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## **USACE hosts open house April 30 in Sturbridge, Mass., for East Brimfield Lake Master Plan revision**

**CONCORD, Mass.** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District will host an open house April 30, 2024, in Sturbridge, Mass., to kick off a process to revise the 1998 East Brimfield Lake Master Plan for the East Brimfield Lake project in Fiskdale.

The open house will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Sturbridge Town Hall (Veterans Memorial Hall) at 308 Main Street in Sturbridge. There will be no formal presentation during the session, but USACE members will be on hand to share information about the revision process, provide the general schedule and gather initial feedback from the public.

The master plan serves 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 East Brimfield Master Plan was last approved in 1998 and 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 updated 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 revision does not address the technical and operational aspects of the East Brimfield Lake project related to flood risk management or the water conservation missions of the project.

An initial 30-day public comment period will begin April 30 and end May 30. During this time, members of the public can submit comments, suggestions and concerns about the master plan.

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## Master Plan/2-2-2

Comments must be submitted in writing at the open house or digitally via the comment form on the East Brimfield Master Plan revision website at <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/East-Brimfield-Lake/East-Brimfield-Lake-Master-Plan/>. The website also contains a presentation which will be available during the open house that provides details about an additional comment period that will open after the draft report is released (currently scheduled for June 2025).

The East Brimfield Lake project is located along the upper reaches of the Quinebaug River in south central Massachusetts in the towns of Brimfield, Holland and Sturbridge. Construction of the East Brimfield Dam was completed in June 1960 at a cost of \$7,057,000. It is a rolled earthfill dam that is 520 feet long and 55 feet high and holds back a lake capable of storing 9.4 billion gallons of water. East Brimfield Dam helps to reduce flooding in Sturbridge and Southbridge and optimizes its flood damage reduction by coordinating its operation with other dams in the comprehensive Thames River Basin system.

USACE manages the natural resources at East Brimfield Lake for multiple uses to include flood risk management, wildlife habitat, forest production, watershed protection and outdoor recreation. While the main purpose of East Brimfield Lake is to provide flood risk management to the Thames River Basin, over the years the lake has become a recreational draw for approximately 135,000 visitors a year. With over 10 miles of multi-use trails, a five-mile-long canoe trail, 1,670 acres of land, 400 acres of water, picnic areas, a swimming beach, and three boat launches, the lake can accommodate all kinds of outdoor enthusiasts.

For more information about East Brimfield Lake, visit the project website at <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/East-Brimfield-Lake/>

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