Conant Brook Dam Master Plan

Connecticut River Basin

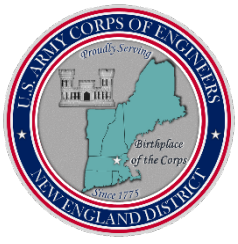
Hampden County, Massachusetts

June 2025

DRAFT REPORT

US Army Corps of Engineers®
New England District

The Conant Brook Dam Master Plan was produced by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regional Planning and Environmental Center (RPEC) for the New England District (NAE).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conant Brook Dam Master Plan
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Prepared by the Southwestern Division
Regional Planning and Environmental Center (RPEC)
June 2025

ES.1 PURPOSE

The Conant Brook Dam Master Plan (hereafter Plan or Master Plan) is a complete revision of the 1998 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan and its supplements. The revision is a framework built collaboratively to guide appropriate stewardship of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) administered resources at Conant Brook Dam over the next 25 years. The 1998 Master Plan has served beyond its intended 25-year planning horizon and does not reflect the growing population around the project and regional recreation needs.

Conant Brook Dam is a single purpose flood control project and is part of the USACE comprehensive flood control plan for the Connecticut River Basin which includes a total of 16 dams and reservoirs and 24 local protection projects. In addition to this primary mission, the USACE has an inherent mission for environmental stewardship of project lands while working closely with stakeholders and partners to provide regionally important outdoor recreation opportunities.

During the 2025 Master Plan revision, Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping technology was utilized to digitize the maps to show the 1998 acres of all fee lands as a basis for the 2025 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan. Due to this more precise measurement technology, discrepancies between the acreages documented in the 1998 plan and the recalculated acres were found. The 2025 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan revision reflects the recalculated 1998 acres throughout the document. Both the 1998 and the 2025 acres may differ from the acres on record with the USACE New England District Real Estate Office or those documented within the Water Control Manual for the Conant Brook Dam, which is maintained by the USACE New England District. Any water control management and real estate studies or transactions should be coordinated with the appropriate USACE offices.

The Master Plan and supporting documentation provide an inventory and analysis of goals, objectives, and recommendations for USACE lands and waters at Conant Brook Dam, Monson, Massachusetts with input from the public, stakeholders, and subject matter experts. The Master Plan is primarily a land use and outdoor recreation strategic plan that does not address the specific authorized purposes of flood risk management or water supply.

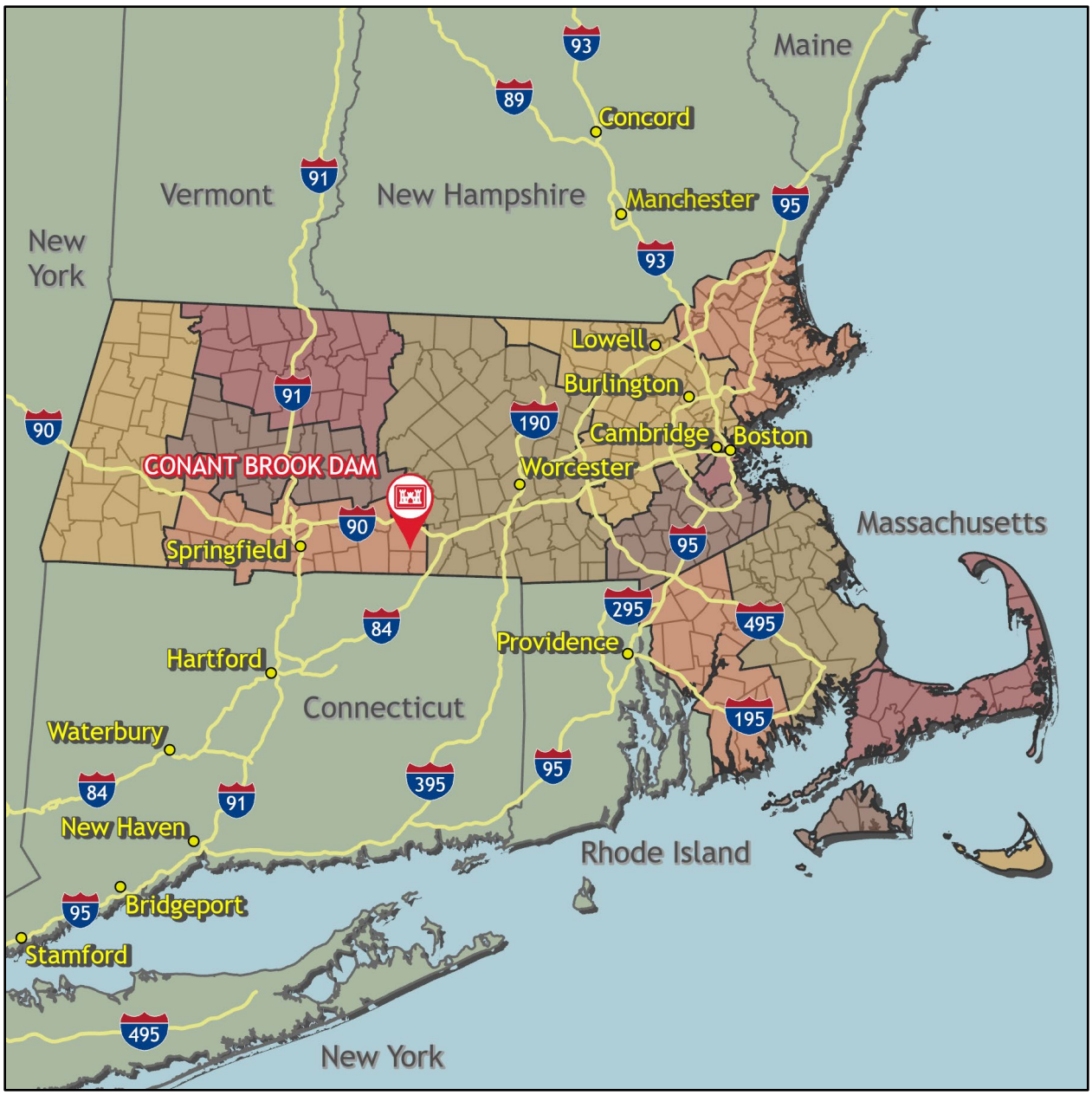


Figure ES-1 Vicinity Map of Conant Brook Dam

The mapping used for this Master Plan revision uses modern satellite imagery and GIS mapping to create updated land classifications. Using GIS measurements, Conant Brook Dam has approximately 437 acres of lands held in fee. All elevations in this document are NGVD29 unless noted otherwise.

ES.2 PUBLIC INPUT

To ensure a balance between operational, environmental, and recreational outcomes, USACE obtained both public and agency input toward the Master Plan. An

Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed in conjunction with the Master Plan to evaluate the impacts of alternatives and can be found in Appendix B.

On July 31, 2024, USACE held a public open house at the Monson Public Library in Monson, Massachusetts to inform the public of their intent to revise the Master Plan. The public input period remained open for 30 days from July 31, 2024 to August 31, 2024. At the public information meeting USACE gave a presentation that included the following topics:

- What is a Master Plan?
- What a Master Plan is Not
- Why Revise a Master Plan?
- Overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
- Master Planning Process
- Instructions for submitting comments

USACE received two comments for Conant Brook Dam. The Master Plan list these comments and the USACE response in Appendix E.

A public open house will be held for the Conant Brook Dam Draft Master Plan revision. The purpose of this open house will be to provide attendees with information regarding the proposed Master Plan revision as well as to provide them with the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Conant Brook Dam Draft Master Plan. The open house will the same topics as the initial public open house. The open house will begin a 30-day comment period where the public and stakeholders can provide comments on the Draft Master Plan. These comments will be reviewed and addressed as the USACE revises a final version of the Master Plan.

ES.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following land classification changes (detailed in Chapter 8) were a result of the inventory, analysis, synthesis of data, documents, and public and agency input. In general, all USACE land at Conant Brook Dam was reclassified either by a change in nomenclature required by regulation or changes needed to identify actual and projected use. Table ES.0.1 illustrates the prior and revised land classifications, which includes increases in Project Operations and Wildlife Management. Multiple Resources Management, a 1998 Master Plan land classification, was decreased largely due to the updated naming of this land classification which is reflected in the increase of Wildlife Management. Environmentally Sensitive Area classification for environmental, cultural, and/or aesthetic preservation stayed the same.

Table ES.0.1 Change from 1998 Land Classifications to 2025 Proposed Land Classifications

Prior Land Classifications (1998)	Acres	Proposed Land Classifications (2025)	Acres	Net Difference
Project Operations	21	Project Operations (PO)	32	11
Recreation Lands	1	High Density Recreation (HDR)	-	(1)
Multiple Resources Management (MRM)	410	Multiple Resource Management Lands (MRML)	-	(410)
–	–	Wildlife Management (MRML-WM)	400	400
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	5	Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	5	0
LAND TOTAL	**437**	**LAND TOTAL**	**437**	**0**

*1998 acres are approximate based on digitizing the 1998 land classification map. Total fee acreage differences from the 1998 totals to the 2025 totals are due to improvements in measurement technology, deposition/siltation, and erosion. Totals also differ due to rounding while adding parcels.

ES.4 PLAN ORGANIZATION

Chapter 1 of the Master Plan presents an overall introduction to Conant Brook Dam. Chapter 2 consists of an inventory and analysis of Conant Brook Dam and associated land resources. Chapters 3 and 4 lay out management goals, resource objectives, and land classifications. Chapter 5 is the resource management plan that identifies how project lands will be managed for each land use classification. This includes current and projected overall park facility needs, an analysis of existing and anticipated resource use, and anticipated influences on overall project operation and management. Chapter 6 details special topics that are unique to Conant Brook Dam. Chapter 7 identifies the public involvement efforts and stakeholder input gathered for the development of the Master Plan, and Chapter 8 gives a summary of the changes in land classification from the previous Master Plan to the present one. Finally, the appendices include information and supporting documents for this Master Plan revision, including Land Classification and Park Plate Maps (Appendix A).

An EA was developed with the Master Plan, which analyzed alternative management scenarios for Conant Brook Dam, in accordance with federal regulations including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) and USACE regulations, including Engineer Regulation 200-2-2: Procedures for Implementing NEPA. The EA is a separate document that informs this Master Plan and can be found in its entirety in Appendix B.

The EA evaluated two alternatives as follows: 1) No Action Alternative, which would continue the use of the 1998 Master Plan, and 2) Proposed Action, the adoption and implementation of this Master Plan. The EA analyzed the potential impact these alternatives would have on the natural, cultural, and human environments. The Master

Plan is conceptual and broad in nature, and any action proposed in the Plan that would result in significant disturbance to natural resources or result in significant public interest would require additional NEPA documentation at the time the action takes place.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

Conant Brook Dam is located on Conant Brook in the town of Monson, Massachusetts. Monson is located in south-central Massachusetts, in Hampden County, on the southern border with Connecticut. The project is located two miles southeast of Monson Center. Conant Brook is a tributary of Chicopee Brook, which is in Chicopee River Watershed within the Connecticut River Basin. The project location is shown on Figure 1.1. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) New England District (formerly New England Division) built Conant Brook Dam and continues to operate the project.

The Master Plan is intended to serve as a comprehensive land and recreation management guide with an effective life of approximately 25 years. The focus of the plan is to guide the stewardship of natural and cultural resources and make provision for outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities on federal land associated with Conant Brook Dam. The Master Plan identifies conceptual types and levels of activities, but does not include designs, project sites, or estimated costs. All actions carried out by the USACE, other agencies, and individuals granted leases to USACE lands must be consistent with the Master Plan. The Master Plan does not address the flood risk management of Conant Brook Dam. USACE previously prepared various design memoranda in 1962 and 1963 covering real estate, design, and other factors. In 1979 USACE created a Master Plan for Recreation Resources Development. The 1998 Master Plan superseded that document. In turn, the 1998 Master Plan has served past its intended planning horizon of 25 years and merits a revision.

National USACE missions associated with water resource development projects may include flood risk management, water supply, water quality, navigation, recreation, environmental stewardship, and hydroelectric power generation. Most of these missions serve to protect the built environment and natural resources of a region from the climate extremes of drought and floods. This helps to create a more resilient and sustainable region for the health, welfare, and energy security of its citizens. Mitigation, while not a formal mission at USACE lakes, may be implemented to achieve the stewardship and recreation missions. Maintaining a healthy vegetative cover and native tree cover where ecologically appropriate on Federal lands within the constraints imposed by primary project purposes helps reduce stormwater runoff and soil erosion, mitigates air pollution, and moderates temperatures.

