the boundaries and acres within the flowage easement.

Management Goals & Resource Objectives

- Chapter 3 of the Master Plan
- Consists of 5 Goals (**broad generalized statements**)
- Consists of 5 Resource Objective Categories (**details**)
 - ▶ Recreational Objectives
 - ▶ Natural Resource Management Objectives
 - ▶ Visitor Information, Education, and Outreach Objectives
 - ▶ General Management Objectives
 - ▶ Cultural Resource Management Objectives



This slide is self explanatory. These goals and objectives were developed for the 2021 Master Plan to help manage the resources at Benbrook Lake. For a complete description of these revised goals and objectives, please review Chapter 3 of the revised draft Master Plan.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

- Applies to 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
- Requires federal agencies to **cooperate with other federal, state and local governments** as well as with 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

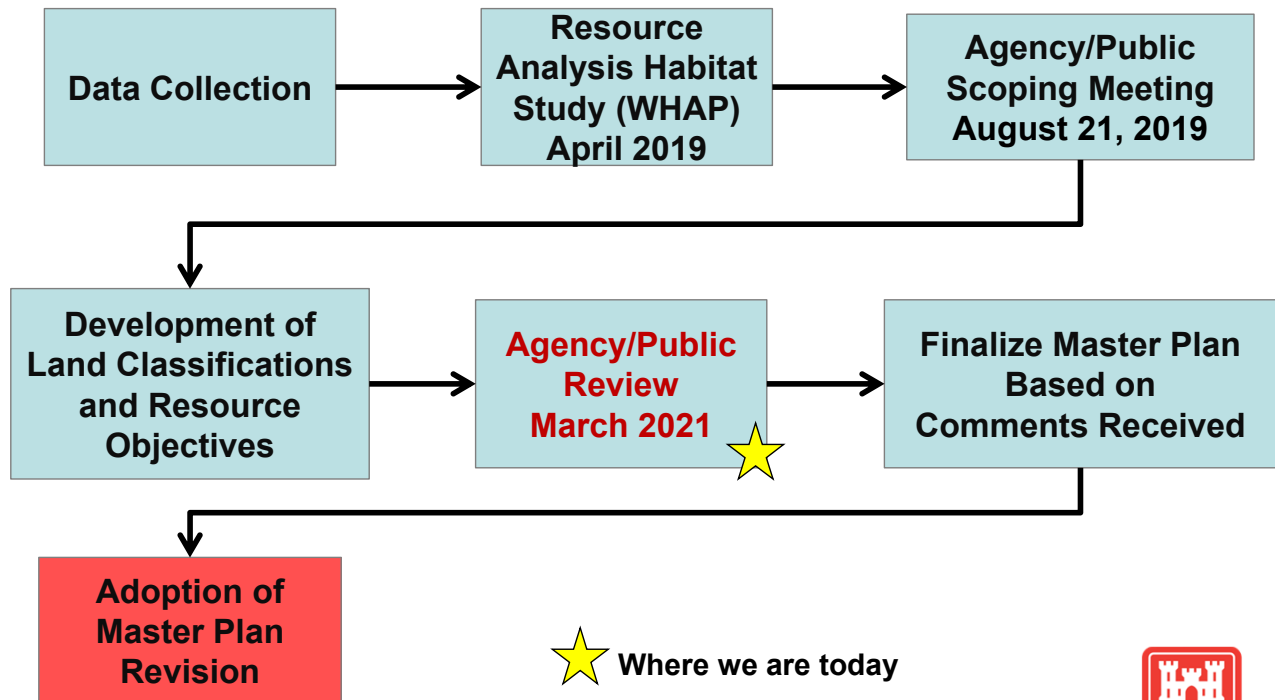


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The National Environmental Policy act of 1969 applies to all federal actions that affect the environment including the draft revised 2021 Master Plan. I want to emphasize that the “Proposed Action” is the revision of the Master Plan and the Environmental Assessment will assess the impacts of that action. The EA identifies possible Alternatives, including a No Action alternative and will describe which alternative is the “Preferred Alternative”. Basically, the revision of the Master Plan triggers the need to prepare an EA. The EA will be prepared as an Appendix to the Master Plan Revision.

