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## USACE to host North Hartland Lake Master Plan public meeting, open comments

**CONCORD, Mass.** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will host an open house on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, to kick off a process to revise the 1999 North Hartland Lake Master Plan. The open house will be held from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Hartland Library, 153 US Route 5, Hartland, VT 05048.

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 North Hartland Lake Master Plan, last approved in 1999, 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 April 16, 2025, and end May 16, 2025. 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:

[www.nae.usace.army.mil/missions/recreation/north-hartland-lake/north-hartland-lake-master-plan/](http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/missions/recreation/north-hartland-lake/north-hartland-lake-master-plan/)

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The web page also contains a presentation which will be running 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 July 2026).

## **About North Hartland Lake**

The dam at North Hartland Lake in Hartland is located on the Ottauquechee River, 1.5 miles above the confluence of the Ottauquechee and Connecticut Rivers. From White River Junction, the dam is five miles south on U.S. Route 5. This is a multi-purpose project built and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) New England District. Construction began in June 1958 and was completed in June 1961 at a cost of \$7.3 million. The project consists of an earthfill dam with stone slope protection 1,640 feet long and 185 feet high. North Hartland Lake can store up to 23.2 billion gallons of water for flood control purposes. This is equivalent to 6.1 inches of water covering its drainage area of 220 square miles. The project provides flood protection to downstream communities on the Connecticut River, including Hartland, Windsor, Weathersfield, Springfield, and Rockingham, and the New Hampshire communities of Plainfield, Cornish, Claremont, Charlestown, and Walpole. In conjunction with other reservoirs in the Connecticut River Basin, North Hartland Lake also reduces the Connecticut River's flood stages in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

While the main purpose of North Hartland Lake was to provide flood risk management to the Connecticut River Basin, with more than 1,460 acres of land ranging from forests and fields to wetlands and a reservoir, North Hartland Lake has recreation opportunities for everyone. Anglers can try their luck in our lake. A boat launch is available, and this is a popular location for canoeists to launch from and explore the beauties of nearby Quechee Gorge. The Quechee Gorge Visitor Center opened in 2005, and since this time, more than one million people have visited the center. Visitor information, both electronic and brochure format, is available along with interpretive displays about the history of the gorge and local flora and fauna. All project lands and waters are under the jurisdiction of CFR Title 36 regulations, state, and local laws.

Park Rangers use an assortment of management practices to improve or conserve the different habitat types. One such management practice is prescribed burning to maintain important open field habitats at North Hartland Lake. Certain species of wildflowers benefit from this practice while others require wooded areas to grow. Mowing of fields and artificial nest structures are also used to keep the project lands attractive to a variety of game and non-game species. As you walk along the entrance road during the spring, listen for the variety of frogs singing. During the summer, look for wood ducks nesting in the boxes. Forest management, including thinning and harvesting, is also used. Brush piles are assembled in different locations to create cover for small animals.

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