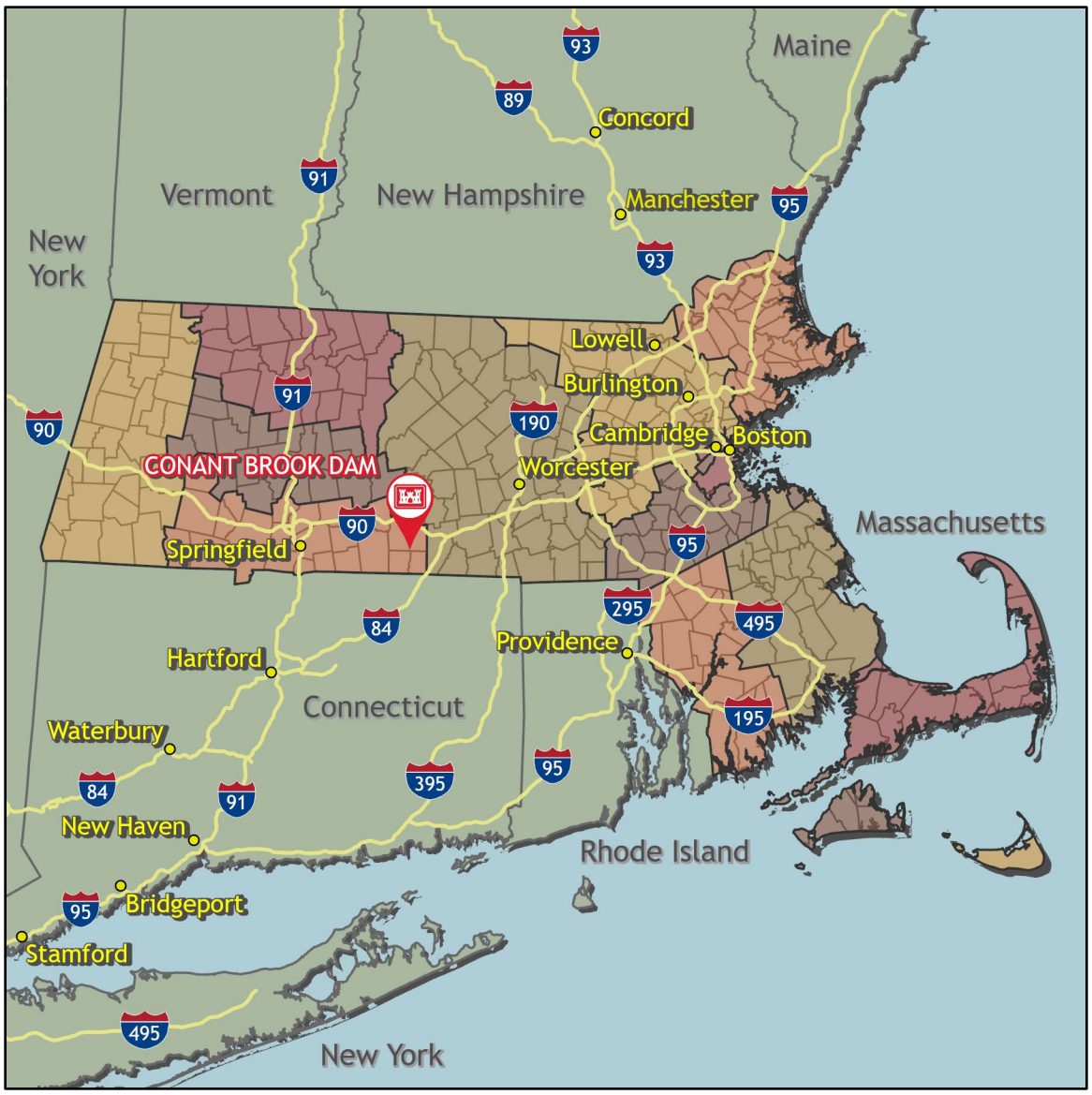


Figure 1.1 Conant Brook Dam Vicinity Map

1.2 PROJECT AUTHORIZATION

The Conant Brook Dam project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1960 (House Document 434, 86th Congress, 2nd Session). The dam and reservoir are located entirely within the town of Monson, Massachusetts. Authorization for development and use of USACE reservoir areas for public recreation and other purposes is contained in Section 4 of the Flood Control Act of December 22, 1944 (Public Law 534, 78th Congress), as amended.

1.3 PROJECT PURPOSE

USACE initiated construction of Conant Brook Dam in June 1964 and completed in December 1966 at a total cost of $2,950,530. Conant Brook Dam is a single purpose

flood control project and an integral part of the USACE's comprehensive flood control plan for the Connecticut River Basin. This comprehensive plan consists of sixteen dams and reservoirs, and 24 local protection projects. Two of these flood control dams (Conant Brook and Barre Falls), and four local protection projects (Chicopee Falls, Three Rivers, Ware, and West Warren) are located in the Chicopee River Basin (see Figure 1.1). Conant Brook Dam reduces flood damages primarily in the town of Monson, and to a lesser extent, in other communities farther downstream along the Quaboag and Chicopee Rivers. The project also provides natural resources management and recreational opportunities that are compatible with the project's primary purpose of flood control.

The Conant Brook Dam project area provides important natural resources and recreational opportunities for the surrounding area, as well as protection for the valuable natural resources in the project area. Management programs are carried out on project lands for fish and wildlife, and forestry resources. Recreational activities include hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, sightseeing, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing.

In addition to these missions, USACE has an inherent mission for environmental stewardship of project lands while working closely with stakeholders and partners to provide regionally important outdoor recreation opportunities. Other laws, including but not limited to Public Law 91-190, National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and Public Law 86-717, Forest Cover Act, place emphasis on the environmental stewardship of Federal lands and USACE-administered Federal lands, respectively.

1.4 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF MASTER PLAN

In accordance with Engineering Regulation (ER) 1130-2-550, Recreation Operations and Maintenance Policies, Change 07, dated 30 January 2013 and Engineering Pamphlet (EP) 1130-2-550, Recreation Operations and Maintenance Guidance and Procedures, Change 05, dated 30 January 2013, most USACE water resources development projects having a federally owned land base require a Master Plan. The Master Plan works in tandem with the Operational Management Plan (OMP), which is the task-oriented implementation tool for the resource objectives and development needs identified in the Master Plan. This revision of the Master Plan aims to bring the Master Plan up to date to reflect current ecological, socio-demographic, and outdoor recreation trends that are impacting Conant Brook Dam, as well as those anticipated to occur within the next 25 years.

The Conant Brook Dam Master Plan (hereafter Master Plan) is the strategic land use management document that guides the efficient, cost-effective, comprehensive management, development, and use of recreation, natural resources, and cultural resources throughout the life of the Conant Brook Dam project. It is a vital tool for responsible stewardship and sustainability of the project's natural and cultural resources for the benefit of present and future generations. The Master Plan guides and articulates USACE responsibilities pursuant to federal laws to preserve, conserve, restore, maintain, manage, and develop the land, water, and associated resources. It is

a dynamic and flexible tool designed to address changing conditions. The Master Plan focuses on carefully crafted resource-specific goals and objectives. It ensures that equal attention is given to the economy, quality, and needs in the management of resources and facilities, and that goals and objectives are accomplished at an appropriate scale.

The master planning process encompasses a series of interrelated and overlapping tasks involving the examination and analysis of past, present, and future environmental, recreational, and socioeconomic conditions and trends. With a generalized conceptual framework, the process focuses on the following four primary components:

- Regional and ecosystem needs
- Project resource capabilities and suitability
- Expressed public interests that are compatible with Conant Brook Dam's authorized purposes
- Environmental sustainability elements

It is important to note what the Master Plan does not address. The Master Plan does not address details of design, management and administration, and implementation. The Conant Brook Dam OMP instead covers these topics. In addition, the Master Plan does not address the specifics of regional water quality, shoreline management (a term used to describe primarily vegetation modification or permits by neighboring landowners), or water level management, nor does it address the operation and maintenance of prime project operations facilities such as the dam embankment, gate control outlet, and spillway. Additionally, the Master Plan does not address the flood control, water supply, and low flow augmentation purposes of Conant Brook Dam with respect to management of water levels.

The previous Master Plan was sufficient for prior land use planning and management but changes in outdoor recreation trends, regional land use, population, current legislative requirements, and USACE management policy have occurred over the past decades. Additionally, factors such as increasing fragmentation of wildlife habitat, national policies related to land management, and growing demand for recreational access and protection of natural and cultural resources affect Conant Brook Dam and the region in general. In response to these escalating pressures and trends, a full revision of the 1998 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan is necessary as set forth in this Master Plan. The Master Plan revision will update land classifications and include new resource management goals and objectives.

1.5 BRIEF WATERSHED AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Conant Brook and its tributaries drain an area of moderate relief located in the western part of the Worcester Plateau. The main tributary of Conant Brook is Vinica Brook which drains an area of approximately 6.4 square miles. The relatively steep slopes of the hills and tributaries which drain into narrow valleys are conductive to rapid runoff. The main streambed above the dam site drops approximately 300 feet in 5 miles.

Conant Brook Dam is a rolled earthfill dam with an impervious core and rock slope protection. The dam has a top elevation of 771 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD), an overall length of 1,050 feet, and a maximum height of 85 feet. An emergency chute type spillway with a 100 foot wide ogee concrete weir is located at the right abutment of the dam. The spillway has a crest elevation of 757 feet NGVD, 14 feet below the crest of the dam. The outlet works at the dam consist of an ungated 36 inch diameter concrete conduit about 405 feet long. The inlet structure and 10 foot wide inlet channel have an invert elevation of 694 feet NGVD. The trash rack and log boom protect the inlet structure from being clogged by debris. The project also includes a 900 foot long dike at the northern end of the reservoir. This dike raised a natural drainage divide a maximum of 20 feet (the elevation 771 feet NGVD), and serves as a foundation for Munn Road, which was relocated to the top of the dike.

There is no lake at Conant Brook Dam. At spillway crest elevation, Conant Brook Reservoir would have a surface area of 158 acres and a storage capacity of 3,740 acre-feet. The flood storage area of the project, which covers 158 acres, is normally empty and only utilized to store floodwaters. The entire project, including all associated lands, covers 455 acres. Conant Brook Dam can store up to 1.22 billion gallons of water for flood control purposes. This is equivalent to nine inches of water covering its drainage area of 7.8 square miles.

Conant Brook Dam is self-operating. With an ungated outlet, the reservoir acts as an automatic detention basin that stores all flows exceeding the capacity of the conduit. The selected conduit size permits passage of normal brook flows without utilizing any appreciable storage in the reservoir.

1.6 PROJECT ACCESS

Access to the project area is provided from Wales Road which follows a generally southeasterly direction from State Route 32 in south Monson. From Wales Road, the access road provides entrance to the damsite and parking area, and Munn Road provides access to the dike area. State Route 32 can be reached from Interstate 90 (Mass Pike) or State Route 20.

1.7 PRIOR DESIGN MEMORANDA AND PLANNING REPORTS

Design Memoranda (DM) and Project Reports approved and set forth design and development plans for all aspects of the project including the prime flood risk management facilities, real estate acquisition, road and utility relocations, reservoir clearing, and the master plan for recreation development and land management prior to 1999, when the use of DMs was terminated. The USACE prepared all DMs for Conant Brook Dam in 1962 and 1963. The DMs include Hydrology and Hydraulics, Detailed Design of Structures, Embankments and Foundations, Concrete Materials, General Design, Site Geology, and Real Estate. Table 1.1 contains the DMs for Conant Brook Dam and the manuals and reports for Conant Brook Dam are listed in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Conant Brook Dam Design Memoranda

DM No.	Design Memoranda Title	Date Approved
1	Hydrology and Hydraulics	May 1963
2	Detailed Design of Structures	November 1963
3	Embankments and Foundations	October 1963
4	Concrete Materials	November 1962
5	General Design	May 1963
6	Site Geology	August 1963
7	Real Estate	November 1963

Table 1.2 Manuals and Reports for Conant Brook Dam

Subject	Date Approved
Operation and Maintenance Manual, Conant Brook Dam, Monson, Massachusetts	June 1972
Environmental Assessment of the Operation and Maintenance of Conant Brook Dam, Monson, Massachusetts	June 1974
Cultural Resource Reconnaissance for Operation and Maintenance of Conant Brook Dam, Monson, Massachusetts	1978
Master Plan for Recreation Resources Development, Conant Brook Dam, Monson, Massachusetts	April 1979
Forest Management Plan, Master Plan Appendix B, and Fish and Wildlife Management Plan, Master Plan Appendix D, Conant Brook Dam	May 1981
Conant Brook Water Quality Evaluation	June 1983
Master Water Control Manual, Connecticut River Basin	November 1983
Operational Management Plan, Conant Brook Dam	1993
Five Period Inspection Reports	February 1997, May 1981, October 1985, November 1990, October 1995

1.8 PERTINENT PROJECT INFORMATION

Table 1.3 provides general pertinent information for Conant Brook Dam. Table 1.4 provides pertinent data regarding key reservoir elevations and storage capacity at Conant Brook Dam.

Table 1.3 General Pertinent Information for Conant Brook Dam

Location	
Basin	Connecticut River
Stream	Conant Brook
County	Hampden
State	Massachusetts
Drainage Area	
Above Dam	67.5 square miles
Dam	
Type	Rolled earth fill with impervious core and rock slope
Length	1050 feet
Height	85 feet
Width	20 feet
Spillway	
Type	Ogee concrete weir
Crest Elevation	757 ft NGVD29
Length	100 feet
Design Discharge	11,000 cubic feet per second

(Source: Connecticut River Basin Master Manual of Water Control, 1979)

Table 1.4 Pertinent Data for Conant Brook Dam

Reservoir Feature	Elevation (ft, NGVD29)	Stage (feet)	Surface Area (acres)	Capacity (acre-feet)	Capacity (inches of runoff)
Streambed	693	0	0	0	0
Spillway Crest	757	63	158	3,740	9
Maximum Surcharge (Design Criteria)	766	80	216	5,400	21.3
Top of Dam	771	78	158	3,740	9

(Source: Connecticut River Basin Master Manual of Water Control, 1979)

CHAPTER 2 – PROJECT SETTING AND FACTORS INFLUENCING MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 HYDROLOGY

2.1.1 Surface Water

Surface waters are categorized by hydrologic units. Hydrologic units are classified by the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) using a Hydrologic Units Code (HUC) system. As shown in Figure 2.1, the units are classified from largest HUC with a two-digit region (i.e., the New England Region), encompassing the largest area, to a twelve-digit sub-watershed HUC. Conant Brook Dam is classified by sub-watersheds as follows:

01 (HUC 2: Region) – New England Region
0108 (HUC 4: Sub-region) – Connecticut Coastal
010802 (HUC 6: Basin) – Lower Connecticut
01080204 (HUC 8: Sub Basin) –Chicopee
0108020403 (HUC 10: Watershed) – Quaboag River
010802040306 (HUC 12: Sub-watershed) – Chicopee Brook