The Master Planning Process



 Where we are today



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This seven-step planning process describes the path we have followed to date. We are currently at the yellow star where Agencies and the Public Review the draft revised Master Plan and Environmental Assessment. The review and comment period takes place beginning March 5 and ends April 5, 2021. At that point, we will review comments provided by Agencies and the Public in order to complete a final Master Plan Revision.

How to Participate

- **Review the draft revised Master Plan.** It is posted on this website along with all related documents needed for your review.
- Use the link provided on this website to **submit a written comment** via email. Also, a link is provided on this website where you can watch a video of this presentation. You may also print the comment form provided on the website, fill it out by hand and mail it to the Corps at the address on the comment form.
- **Verbal comments cannot be considered.** Comments are due by close of business on April 5, 2021.



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Your participation is the key to preparing a Master Plan for Benbrook Lake that will guide management of the lands and water surface for approximately the next 25 years. Please review the documents posted on this website.

A convenient link is provided on this website where you can submit a comment via email. A link is also provided where you can watch this presentation as a video. The video has the advantage of being able to use a pause button to more carefully view the information being presented.

When the lake office reopens to the public, a printed copy of the draft revised Master Plan will be available for in-office review.

I want to emphasize that only written comments can be accepted. While we encourage you to call the office if you have questions, only written comments can be considered.

If You Have Questions

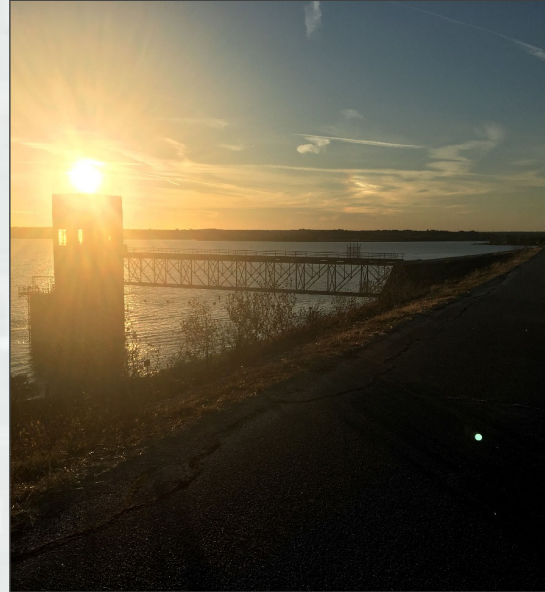
Questions about the Master Plan can be addressed by:

- Contacting Benbrook Lake Project Office at:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Benbrook Lake Manager
7001 Lakeside Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76132
Phone: (817) 292-2400

- Emailing the Corps at:

