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# News Release

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## USACE to host open house for Mansfield Hollow Lake Master Plan revision

NEW ENGLAND – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will host an open house on Thursday, May 2, 2024, to kick off a process to revise the 1979 Mansfield Hollow Lake Master Plan. The open house will be held from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Mansfield Library (Programming Room) at 54 Warrenville Road, Mansfield Center, CT 06250.

During the open house session, there will be no formal presentation. The public is invited to visit at any point during the 4:00-6:00 p.m. time frame to interact with USACE team members. Team members will be stationed around the room and can share information about the revision process, provide the general schedule, and gather initial feedback from the public.

### Master Plan Overview

The Master Plan is defined as the strategic land use management document that guides the comprehensive management and development of all recreational, natural, and cultural resources throughout the life of the water resource development project. It defines "how" USACE will manage the resources for public use and conservation.

The current Mansfield Hollow Lake Master Plan, last approved in 1979, needs revision to address changes in regional land use, population, outdoor recreation trends, and the USACE management policy. Key topics to be discussed in the revised Master Plan include revised land use classifications, new natural and recreational resource management objectives, recreation facility needs, and special issues such as invasive species management and threatened and endangered species habitat.

The Master Plan revision WILL NOT address the technical and operational aspects of the lake related to flood risk management or the water conservation missions of the project.

### Initial Comments

An initial 30-day comment period will begin May 2, 2024, and end June 1, 2024. The public can send comments, suggestions, and concerns during this time. Comments must be submitted in writing at the open house or digitally via the comment form on the Master Plan Revision web page: <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Mansfield-Hollow-Lake/Mansfield-Hollow-Lake-Master-Plan/>.

The web page also contains a presentation which will be available during the open house. The presentation provides a schedule as well as details on an additional comment period after the draft report is released (currently scheduled for June 2025).

## **About Mansfield Hollow Lake**

Mansfield Hollow Dam lies on the confluence of the Natchaug, Fenton, and Mt. Hope Rivers, in Mansfield, Connecticut. The dam is part of a network of six flood risk management dams in the Thames River Basin constructed and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District. This network helps to reduce flooding in communities within the Thames River Basin by regulating water levels on upstream tributaries in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The project provides substantial flood protection for the Shetucket River communities of Norwich, South Windham, Baltic, Occum, Taftville, and Willimantic. The lake lies within the boundaries of Mansfield and Windham, 25 miles east of Hartford.

Construction of the dam began in 1949 and was completed in May 1952. The cost of the project was \$6.5 million. The dam consists of earthfill with stone slope protection. It has a length of 14,050 feet and a height of 68 feet. The project also consists of six earthfill dikes with stone slope protection that total 2,656 feet in length and have a maximum height of 53 feet. The project offers recreational opportunities compatible with the primary function of flood risk management.

While the main purpose of Mansfield Hollow Lake was to provide flood risk management to the Thames River Basin, over the years the lake has become a recreational draw due to its location and beautiful natural surroundings. With over 15 miles of trails, 2,472 acres of land, 450 acres of water, picnic areas, and a boat launch, the lake can accommodate all kinds of outdoor enthusiasts.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers owns 2,472 acres, of which the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection leases approximately 2,300 acres for recreation and natural resource management. On a graceful, pine-covered bluff overlooking the broad expanse of water, a picnic shelter and individual picnic sites for both families and large groups are available at the Mansfield Hollow State Park. Many acres of open field lie adjacent to the bluff and may be used for softball, touch football, volleyball, and other team sports and group activities. Mansfield Hollow Lake receives approximately 435,000 visitors per year.

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