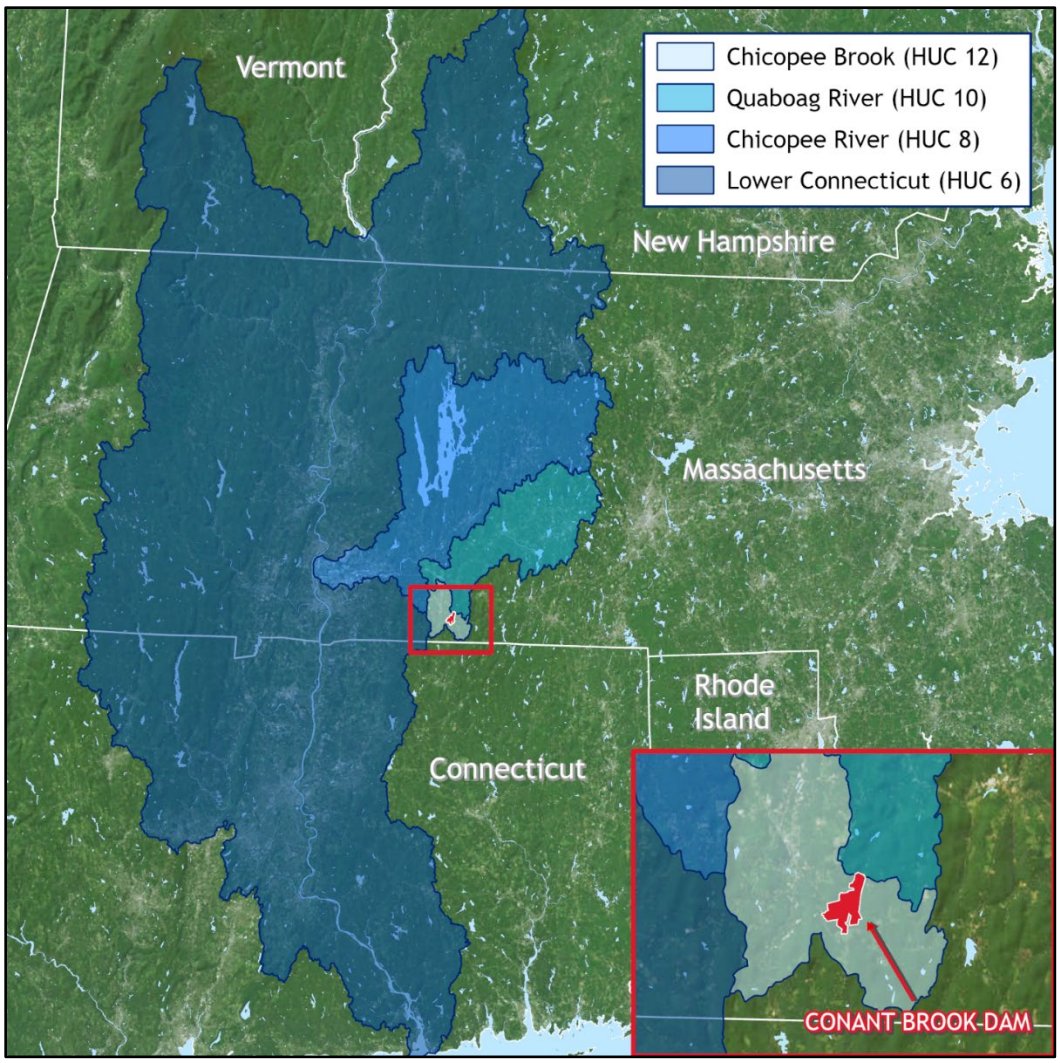


Figure 2.1 Hydrology (HUC 6, 8, 10,12) Map for Conant Brook Dam (USGS 2023)

2.1.2 Ground Water

The groundwater at Conant Brook Dam is limited to New England crystalline-rock aquifers as shown in Figure 2.2. Igneous and metamorphic rocks, primarily gneiss and schist, characterize the aquifers in Massachusetts. Well depths of 100-400 feet are common, with the potential for some wells exceeding 1,000 feet before reaching water. Groundwater generally yields 1-20 gallons per minute but can exceed 300 gallons per minute. Groundwater is generally suitable for most uses but may corrode pipes and appliances. The nearest major aquifer is the northernmost portion of sandstone Early Mesozoic Basin Aquifers, approximately ten miles to the west. The state data indicates that a medium and high yield aquifer capable of providing 100-300 and over 300 gallons per minute, respectively occur three miles west of the project. Overall, some groundwater resources are available in the area. Outside of the aquifers mapped by the USGS and the state, wells may have low yields. In the scattered local and larger regional aquifers wells may have higher yields. Groundwater resources should not

affect the management of Conant Brook Dam's lands and resources (USGS n.d. a, USGS n.d. b, USGS n.d. c, USGS 2024, MassGIS 2007).

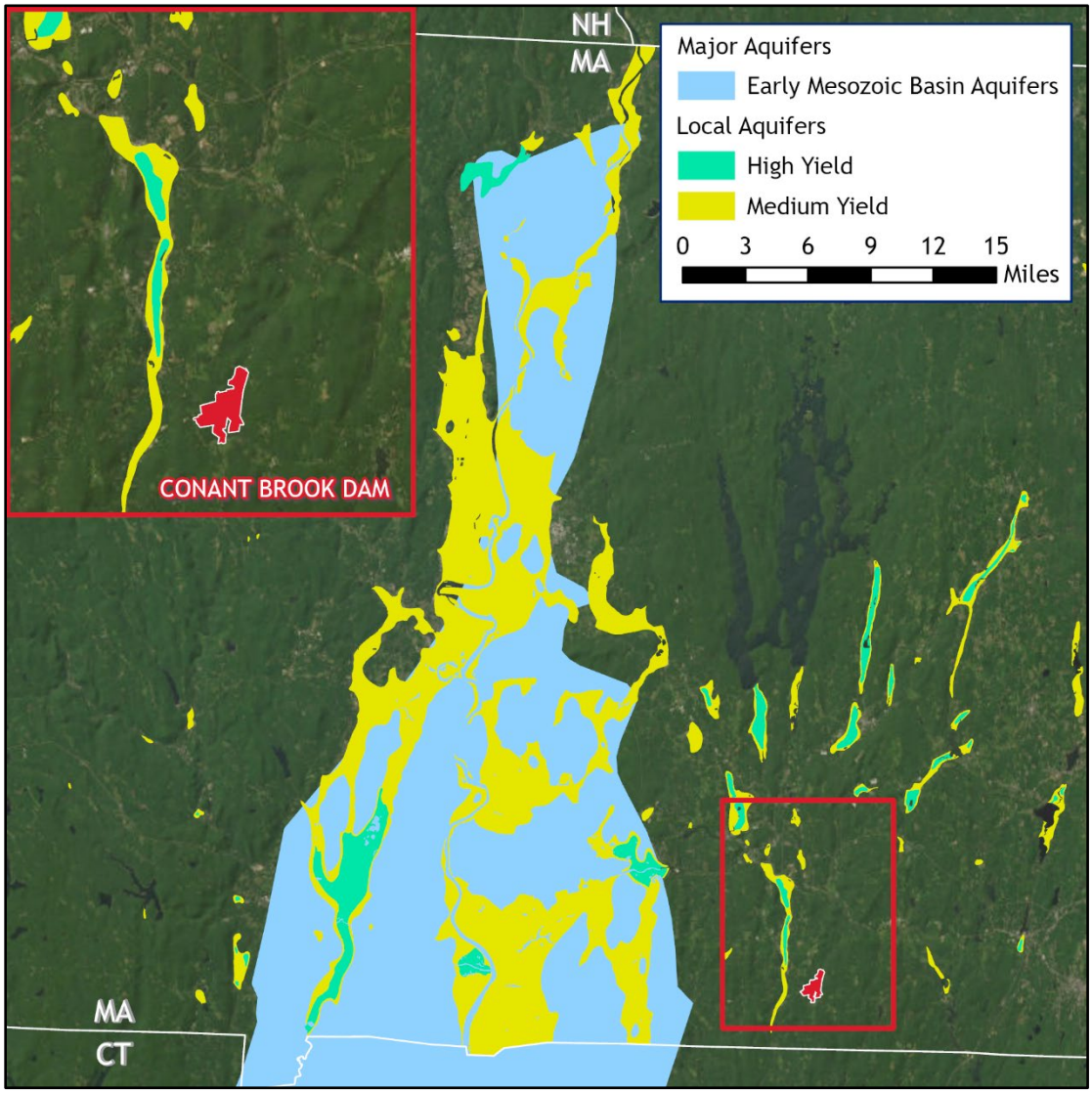


Figure 2.2 Groundwater Map for Conant Brook Dam (USGS, 2007, 2023)

2.2 SEDIMENTATION AND SHORELINE EROSION

Currently, minor erosion and subsequent sedimentation of streams and wetlands is caused by the unauthorized and irresponsible use of all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes. A law-enforcement contract is currently in place with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Environmental Police to control unauthorized use of these off-road vehicles. This contract and patrols performed by USACE park rangers have greatly reduced damaged areas allowing USACE to revegetate previously damaged areas. Adverse erosion effects on the shoreline from flood impoundment operations are not a significant problem in the reservoir due to the short period of time that flood waters are present.

The inherent design of this run of the river project has helped to minimize shoreline erosion, thereby contributing to overall good water quality conditions. Erosion/runoff control will be an integral part of resource management activities, such as harvesting operations, access road construction and trail development. Control measures, including proper layout, improved drainage, minimum vegetation removal, and erosion bars and seeding will be accomplished in all management and contract work before jobs are completed. Practices would also include the provision of filter strips, water bars and control of equipment on steep slopes. Results of erosion control efforts will be monitored to ensure erosion is properly managed. Frequent inspection will be made of problem areas after erosion has been controlled and periodic maintenance will be scheduled as needed to prevent degradation.

2.3 WATER QUALITY

The Conant Brook Dam provides flood protection to the town of Monson and other communities along the Quaboag River. The 158-acre reservoir has a capacity to store 1.22 billion gallons of floodwater during a flood event, but typically only 4 acres are filled with water in normal conditions. The project area also contains the 7-acre warmwater man-made Squire Pond, and Duck Pond, a shallow kettle pond. Conant Brook Dam provides recreational opportunities such as stream fishing, hiking, horseback riding, seasonal hunting, and cross-country skiing (USACE 2021). The project area also serves as habitat for fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts protects its waters through established water quality standards based on classified uses of each water body. According to the 2022 Integrated List of Waters report, the reservoir is a Class B freshwater lake and Conant Brook is a Class B, cold water river. Conant Brook is monitored for water quality attainment while the reservoir, Duck Pond, and Squire Pond are not. The 2022 report lists Conant Brook in attainment for four use categories, presented in Table 2.1 (MassDEP 2022; MassGIS 2021). Fish consumption is not assessed by MassDEP for Conant Brook.

Table 2.1 MassDEP 2022 Integrated List of Waters Report Data for Conant Brook Dam (MassGIS 2021)

Assessed Use Category	Assessment Determination	Date Listed as Impaired	Impairment Cause	Impairment Source
Fish Consumption	Not Assessed	-	-	-
Aquatic Life	Attaining	2022	-	-
Primary Contact Recreation	Attaining	2022	-	-
Secondary Contact Recreation	Attaining	2022	-	-

Assessed Use Category	Assessment Determination	Date Listed as Impaired	Impairment Cause	Impairment Source
Aesthetics	Attaining	2022	-	-

2.4 AIR QUALITY

The Clean Air Act (CAA) establishes the framework for modern air pollution control and delegates primary responsibility for regulating air quality to the states, with oversight by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA develops rules and regulations to preserve and improve air quality as minimum requirements of the CAA, and delegates specific responsibilities to state and local agencies. Seven specific pollutants (called criteria pollutants) have been identified to be of concern with respect to the health and welfare of the public. The criteria pollutants are carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO2), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), ozone (O3), particulate matter 10 micrometers or less in aerodynamic diameter (PM10), particulate matter 2.5 micrometers or less in aerodynamic diameter (PM2.5), and lead (Pb). The EPA has established the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for these pollutants. Attainment zones are areas where the NAAQS have been met. The EPA has established the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for these pollutants. In 2023, Hampden county was in attainment of all national pollutant standards (EPA 2023).

A General Conformity determination is not required for the 2025 MP since it would not contribute or produce any emissions that would equal or exceed the de minimis thresholds defined by the EPA for non- attainment areas (40 CFR §93.153).

2.5 CLIMATE AND GREENHOUSE GASES

2.5.1 Climate

Climatic regions are described by the Köppen-Geiger climate classification system and represented by three letters, according to their main climate group and precipitation and temperature subgroups. Most of central Massachusetts is classified as a warm- summer humid continental climate (Köppen classification Dfb). A humid continental climate can be broadly described as having four distinct seasons with large seasonal temperature differences, warm to hot summers, and cold, snowy winters. The Northeast region of the United States experiences extreme heat, flooding, droughts, and poor air quality (U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP 2023)), as well as an increase in extreme precipitation events and more severe and long-lasting heatwaves.

The nearest NOAA climate station is located 8 miles east at East Brimfield Lake (Station USC00192107). The 1991-2020 data is presented in Figure 2.3 which includes the average precipitation each month and the average minimum, maximum, and daily temperature for each month (NCEI 2020).

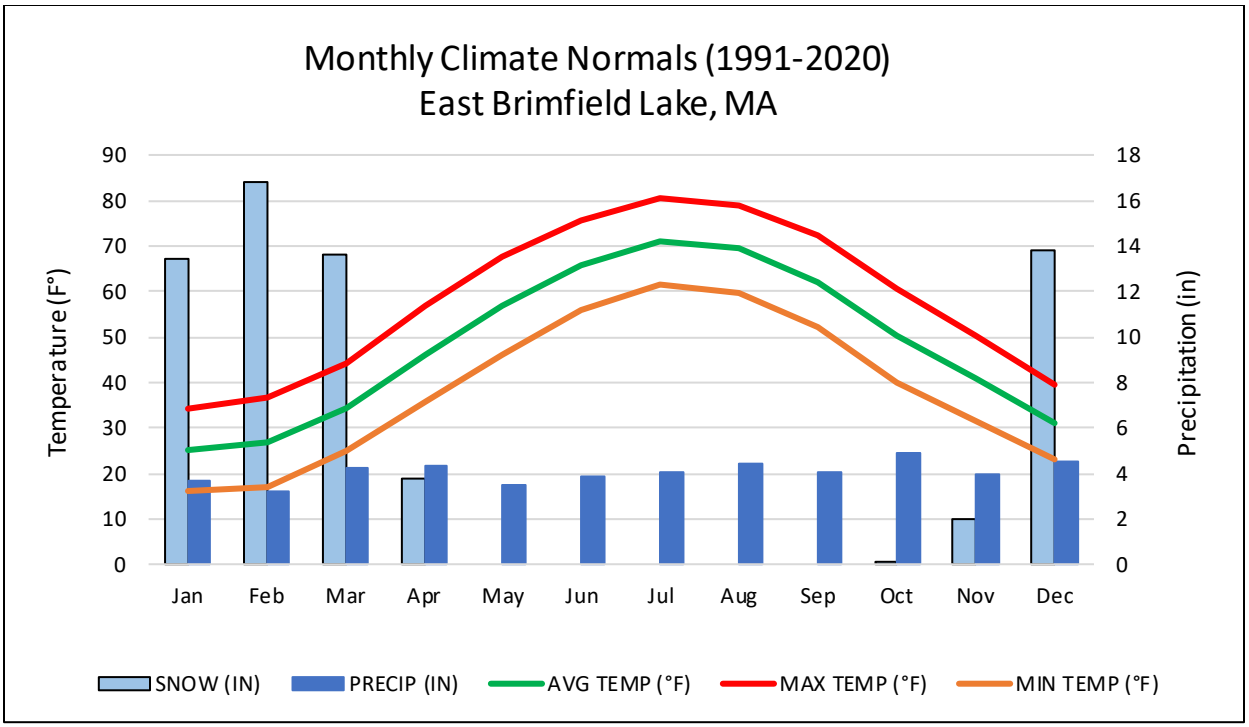


Figure 2.3 Average Monthly Climate for East Brimfield Lake, Massachusetts, 1991-2020 (NCEI 2020)

2.5.2 Greenhouse Gases

The EPA Facility Level Information on Greenhouse gases Tool (FLIGHT) provides data on large emitters of GHGs. Within a 10-mile radius of Conant Brook Dam in Hampden County there is a single facility. However, this facility has discontinued reporting since 2014 (EPA 2022).