CESWF-PER-Benbrook@usace.army.mil



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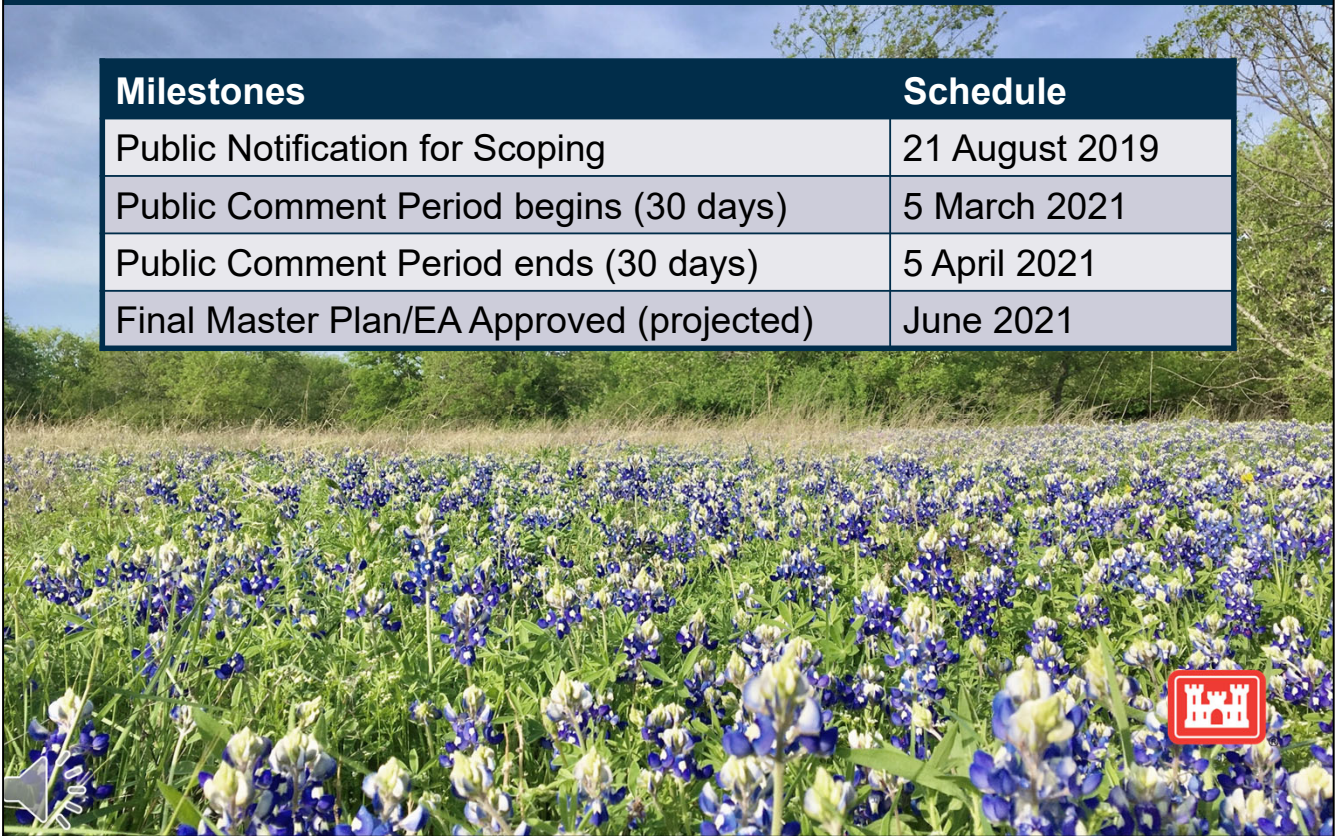


If you have questions regarding the master plan, please call or email the Corps project office or district staff.

You can also send questions to the Email address setup for this project as listed on this slide.

Projected Master Plan Schedule

Milestones	Schedule
Public Notification for Scoping	21 August 2019
Public Comment Period begins (30 days)	5 March 2021
Public Comment Period ends (30 days)	5 April 2021
Final Master Plan/EA Approved (projected)	June 2021



Public notification for scoping initiated on August 21, 2019.

The draft document is scheduled to be available for public review by March 5, 2021 which begins the 30-day comment period which will end April 5, 2021.

The final approved Master Plan and EA are scheduled to be completed **June 2021**.

This Concludes the Presentation

Thank you for viewing this presentation and participating in the Master Plan revision process at Benbrook Lake.

Website address:

<https://www.swf.usace.army.mil/About/Lakes-and-Recreation-Information/Master-Plan-Updates/Benbrook-Lake/>

Email: CESWF-PER-Benbrook@usace.army.mil

USACE Office Address:

Benbrook Lake Manager
7001 Lakeside Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76132



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Thank you for viewing this presentation and participating in the Master Plan revision process at Benbrook Lake

Project documents are available at this website.

Please send your comments to the Email address or USACE Office Address listed here. Remember that we can only consider written comments.

I am excited about where we are at in the Master Plan process and look forward to having the final Master Plan approved later this year.

Thank you again, and please remember water safety when you are out enjoying the lake, and always wear a properly fitted life jacket.

This concludes the presentation.