2.6 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, AND SOILS

2.6.1 Topography

The Conant Brook Dam project is located within the western part of the Worcester plateau. The topography in the project area is characterized by broad, steep sided hills and poorly drained valleys. The land surface is controlled largely by the underlying folded and very much altered crystallin bedrock that has been modified by glacial and post glacial erosion and deposition.

Elevations in the area range from about 700 feet NGVD at the dam site to a maximum of about 1260 feet NGVD in the headwaters of Conant Brook. The relatively steep slopes of the drainage area and poorly drained narrow valleys are conducive to rapid runoff. This results in quick inundation of the lower levels of the project during heavy rain or snowmelt. Remnants of glacial outwash and lake deposits are present on the floor and sides of the main valleys. Above these deposits, the slopes are blanketed with glacial till through which bedrock outcrops rather extensively at the higher

elevations. There is also limited bedrock exposure along the valley floors due to erosion of overburden material.

2.6.2 Geology

During the late stages of the glacial period, the Worcester Plateau was altered by intermittent cycles of erosion and deposition from an irregularly oscillating ice margin. This left glacial till, boulders, kettles, and other features after the glacial retreat. The bedrock in Conant Brook is metaphoric rock primarily composed of mica minerals and visible garnet crystal. Thin, elongated intrusions of quartz and feldspar run through the rock, appearing like stringers and veins within the schistose fabric. This bedrock generally run in a north-south direction leaving two valleys between the hills.

2.6.3 Soils

The non-irrigated land capability classification from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) shows there are eight possible general classifications (Class I through Class VIII), but only six occur at Conant Brook Dam. The erosion hazards and plant cultivation limitations for use increase as the class number increases. Class I has few limitations, whereas Class VIII has many. The NRCS' Web Soil Survey provided the soil class data for project lands in Table 2.2. This data is a standard component of natural resource inventories on USACE lands. This data, however, is not recorded in the USACE Natural Resource Management (NRM) system.

Table 2.2 Soil Classifications at Conant Brook Dam

Soil Class	Acreage
Class I	0
Class II	12
Class III	74
Class IV	53
Class V	32
Class VI	106
Class VII	139
Class VIII	0

(Source: NRI Level I Inventory)

The descriptions of the soils and land capability classifications below demonstrate the relative general potential for project lands. The different soils are mapped in Figure 2.4. The NRCS maintains detailed information on all soil types surrounding Conant Brook Dam in various websites and datasets.

- Class I soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.
- Class II soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.

- Class III soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require special conservation practices, or both.
- Class IV soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or require very careful management, or both.
- Class V soils have little or no hazard of erosion but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use mainly to pasture, range, forestland, or wildlife food and cover.
- Class VI soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and that limit their use mainly to pasture, range, forestland, or wildlife food and cover.
- Class VII soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuited to cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to grazing, forestland, or wildlife.
- Class VIII soils and miscellaneous areas have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plant production and limit their use to recreation, wildlife, or water supply or for aesthetic purposes.

Figure 2.4 Soil Classification Map for Conant Brook Dam (NRCS, 2023)

2.6.4 Prime Farmland

Section 1541(b) of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) of 1980 and 1995, 7 U.S.C. 4202(b), requires federal and state agencies, as well as projects funded with federal funds, to (a) use the criteria to identify and take into account the adverse effects of their programs on the preservation of farmland, (b) consider alternative actions, as appropriate, that could lessen adverse effects, and (c) ensure that their programs, to the extent practicable, are compatible with state and units of local government and private programs and policies to protect farmland. The prime farmlands are mapped in Figure 2.5 and described in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Prime Farmlands Identified at the Conant Brook Dam (NRCS, 2023)

Map Symbol	Map Unit Name	Farmland Classification
103E	Charlton-Hollis-Rock outcrop complex, steep	Not prime farmland
15A	Scarboro-Rippowam complex, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
253B	Hinckley loamy sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
253C	Hinckley loamy sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
253D	Hinckley loamy sand, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
253E	Hinckley loamy sand, 25 to 35 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
260B	Sudbury fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
301B	Montauk fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
302B	Montauk fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, extremely stony	Farmland of statewide importance
307C	Paxton fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, extremely stony	Not prime farmland
317B	Scituate fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, extremely stony	Not prime farmland
317C	Scituate fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, extremely stony	Not prime farmland
31A	Walpole sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
386B	Essex gravelly fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance

Map Symbol	Map Unit Name	Farmland Classification
442D	Gloucester gravelly fine sandy loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes, extremely stony	Not prime farmland
52A	Freetown muck, ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
600	Pits, gravel	Not prime farmland
71A	Ridgebury fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, extremely stony	Not prime farmland
71B	Ridgebury fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, extremely stony	Not prime farmland
751	Dam	Not prime farmland

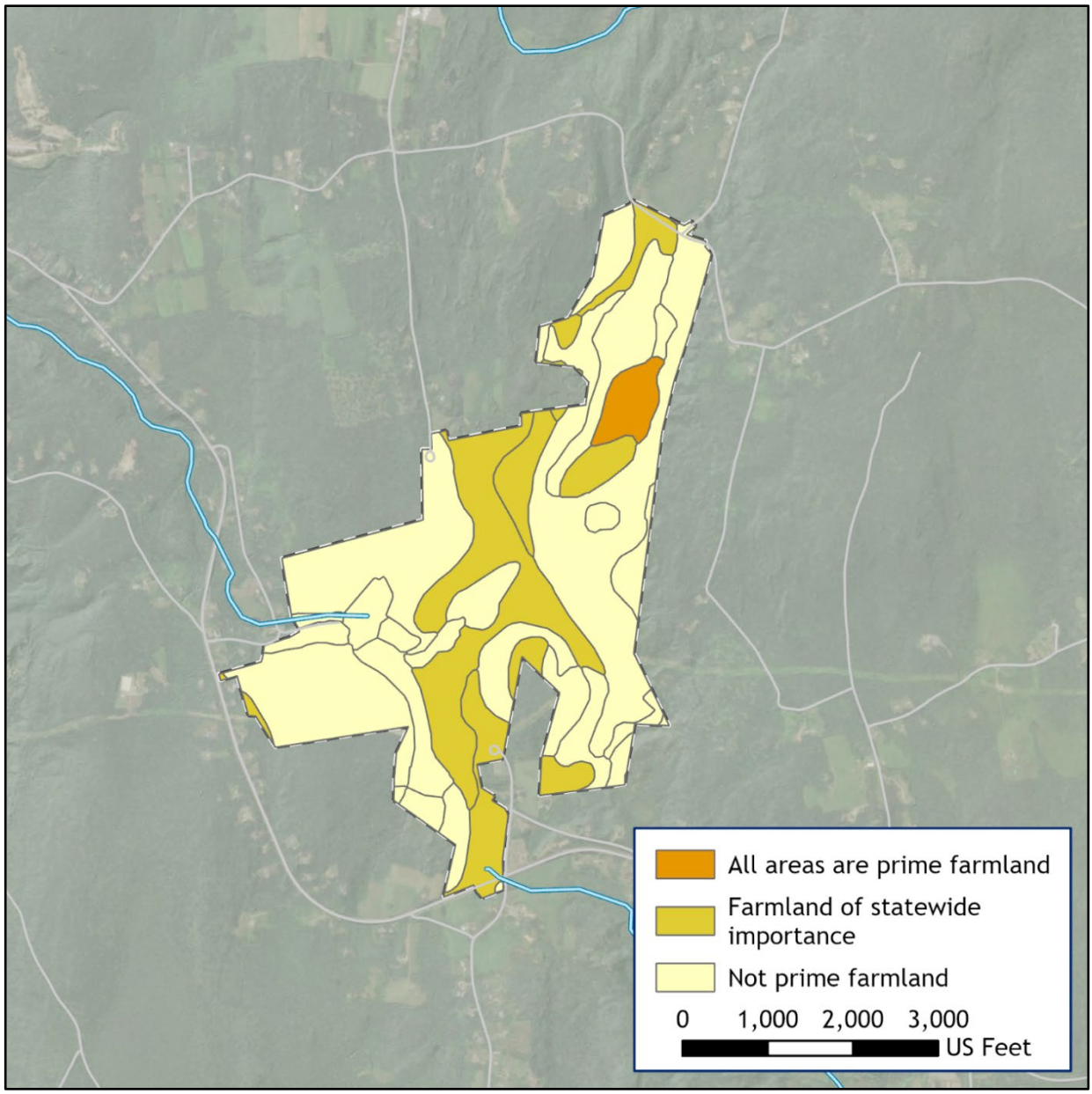


Figure 2.5 Prime Farmland Soils Map for Conant Brook Dam (NRCS, 2023)

2.7 NATURAL RESOURCE ANALYSIS

2.7.1 Fish and Wildlife Resources

Fish and wildlife found at the Conant Brook Dam project area are common in Hampden County and Central Massachusetts (USACE 2022; USACE 1998; USACE 1993; Mass Audubon n.d.). A brief list of indigenous species of birds, fish, invertebrates, and mammals is found in Table 2.4. A more extensive list can be found in Appendix C, which includes some species found during USACE field surveys in 1996 (USACE 1998). Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with Massachusetts fish and game laws. Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) stocks the water bodies with trout (USACE 2022; USACE 1998).

Table 2.4 Common Species Potentially Occurring at Conant Brook Dam

Common Name / Scientific Name	Common Name / Scientific Name
White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)	Eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)
Eastern grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)	Eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*)
American beaver (*Castor canadensis*)	Groundhog (*Marmota monax*)
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)	Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)
Wood duck (*Aix sponsa*)	Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)
Red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)	Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)
Barred owl (*Strix varia*)	Ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)
Spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*)	Northern spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*)
Eastern American toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*)	Common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)
Common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)	Eastern racer snake (*Coluber constrictor*)
Eastern elliptio (*Elliptio complanate*)	Eastern floater (*Pyganodon cataracta*)
Slender spreadwing (*Lestes rectangularis*)	Lesser maple spanworm (*Speranza pustularia*)

MassWildlife conducted a fishery survey of Conant Brook Dam in 1972 and 1984 and the results were reported in the 1998 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan (USACE 1998). The species, in addition to other common species, are described in Table 2.5. The reservoir, which usually holds 4 acres of water in normal conditions, has a limited warmwater fish population. The reservoir does not have an active fishery management and raising its water level is not feasible because of its impact on flood control

operations. Squire Pond, a 7-acre warmwater pond, also supports fish, but no fishery survey has been completed.

Table 2.5 Common Species and Surveyed Species at the Conant Brook Dam (USACE 1998)

Common Name / Scientific Name	Common Name / Scientific Name
Eastern blacknose dace (*Rhinichthys atratulus*)	Brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)
White sucker (*Catostomus commersonii*)	Tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedi*)
Chain pickerel (*Esox niger*)	Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)
Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*)	Yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*)
Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*)	Largemouth bass (*Micropterus nigricans*)
American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*)	-

2.7.2 Vegetative Resources

The Conant Brook Dam sits within the Lower Worcester Plateau/Eastern Connecticut Upland Level IV ecoregion designated by the EPA (EPA n.d.; Griffith et al. 2009). Dominant forest-types in this region are transitional hardwoods (i.e. maple-beech-birch) and central hardwoods-pine (i.e. oak-hickory, oak-hemlock-white pine) (Griffith et al. 2009). Conant Brook is dominated by second growth forest (CME 2008). The last forest inventory for Conant Brook Dam occurred in 1994 and found stands of white pine/hemlock, mixed oak, hemlock/hardwoods, white pine/hardwoods, gray birch/red maple, oak hardwoods, northern red oak, white pine/oak, and red pine/white pine (USACE 1998). Black cherry and yellow birch also occur at the project area. Understory vegetation includes high bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), low bush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), maple-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), and trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*) (USACE 1998). Additionally, a species survey in 2008 noted several hemlock ravine/forest areas (CME 2008).

2.7.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

A list of federally threatened and endangered species was obtained through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool on October 18, 2024. Listed species and their critical habitats are managed by the USFWS. The project area is located within the range of the endangered northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and the threatened small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*), which is a perennial member of the orchid family that grows in wooded habitats. The IPaC tool did not report any critical habitats for these species in the project area (USFWS 2024).

The IPaC tool also reports on migratory birds and eagles that are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Some of these protected species are also considered Birds of

Conservation Concern (BCC) because they are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act if there are no additional conservation actions (USFWS 2021). Birds identified as BCC according to the USFWS are denoted with an "*" in Table 2.6. Bird species considered for the BCC include nongame birds, game birds without a hunting season, subsistence-hunted nongame birds in Alaska, and Endangered Species Act (ESA) candidate, proposed, and recently de-listed species. The overall goal of the BCC designation is to accurately identify the migratory and non-migratory bird species (beyond those already designated as federally threatened or endangered) that represent the USFWS's highest conservation priorities (USFWS 2021).

Table 2.6 Federally Protected Migratory Birds Potentially Occurring at Conant Brook Dam

Common Name / Scientific Name	Common Name / Scientific Name
Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)	Black-billed cuckoo * (*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*)
Blue-winged warbler * (*Vermivora cyanoptera*)	Bobolink * (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)
Canada warbler * (*Cardellina canadensis*)	Chimney swift * (*Chaetura pelagica*)
Prairie warbler * (*Setophaga discolor*)	Rusty blackbird * (*Euphagus carolinus*)
Scarlet tanager * (*Piranga olivacea*)	Wood thrush * (*Hylocichla mustelina*)
Eastern whip-poor-will * (*Antrostomus vociferus*)	-

* Birds that are of Conservation Concern (BCC) by the USFWS are denoted with an asterisk.

The project area was also surveyed for state-listed rare, threatened, and endangered species which were reported in 2008 and 1997 (CME 2008; NHESP 1997). The most recent report surveyed the project area from March to September 2008 and found three of the four state-listed species that were previously identified (NHESP 1997) at the site. The comet darner (*Anax longipes*), a large dragonfly, was not observed in the 2008 survey. The report referred to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) and the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) for their list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). These SGCN may be federally listed, state-listed, globally rare, or of regional concern (MassWildlife 2015). Of note is the golden club plant species, which was reported in the 1998 MP to be the largest population of golden club in Massachusetts. Table 2.7 lists these species surveyed in the 2008 and 1997 reports. Additionally, according to MassWildlife's Rare Species Viewer map for the town of Monson, ten other state-listed species could potentially occur at the site (MassWildlife n.d.). Although these additional species were not found during the 2008 or 1996 surveys, their information is provided in Appendix C.

Table 2.7 State-Listed Species Surveyed at Conant Brook Dam

Common Name / Scientific Name	Last Recorded	State Listing
Golden club (*Orontium aquaticum*)	2008	Endangered
Slender blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium mucronatum*)	2008	Endangered
Spring blue darner (*Rhionaeshna mutata*)	2008	Special Concern (SGCN)
Comet darner (*Anax longipes*)	1996	Special Concern (SGCN)

2.7.4 Invasive Species

Executive Order (EO) 13112 defines an invasive species as a plant or animal that is non-native to an ecosystem and whose introduction causes, or is likely to cause, economic and/or environmental harm, or harm to human health. Invasive species can thrive in areas beyond their normal range of dispersal and are characteristically adaptable, aggressive, and highly reproductive. Invasive species outside of their normal range lack predators, competitors, and parasites, allowing their populations to grow rapidly, resulting in a negative effect on native plants, animals, and ecosystem functions. The 2008 report and additional surveys conducted by park rangers reported multiple invasive plants at the Conant Brook Dam (Table 2.8) (CME 2008). Invasive aquatic species are denoted with an "*".

Table 2.8 Invasive Species Surveyed at Conant Brook Dam

Common Name / Scientific Name	Common Name / Scientific Name
Common reed (*Phragmites australis*)	Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
Variable watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) *	Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*)
European watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) *	Honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp.*)
Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*)	Glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*)
European buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*)	Carolina fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*)*
Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)	Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)
Sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)	Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)
Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*)	Yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)
Winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*)	Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)
Black swallow-wort (*Cynanchum louiseae*)	Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)
Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)	-

* Aquatic invasive species are denoted with an asterisk.

Invasive species can change community structure, composition, and ecosystem processes in ways that may not be anticipated or desirable. Careful management can minimize these negative impacts. Methods suggested to reduce invasives include hand-pulling, chemical control, prescribed fire, cutting, mowing, excavation, and water inundation (Terry 2024). Chemical, mechanical, and manual methods are used by staff and volunteers at the project to manage invasive species; they include:

- Hand pulling
- Cutting
- Mowing
- Digging
- Brush hogging/cutting
- Pulling with a mini excavator and tractor
- Chemical treatment

These methods are effective if repeated frequently during a growing season to exhaust a plant's root reserves, or if used in combination with other techniques. An invasive species management plan for the project will be developed in the future as funding becomes available. This plan would then be directly incorporated into the Master Plan during future updates or revisions.

2.7.5 Ecological Setting

The EPA's ecoregion classifications describe the broader ecological setting of Conant Brook. North America is divided into 15 broad, Level I ecological regions, 50 more detailed Level II ecoregions, and 182 Level III ecoregions that are nested within Level II regions. Massachusetts contains the Level I eastern temperate forests region and the northern forests region. The project area sits in the nested Level II mixed wood plains region of the broader eastern temperate forests (EPA 2024). Its Level III classification is the northeastern coastal zone (Figure 2.6). The overall characteristic in the northeastern coastal zone is irregular plains with low to high hills, nutrient-poor soils, and continental glacial lakes and ponds (Griffith et al. 2009).

Conant Brook resides in the Worcester Plateau/Eastern Connecticut Upland Level IV ecoregion. The region is characterized by low hills, irregular rolling plains, and an abundance of glacial drumlins (Griffith et al. 2009). The geologic relief, or difference in elevation between the high and low points, varies from 300 to 500 feet, and consists of gneiss, schist, and granofel metamorphic rock (Griffith et al. 2009). The soil on the uplands developed from glacial till, typically coarse-loamy, mesic Inceptisols (i.e. Woodbridge, Paxton, and Hollis soils). The valleys consist mostly of sand, gravel, and silt deposits.

Figure 2.6 EPA Level III Ecoregions of Massachusetts (ESRI n.d.; EPA 2024)

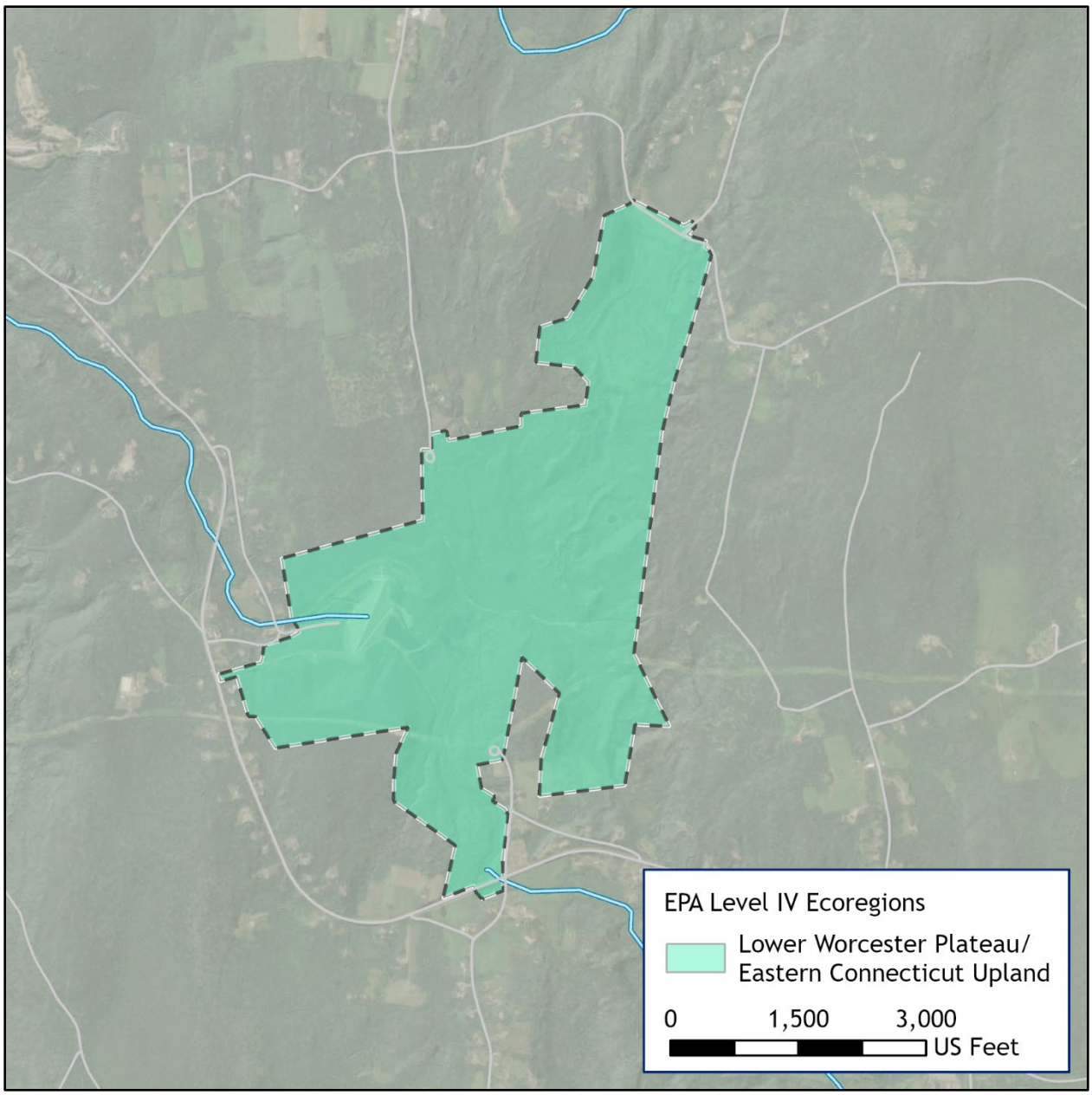


Figure 2.7 EPA Level IV Ecoregion at Conant Brook Dam (ESRI n.d.; EPA 2024)

The Worcester Plateau/Eastern Connecticut Upland climate is humid continental, having slightly cooler temperatures and slightly shorter growing seasons than the bordering lowland regions (Griffith et al. 2009). The variation in annual precipitation range (40-50 inches) is more similar to the western bordering regions than the along the coast. The number of days being frost-free ranges from 120-160. Freezing temperatures can be expected from late October to late April (USACE 1998).

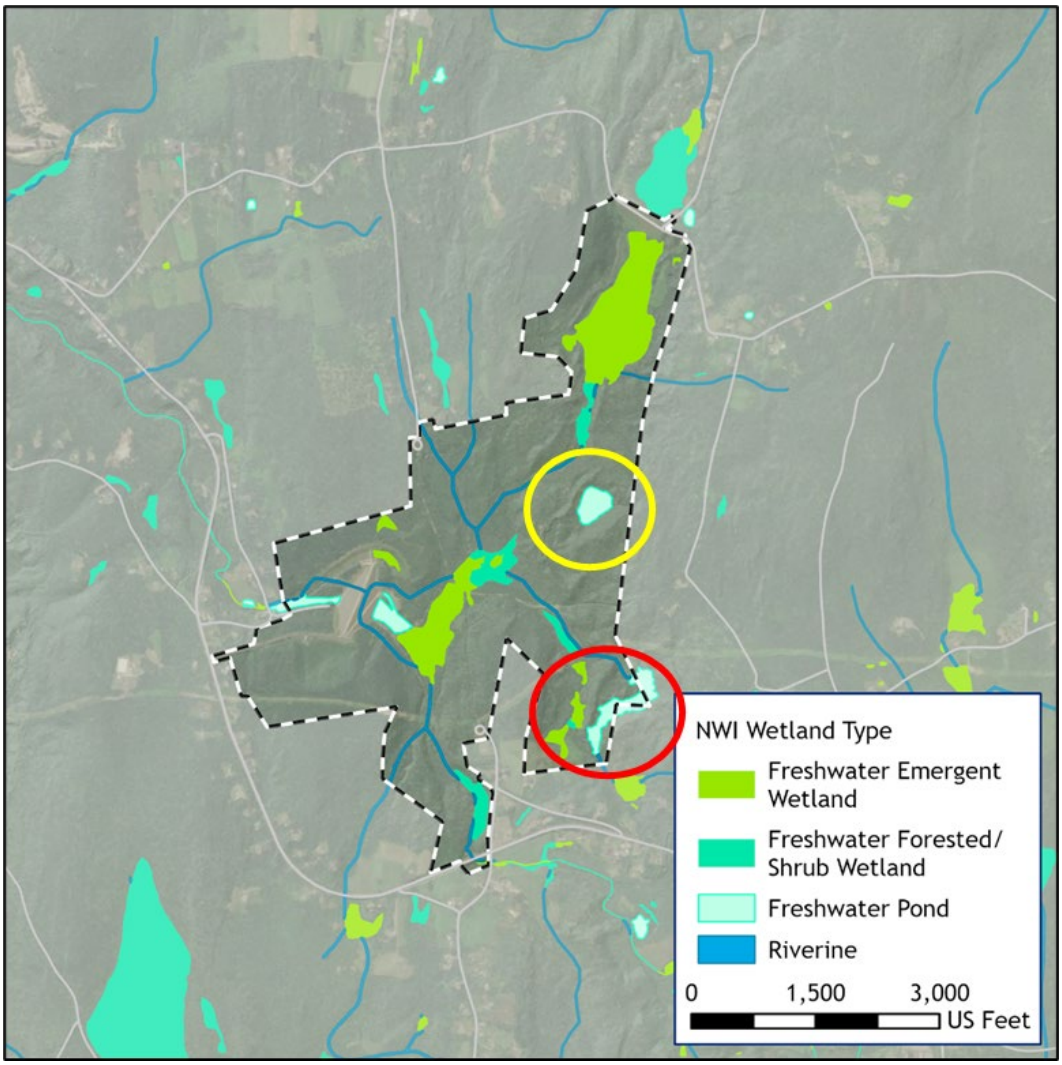
Vegetation throughout the ecoregion was originally forested with significant areas of wetlands. Much of Massachusetts had been historically deforested for farming by European settlers, but has since returned to mostly forests, woodlands, and urban

development, with only minor areas for pasture and cropland (Griffith et al. 2009). The major forest types are transition hardwoods (i.e. maple-beech-birch) and some central hardwoods (i.e. oak-hickory). The region has an abundance of ponds, small lakes, and acidic wetlands, with some freshwater marshes.

This region also supports unique habitats, which can be found at Conant Brook Dam. These special, exemplary, or biologically important community types are protected under MassWildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program and support endangered, threatened, and rare species. Some of these community types found at the project area include red maple swamps, hemlock ravines, wetlands, and vernal pools (CME 2008).

2.7.6 Wetlands

The USFWS maintains the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), which is a wetlands database across the United States. Protected wetlands provide habitat for more than 50 percent of endangered, threatened, and rare species, as well as habitat for migratory birds and nursery habitat for fish (USFWS n.d.(a)). The Conant Brook Dam project area contains several types of freshwater emergent and freshwater forested/shrub wetlands, freshwater ponds, and riverine habitat (Figure 2.8).



Duck Pond is within the yellow circle and Squire Pond is within the red circle.

Figure 2.8 Estimated Wetlands within Conant Brook Dam (USFWS n.d.(b))

There are approximately 70 acres of wetlands present within the boundary of the Conant Brook Dam project. Table 2.9 summarizes the area coverage per wetland type. One notable wetland sits south of Munn Road (CME 2008). This wetland contains hemlock ravines and forests. Five vernal pool locations were confirmed in a 2008 survey (CME 2008). The 1998 MP also noted the large population of golden club species occurring in and around Duck Pond (yellow circle), which is an isolated wetland.

Table 2.9 Wetland Cover in Acres at Conant Brook Dam

Wetland Type	Acreage
Freshwater Emergent Wetland	41
Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland	11
Freshwater Pond	10
Lake	0
Riverine	8

2.8 HAZARDOUS, TOXIC AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE

A review of the EPA EnviroMapper Database that includes Superfund sites, toxic releases, water discharges, air emissions, and hazardous wastes, indicates that there are no sites known to be within the area of the Conant Brook Dam project (EnviroMapper 2024).

The EPA's EnviroMapper tool reports that there are 76 hazardous, toxic, and/or radioactive waste sites within a 5-mile buffer of the Conant Brook Dam project area. These facilities range from Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) sites, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) sites, Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) sites, and GHG emissions sites. There are no Superfund or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) sites within a 5-mile radius. None of these facilities occur within the Conant Brook Dam project boundary. Figure 2.10 shows the EnviroMapper sites found within a 5-mile buffer of the project boundary. No sites are directly above Conant Brook Dam.

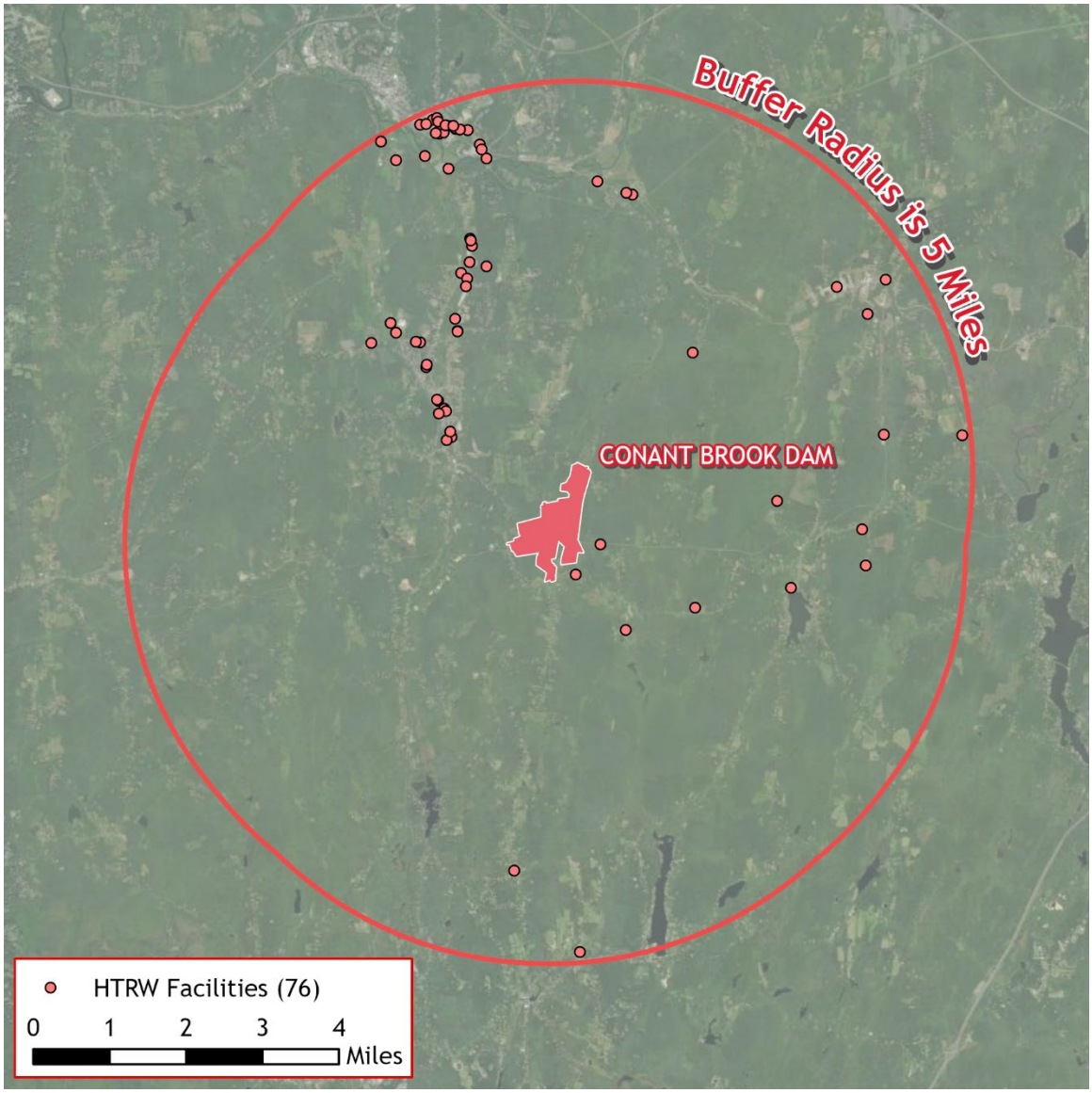


Figure 2.9 EPA EnviroMapper Hazardous, Toxic and/or Radioactive Waste Sites within 5 miles of Conant Brook Dam

2.9 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Conant Brook Dam staff work to provide public outreach programs on USACE missions and conservation of natural resources. USACE partners with the Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) to protect the recreating public at Conant Brook Dam. Partnership support includes patrol and enforcement of natural resource regulations, hunting and fishing regulations, and general law enforcement support. USACE also ensures compliance with rules and regulations governing solid waste, wastewater, and potable water management on USACE fee land, including those areas operated by lessees.

2.10 AESTHETIC RESOURCES

The natural environment of Conant Brook Dam reflects the diverse nature and beauty of New England. Forested, rolling hills frame the river valley and provide various habitats for a diversity of wildlife including a large wetland area, several ponds and streams, and extensive woodlands. These wetland and open water areas, along with the adjacent upland areas, provide conditions suitable for diverse vegetation cover, and support a variety of fish and wildlife species.

The project provides numerous opportunities for excellent scenic views. The overlook area at the dam provides the best views of both project features and the reservoir area upstream from the dam. Numerous trails and old roadways provide hikers and other project visitors with scenic views of streams, ponds, and other open and wooded areas throughout the project area.

Spring brings a renewed interest in fishing and mountain biking. A portion of the Monson-Brimfield-Wales (MBW) Trail, that goes through the towns of Monson, Brimfield and Wales, crosses over the Conant Brook Dam project. During wintertime, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing can be enjoyed on the wide trails. In fall, the colorful leaves make the rolling hills and the river valley a photographer's delight. Scenic views can be enjoyed throughout the area.

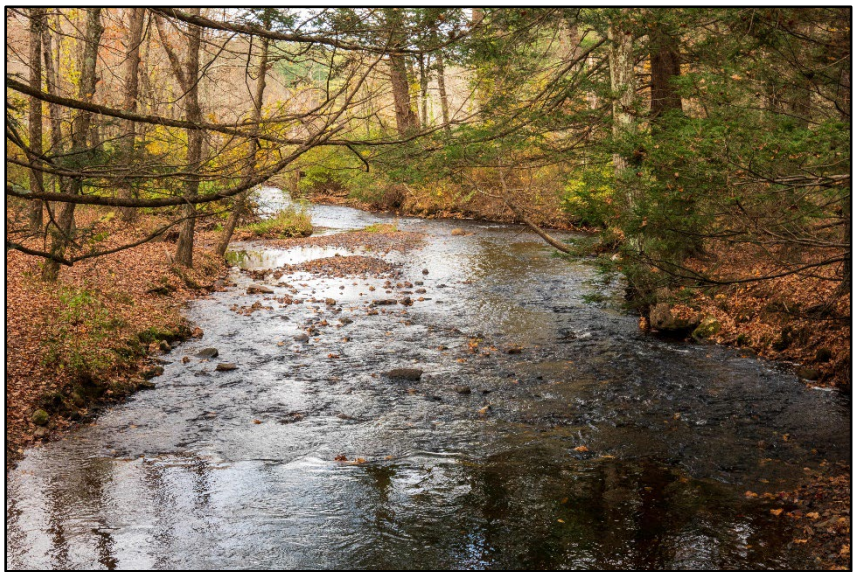


Photo 2.1 Stream located at Conant Brook Dam

The combination of topographic relief, open water areas, relative ease of access, and diversity of vegetation and wildlife provide a varied landscape and an aesthetically pleasing experience for visitors. The continuation of management practices that provide for the greatest diversity of indigenous plant and wildlife species, within a multiple use framework, will contribute to maintaining the natural and scenic qualities of this project. Other management practices to be continued are the maintenance of viewing areas, and protection of visually and environmentally sensitive areas.

2.11 CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources preservation and management is an equal and integral part of all resource management at USACE-administered operational projects. The term "cultural resources" is a broad term that includes, but is not limited to, historic and prehistoric archaeological sites, deposits, and features; burials and cemeteries; historic and prehistoric districts comprised of groups of structures or sites; cultural landscapes; built environment resources such as buildings, structures (such as bridges), and objects; traditional cultural properties; and sacred sites. These property types may be listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) if they meet the criteria specified by the NRHP (36 CFR Part 60), reflecting significance in architecture, history, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Cultural resources that are identified as eligible for listing in the NRHP are referred to as "historic properties," regardless of category. A Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) is a property that is eligible for inclusion in the NRHP based on its associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community. Ceremonies, hunting practices, plant-gathering, and social practices which are part of a culture's traditional lifeways, are also cultural resources.

Stewardship of cultural resources on USACE Civil Works water resources projects is an important part of the overall Federal responsibility. Numerous laws pertaining to identification, evaluation, and protection of cultural resources, Native American Indian rights, curation and collections management, and the protection of resources from looting and vandalism, establish the importance of cultural resources to our Nation's heritage. With the passage of these laws, the historical intent of U.S. Congress has been to ensure that the federal government protects cultural resources. Additionally, as stewards of cultural resources and in compliance with federal laws, it is incumbent upon the USACE to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Tribal Nations, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and other interested stakeholders in the preservation and management of cultural resources.

Guidance is derived from a number of cultural resources laws and regulations, including but not limited to Sections 106 and 110 (54 U.S.C. 306101-306114) of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended); Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA); and 36 CFR Part 79, Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archeological Collections. Implementing regulations for Section 106 of the NHPA and NAGPRA are 36 CFR Part 800 and 43 CFR Part 10, respectively. All cultural resources laws and regulations should be addressed under the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (as amended), as applicable. USACE summarizes the guidance provided in these laws in ER and EP 1130-2-540.

2.11.1 Summary of Resources and Previous Investigations

The cultural history of New England spans approximately 12,500 years of human occupation. This history is generally divided into pre-contact (prior to Native American

contact with Europeans) and post-contact (after Native American contact with Europeans) frameworks that are further subdivided into more specific time periods based technological variation, settlement patterns, land use, and subsistence and consist of (Atwood 1997; Lothrop et al. 2018):

Pre-Contact Periods

- Paleo-Indian Period (10,500 to 8,000 BC)
- Early Archaic Period (8,000 to 5,500 BC)
- Middle Archaic Period (5,500 to 3,000 BC)
- Late Archaic Period (3,000 to 1,000 BC)
- Early Woodland Period (1,000 BC to 300 AD)
- Middle Woodland Period (300 to 950 AD)
- Late Woodland Period (950 to 1500 AD)

Post-Contact Periods

- Contact and Early Historic (1500 to 1675 AD
- Colonial (1675 to 1775 AD)
- Federal (1775 to 1830 AD)
- Early Industrial (1830 to 1870 AD)
- Late Industrial (1870 to 1915 AD)
- Modern (1915 AD to Present)

Cultural resources within Conant Brook Dam include a record of occupations by indigenous populations from as early as the Middle Archaic Period (ca. 5,500 BC) through the Contact period (1500 to 1675 AD) and into the present day (Atwood 1997). There are no pre-contact archaeological sites recorded within the project area. Pre-contact archaeological sites in the surrounding region range from small scatters of chipped stone tools to campsites or small villages representing multiple episodes of occupation. Sites are typically found on low terraces overlooking ponds, wetlands, and streams. Pre-contact artifacts include stone projectile points, chipped stone tools, shell, bone, ceramics, and burned rock. Wilson (1981) notes that the Conant Brook valley had a limited subsistence potential and few level areas to support occupation. Wilson (1981) adds that alluvial terraces along Chicopee Brook and the Quaboag River are more likely to contain pre-contact sites.

Post-contact settlement in the project area begins in the early 18th century in the nearby community of Monson, along Chicopee Brook. Post-contact development in the region is represented by farmsteads, mills (saw, grist, fulling, and clover), quarries, axe and lead pipe factories, and transportation infrastructure. Only four post-contact sites have been identified in the project area and they include the W. King farmhouse and barn (ca. 1860-1912), the A. King farmhouse and barn (ca.1860-1870), the Monson Waterworks circular well (1894 to 1963), and the Monson Waterworks rectangular well (1925 to 1963). An additional four post-contact sites were identified within the project area on historic maps, but no physical evidence of these sites was found during a field

reconnaissance. These sites are the W. Sufliffe Boot Shop (ca. 1860), the Clover Mill (ca. 1830 to 1860), a summer cottage on Wales Road (post 1912 to 1963), and the Wales Road Water Troughs (ca. 1894 to 1912).

There have been three previous cultural resources investigations within Conant Brook Dam project area. The first of these investigations was a visual surface inspection by Dr. Bert Salwen in 1966 and included local informant interviews and limited sub-surface testing (Salwen 1966). The second investigation was a cultural resource reconnaissance of the project area by USACE in 1978 (Wilson 1981). The investigation was limited to six areas of high pre-contact site sensitivity with only two sub-surface tests and the investigation of eight post-contact sites identified through archival research. The final investigation was for the Tennessee Gas Pipeline in 1987 that traversed the project area (Strauss and Cook 1987).

2.11.2 Long-Term Cultural Resource Objectives

Cultural and environmental formation processes have affected cultural resources within the Conant Brook Dam project. These formation processes include the displacement of pre-contact archaeological sites by European settlement of the region that included deforestation, agriculture, and the construction of dams, houses, and roads. Subsurface looting has not been documented in the project area, but artifacts have been removed by local collectors. Impacts from surface collection are often exacerbated by increased access to site locations. The construction of the dam has had the largest impact to cultural resources, especially to historic age buildings and structures. The primary ongoing threat to cultural resources within the project area is erosion resulting from surface runoff, inundation, and recreation.

A Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP) was created by USACE for Conant Brook Dam in 1997 (Atwood 1997). Due to the relative paucity of cultural resources identified in the project area, the current HPMP is sufficient for the management of cultural resources. However, the HPMP should be updated to incorporate any new cultural resources information that has been developed since the 1997 HPMP. Additionally, the USACE has only a partial inventory of the fee-owned lands of the Conant Brook Dam project and a complete inventory should be completed to identify unrecorded cultural resources. It is recommended that the USACE update the existing HPMP in consultation with the Massachusetts SHPO, Native American Tribes, and other stakeholders to synthesize the existing data, address the effects of cultural and environmental processes on cultural resources and recommendations for managing these impacts, and outline procedures for management of these resources during construction and operations activities. Until the HPMP is updated, future activities that have a potential to affect cultural resources should look to the existing HPMP for guidance. Finally, any future activities that have a potential to affect cultural resources must comply with Section 106 and 110 of the NHPA, NAGPRA, and ARPA.

2.12 DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

2.12.1 Zone of Interest

Conant Brook Dam is situated 2 miles southeast of Monson, Massachusetts. The data that comprises the zone of interest for the social and economic analysis comes from counties that are within or significantly overlap a 50-mile radius circle around Conant Brook Dam. The zone of interest covers portions of Connecticut and Massachusetts including the following counties:

- Hartford County, CT
- Tolland County, CT
- Windham County, CT
- Franklin County, MA
- Hampden County, MA
- Hampshire County, MA
- Worcester County, MA

2.12.2 Population

The total population in the zone of interest in 2021 was 2,721,277 (Table 2.10). Approximately 33% of the zone of interest's population resides in Hartford County, CT, 31.5% reside in Worcester County, MA, and 17.1% reside in Hampden County, MA. The remaining counties in the zone of interest each account for less than 6% of the zone's population. Table 2.10 shows historical population counts for 2010 and 2020, a population estimate for 2021 and population projections for 2040. The 2021 population values are based on the Census's 5-year American Community Survey which develops it's estimates from a weighted sample of responses collected continuously over a 5 year period.

Table 2.10 Population Estimates (2010, 2020, 2021, 2040) and Projections

Geographical Area	2010	2020	2021 Population Estimate	Population Projection Estimates
Connecticut	3,577,073	3,570,549	3,605,330	3,654,015
Massachusetts	6,557,254	6,873,003	6,991,852	7,102,574
Hartford County, CT	894,478	892,153	898,636	949,277
Tolland County, CT	152,781	150,947	150,120	154,561
Windham County, CT	118,519	116,657	116,503	134,875
Franklin County, MA	71,369	70,529	71,085	63,652
Hampden County, MA	463,678	466,647	466,265	441,146
Hampshire County, MA	158,094	161,361	161,810	154,612

Geographical Area	2010	2020	2021 Population Estimate	Population Projection Estimates
Worcester County, MA	799,553	826,655	856,858	871,384
Zone of Interest Total	**2,658,472**	**2,684,949**	**2,721,277**	**2,769,507**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year (2017-2021), U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year (2016-2020), U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey 5-Year (2006-2010), Connecticut Open Data, Connecticut Town Populations 2015-2040, UMass Donahue Institute, UMDI-V2024 Massachusetts Population Projections.

From 2021 to 2040, the population in the zone of interest is expected to increase by 1.77% from 2,721,472 to 2,769,507, an average annual growth rate of 0.09%. The forecasted populations of Connecticut and Massachusetts are expected to increase by 1.35%, and 1.58% respectively. Counties within the zone of interest that are expected to grow include: Hartford County, CT (5.64%), Tolland County, CT (2.96%), Windham, CT (15.77%), and Worcester County, MA (1.70%). Counties forecasted to decrease in population include: Franklin County, MA (-10.46%), Hampden County, MA (-5.39%), Hampshire County, MA (-4.45%). Population growth in the zone of interest is most impacted by the projected population growth of approximately 50,000 in Harford County while also depressed by the projected population decline of approximately 25,000 in Hampden County.

The zone of interest's population distribution of the population by gender (Table 2.11) is approximately 49% male and 51% female. Figure 2.10 shows the population by age group for Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the entire zone of interest. The zone of interest is consistent by age group when compared to the two states.

Table 2.11 Population Estimate by Gender

Geographical Area	Male	Female
Connecticut	1,768,860	1,836,470
Massachusetts	3,413,174	3,578,678
Hartford County, CT	438,965	459,671
Tolland County, CT	75,675	74,445
Windham County, CT	58,073	58,430
Franklin County, MA	34,792	36,293
Hampden County, MA	226,473	239,792
Hampshire County, MA	75,480	86,330
Worcester County, MA	424,801	432,057
Zone of Interest Total	**1,334,259**	**1,387,018**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year (2017-2021)

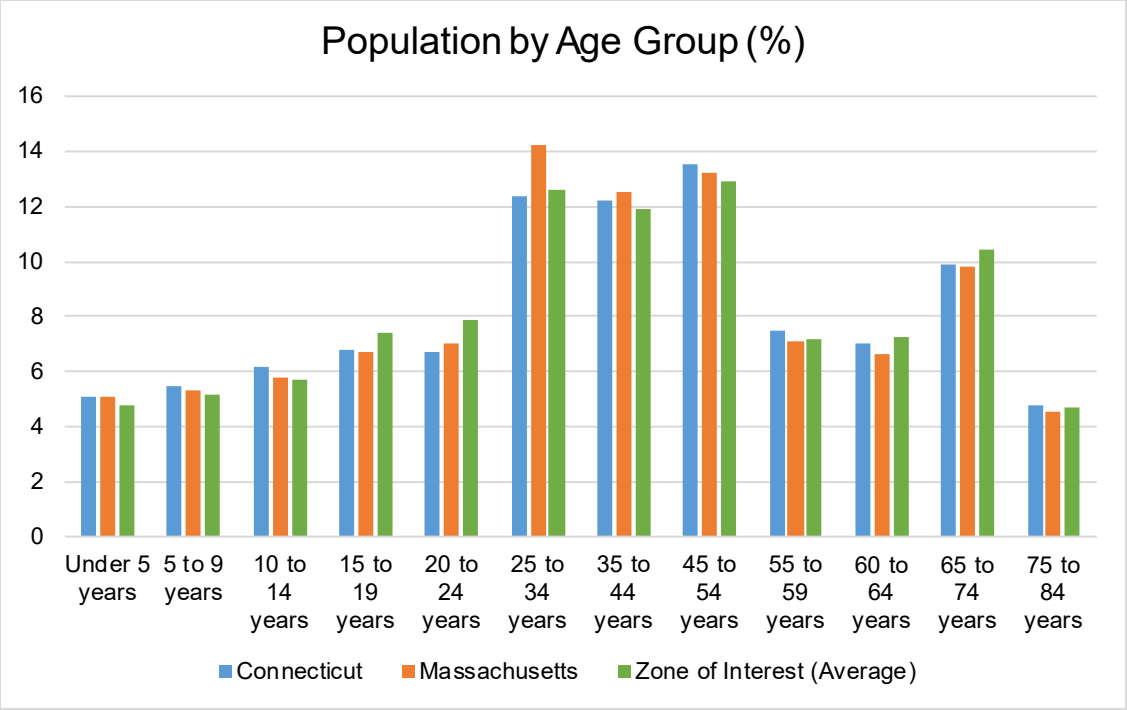


Figure 2.10 Percent of Population by Age Group

Population by race and Hispanic Origin is displayed in Table 2.12. The zone of interest is approximately 68.6% White,15.9% Hispanic or Latino, 7.5% Black, 4.6% Asian and 2.8% two or more races. The other race categories each account for less than 1% of the population. By comparison, the population in the state of Connecticut is 65% White, 17% Hispanic or Latino, 10% Black, .12% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 4.6% Asian, 0.02% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific, 0.52% Some Other Race, and 2.9% Two or More Races. Massachusetts is 70% White, 12% Hispanic or Latino, 6.7% Black, 0.11% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 6.8% Asian, 0.03% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific, 0.94% Some Other Race, and 3.4% Two or More Races.

Table 2.12 Population Estimate by Race/ Hispanic Origin (2021)

Area	White	Hispanic or Latino	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or more races
Connecticut	2,340,848	610,065	359,156	4,225	165,872	761	18,819	105,584
Massachusetts	4,871,674	864,202	467,943	7,977	477,667	1,910	65,840	234,639
Hartford County, CT	530,356	169,097	115,881	1,070	50,830	216	3,830	27,356
Tolland County, CT	124,144	9,043	4,330	133	7,254	3	998	4,215

Area	White	Hispanic or Latino	Black	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some other race	Two or more races
Windham County, CT	94,501	14,545	2,234	127	1,584	12	218	3,282
Franklin County, MA	63,485	3,140	786	56	1,163	19	266	2,170
Hampden County, MA	283,947	123,235	35,811	465	11,518	13	1,112	10,164
Hampshire County, MA	133,763	9,805	3,865	134	8,353	138	434	5,318
Worcester County, MA	637,645	104,707	39,976	953	43,256	247	5,772	24,302
Zone of Interest	**1,867,841**	**433,572**	**202,883**	**2,938**	**123,958**	**648**	**12,630**	**76,807**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year (2017-2021)

2.12.3 Education and Employment

Table 2.13 displays the highest level of education attained by the population ages 25 and over. In the zone of interest, 3.7% of the population have less than a 9th grade education, another 5.7% have between a 9th and 12th grade education, 27.2% have at least a high school diploma or equivalent, 17.3% have some college education, 9% have an associate degree, 21.1% have a bachelor's degree, and 15.9% have a graduate or professional degree.

In Connecticut, 4.03% of the population have less than a 9th grade education, another 4.91% have between a 9th and 12th grade education, 26% have at least a high school diploma or equivalent, 17% have some college education, 8% have an associate degree, 22% have a bachelor's degree, and 18% have a graduate or professional degree.

In Massachusetts, 4.23% of the population have less than a 9th grade education, another 4.6% have between a 9th and 12th grade education, 23% have at least a high school diploma or equivalent, 15% have some college education, 7.68% have an associate degree, 25% have a bachelor's degree, and 20% have a graduate or professional degree.

Table 2.13 Population Estimate by Highest Level of Educational Attainment, Population 25 Years of Age and Older (2021)

Area	Population 25 years and over	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Connecticut	2,515,137	101,461	123,560	656,949	418,214	194,987	561,567	458,399

Area	Population 25 years and over	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Massachusetts	4,902,868	207,481	225,734	1,137,085	739,611	376,608	1,215,939	1,000,410
Hartford County, CT	628,684	26,534	34,412	162,392	106,152	52,600	137,915	108,679
Tolland County, CT	95,783	1,830	3,129	25,023	15,870	8,917	23,004	18,010
Windham County, CT	81,955	2,853	5,809	28,630	16,569	8,087	11,354	8,653
Franklin County, MA	53,932	917	2,533	15,077	8,809	5,644	11,297	9,655
Hampden County, MA	318,636	17,324	26,859	96,780	57,079	30,688	54,293	35,613
Hampshire County, MA	100,155	1,468	3,276	21,612	14,635	8,860	24,493	25,811
Worcester County, MA	594,147	18,838	31,284	159,573	104,541	53,800	133,744	92,367
Zone of Interest	**1,873,292**	**69,764**	**107,302**	**509,087**	**323,655**	**168,596**	**396,100**	**298,788**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2021 Estimate)

Employment by sector is presented in Figure 2.11 and Table 2.14. Figure 2.11 shows that the largest percentage of the zone of interest is employed in the educational services, and health care and social assistance sector at 14.35%, 5.16% of the population works in professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services, 5.6% work in manufacturing, 5.46% work in retail trade, 3.88% work in finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing, and 3.8% work in arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services. The remainder of the employment sectors each comprise less than 3% of the zone of interest's labor force.

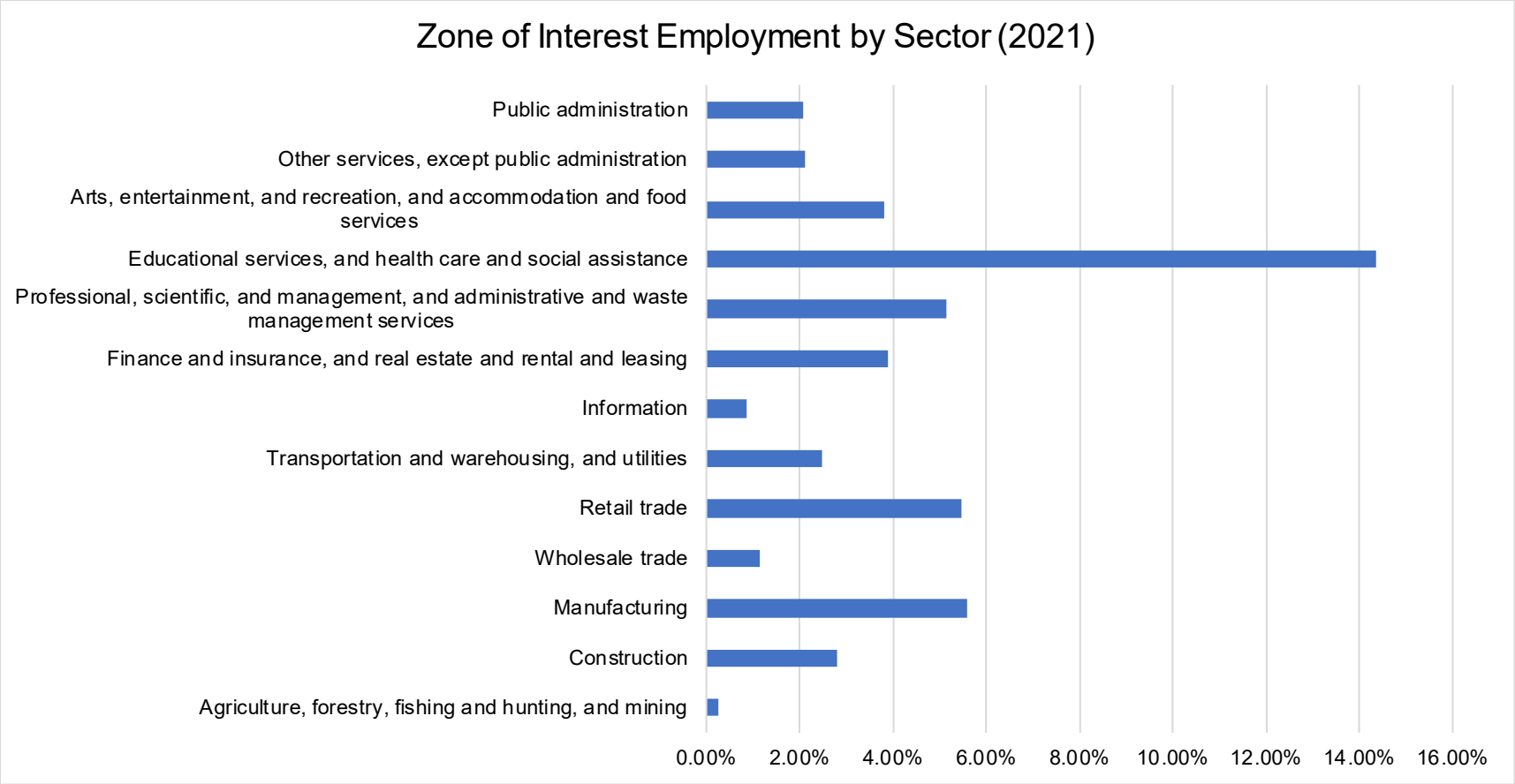


Figure 2.11 Zone of Interest Employment by Sector (2021)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2017-2021)

Table 2.14 Annual Average Employment by Sector (2021)

Employment Sector	Connecticut	Massachusetts	Hartford County, CT	Tolland County, CT	Windham County, CT	Franklin County, MA	Hampden County, MA	Hampshire County, MA	Worcester County, MA	Zone of Interest
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,822,995	3,667,019	453,935	77,173	57,987	36,176	212,917	83,274	437,940	1,359,402
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	7,314	15,477	1,291	516	1,082	852	1,202	623	1,831	7,397
Construction	113,665	215,903	23,323	5,025	3,770	2,589	9,655	3,889	27,780	76,031
Manufacturing	192,688	327,152	49,850	8,684	8,209	4,119	23,963	6,135	51,232	152,192
Wholesale trade	41,165	75,996	10,267	1,652	1,199	610	5,976	1,333	9,795	30,832
Retail trade	194,081	367,234	48,153	7,566	7,720	3,924	22,861	8,352	49,787	148,363
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	80,481	150,820	23,508	3,246	3,311	1,326	13,436	2,735	20,208	67,770
Information	36,259	79,530	8,738	1,230	766	831	2,539	1,371	7,736	23,211
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	164,657	268,309	48,071	6,990	2,807	1,327	14,963	3,881	27,512	105,551
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	212,866	544,131	50,462	7,155	3,920	2,907	16,651	7,511	51,791	140,397

Employment Sector	Connecticut	Massachusetts	Hartford County, CT	Tolland County, CT	Windham County, CT	Franklin County, MA	Hampden County, MA	Hampshire County, MA	Worcester County, MA	Zone of Interest
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	482,274	1,031,113	116,677	23,312	15,619	12,087	65,130	33,175	124,164	390,164
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	148,835	289,688	34,392	5,870	5,113	2,641	16,343	7,677	31,271	103,307
Other services, except public administration	82,217	158,526	19,988	2,896	2,268	1,524	8,911	3,568	18,577	57,732
Public administration	66,493	143,140	19,215	3,031	2,203	1,439	11,287	3,024	16,256	56,455

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2021 Estimate)

A summary of the civilian labor force in the zone of interest is displayed in Table 2.15. In 2021, the zone of interest had an unemployment rate of 5.79%, lower than the unemployment rate of Connecticut (6.06%) and higher than the unemployment rate for Massachusetts (5.42%).

Table 2.15 Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Rates Annual Averages (2021)

Geographic Area	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Connecticut	1,940,626	1,822,995	117,631	6.06%
Massachusetts	3,876,978	3,667,019	209,959	5.42%
Hartford County, CT	481,939	453,935	28,004	5.81%
Tolland County, CT	80,946	77,173	3,773	4.66%
Windham County, CT	62,261	57,987	4,274	6.86%
Franklin County, MA	38,298	36,176	2,122	5.54%
Hampden County, MA	227,941	212,917	15,024	6.59%
Hampshire County, MA	88,119	83,274	4,845	5.50%
Worcester County, MA	463,375	437,940	25,435	5.49%
Zone of Interest	**1,442,879**	**1,359,402**	**83,477**	**5.79%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year (2017-2021) (2021 averages)

2.12.4 Households, Income, and Poverty

Table 2.16 displays the number of households and average household sizes in the state and zone of interest. There were approximately 1,060,518 households in the zone of interest with an average household size of 2.55.

Table 2.16 Number of Households and Average Household Size (2021)

Geographic Area	Total Households	Average Household Size
Connecticut	1,397,324	2.63
Massachusetts	2,714,448	2.66
Hartford County, CT	356,529	2.59
Tolland County, CT	56,989	2.56
Windham County, CT	45,425	2.54
Franklin County, MA	30,792	2.4
Hampden County, MA	183,309	2.58
Hampshire County, MA	60,903	2.44
Worcester County, MA	326,571	2.71
Zone of Interest	**1,060,518**	**2.55**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2021 Estimate)

The median household income in the zone of interest ranged from $61,310 in Hampden County, MA to $88,525 in Tolland County, CT in 2021, as displayed in Table 2.17. Per capita income in the zone of interest was $38,993 in 2021, lower than the per capita income of the states of Connecticut ($47,869) and Massachusetts ($48,617).

Table 2.17 Median and Per Capita Income (2021)

Geographic Area	Median Household Income (All)	Per Capita Income
Connecticut	$83,572	$47,869
Massachusetts	$89,026	$48,617
Hartford County, CT	$80,320	$43,642
Tolland County, CT	$88,525	$42,942
Windham County, CT	$71,418	$35,032
Franklin County, MA	$64,949	$37,740
Hampden County, MA	$61,310	$33,375
Hampshire County, MA	$76,959	$38,695
Worcester County, MA	$81,660	$41,528
Zone of Interest	**$75,020**	**$38,993**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2021 Estimate)

Table 2.18 displays the percentage of persons and families whose incomes fell below the poverty level in the past twelve months as of 2021. Within the zone of interest, Hampden County, MA had the greatest share of people with incomes below the poverty level at 15.9%, followed by Windham County, CT at 11.3%. In terms of families below the poverty level, Hampshire County, MA has the lowest percentage with 4.9% and Hampden County, MA has the highest with 11.3%. Comparatively, the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut have percentages of families with incomes below the poverty level of 6.6% and 6.8% respectively.

Table 2.18 Percent of Families and People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Level (2021)

Geographic Area	All Families	All People
Connecticut	6.80%	10.00%
Massachusetts	6.60%	9.90%
Hartford County, CT	7.50%	10.90%
Tolland County, CT	5.00%	9.70%
Windham County, CT	7.40%	11.30%
Franklin County, MA	6.30%	10.60%
Hampden County, MA	11.30%	15.90%
Hampshire County, MA	4.90%	10.50%
Worcester County, MA	6.50%	9.80%
Zone of Interest	**6.99%**	**11.24%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2017-2021)

2.13 RECREATION FACILITIES, ACTIVITIES, AND NEEDS

2.13.1 Visitation Profile

Conant Brook Dam visitors are a diverse group that includes residents of the immediate area, hunters, fishermen, trail users, and day users who picnic, swim, boat, observe wildlife, and sightsee. The peak visitation months are May through September, with July typically being the highest visitation month. At Conant Brook Dam, USACE maintains traffic counters at locations where the majority of visitation occurs. These locations generally include developed parking areas and minor access points.

Table 2.19 provides total visitation by year for FY2019-2023. Visitation numbers are impacted by several factors including counting methodology, flooding, drought, COVID-19, and other environmental factors. Overall, visits have been fluctuating, but the latest year shows an increase to 24,904 visitors. Conant Brook Dam offers a variety of recreation activities including:

- Bank fishing
- Walking, jogging, and hiking
- Mountain biking
- Sightseeing

Table 2.19 Conant Brook Dam Total Visitation FY2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
TOTAL VISITATION	15,496	14,459	19,725	13,621	24,904

Source: USACE VERS (Visitation Estimation & Reporting System, 2019-2023)

Zone of Interest

The visitation market area, or zone of interest, is the area from which the majority of visitors originate. The study team determined the majority of visitors travel from a 50-mile radius based on visitation records for Conant Brook Dam.

2.13.2 Recreation Areas and Facilities

Recreation at Conant Brook Dam is managed by the USACE. Hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and cross-country skiers enjoy over 10 miles of trails at the project. The streamside environment along Conant and Vinica Brooks offers anglers excellent native trout fishing while warm water anglers enjoy the pool above the dam. Hunting is also popular among visitors. Of great importance to Conant Brook Dam's zone of interest are the existing and future recreational opportunities.

Designated trails to include bike and multipurpose, are currently the largest recreation opportunity at Conant Brook Dam. This project does not offer camping, lodging, showers, or playgrounds.

Fishing and Hunting

Hunting for deer, turkey, and other small game is allowed in the forested wetland and upland areas of the project. The project also offers three miles of stream fishing for state stocked trout along Conant and Vinica brooks. Seasonal hunting is permitted for state stocked pheasant and native rabbit, deer, and other small game. Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with federal, state, and local laws. Licenses are required and available online at the MassWildlife webpage.

Trails

Conant Brook Dam provides visitors the opportunity to access over 10 miles of multiuse trails at several locations at the project. Parking areas are located at the dam site and at the Munn Road Dike, as well as at the end of Morton Hill Road and East Hill Road. Numerous old roadways and trails crisscross the area providing access to relatively undisturbed and pristine areas. The trails provide visitors scenic views of the Conant and Vinica Brooks, wooded uplands, and low lying wetlands including Duck Pond and Squire Pond. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on any trails at Conant Brook Dam.

Photo 2.2 Trail at Conant Brook Dam

2.13.3 Recreation Analysis

The 2023 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was prepared by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA) Division of Conservation Services (DCS). The SCORP serves to address emerging issues in Massachusetts outdoor recreation and set priority areas to serve as the foundation for action over the next five years. According to the 2023 Massachusetts SCORP, the following goals were identified:

1. Improve access to beaches and other water-based recreation facilities
2. Support trail projects
3. Create and renovate neighborhood parks, especially to benefit the underserved
4. Create opportunities, especially for the underserved, to enjoy protected natural areas

To implement these priorities the SCORP identified 3 detailed objectives for each goal, for a total of 12 objectives.

In order to gain an understanding of statewide participation trends, several surveys were conducted to support the development of the SCORP. Some highlights of the participation trends include:

- 44% of respondents indicated that outdoor recreation is “extremely important” and 37% indicated it is “somewhat important.”
- Walking was identified as the most popular activity with 9.6% of respondents and reported as most frequently with 68% of respondents who walked more than once a week. The following most popular activities included visiting the beach (6.1%), hiking (5.7%), visiting farmers markets (4.7%), visiting outdoor historic sites or museums (3.9%), swimming in outdoor pools (3.6%), swimming in natural water bodies, (3.6%), camping (3.3%), bird watching or wildlife viewing (3.2%) and running or jogging (3.0%) and basketball (3.0%).
- 46% of respondents live within 5 miles of an outdoor recreation area or facility they use most often with another 35% of respondents living between 5 and 10 miles away. Racial-ethnic disparities showed that Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino respondents were more likely to live 5 to 10 miles away from the outdoor recreation area of facility they use more often.
- Beaches were at the top of the list of outdoor recreational areas that respondents would like to see more in Massachusetts with 10.6% of respondents. Picnic facilities were at the top of the list for Asian/ Pacific Islander respondents.
- Factors that most limited the use of outdoor recreational areas and facilities is lack of time (15%), lack of restrooms/ locker rooms (12.3%), and lack of parking (11.1%).

Table 2.20 depicts the activities that outdoor recreation enthusiasts in Massachusetts were most interested in participating in and results are presented with different activities identified by race. Walking consistently ranked on the top of the list for all races, with running or jogging and hiking being other activities that are popular among a diversity of respondents in Massachusetts. Conant Brook Dam provides opportunities for the public to participate in their favorite activities by making use of the numerous hiking trials, access to fishing along the shoreline or by boat, and a swimming beach.

Table 2.20 Top Five Activities by Race

White	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander
Walking	Walking	Walking	Walking
Running or jogging	Running or jogging	Hiking	Visiting the beach

White	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander
Hiking	Basketball	Basketball	Hiking
Visiting the beach	Dance	Visiting the beach	Visiting farmers markets
Dance	Visiting the beach	Visiting farmers markets	Swimming in natural water bodies

Source: 2023 Massachusetts Outdoor Recreation Plan

The USACE recognizes the importance of recreation to the local community and the State of Massachusetts, and the importance that USACE managed land can play in providing access. Information from the SCORP including the survey results and the statewide goals and objectives were considered when developing the goals and objectives for this Master Plan. See Chapter 3 for the resource goals and objectives developed for the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan.

2.13.4 Recreation Carrying Capacity

No recreation carrying capacity studies have been conducted at Conant Brook Dam. Presently, USACE manages recreation areas using historic visitation data combined with best professional judgment to address recreation areas that are considered to be overcrowded, overused, underused, or well balanced. Compared to other USACE projects of similar size, Conant Brook Dam experiences low visitation. This trend is expected to continue based on regional population projections. The USACE will apply appropriate best management practices including site management, regulating visitor behavior, and modifying visitor behavior as needed to adapt to changes in usage.

2.14 REAL ESTATE

Approximately 469 acres of fee simple land and 2 acres of easements were originally acquired for the Conant Brook Dam project. Easement acres reflect all easements on the project and not solely flowage easements. These are the official acres and may differ from those in other parts of this plan, which are for planning purposes only, due to improved measurement technology, erosion, and sedimentation.

2.14.1 Outgrants

The term “outgrant” is a broad term used by the USACE to describe a variety of real estate instruments wherein an interest in real property has been conveyed by the USACE to another party. Potential outgrants at Conant Brook Dam include leases, licenses, easements, consents, and permits. As of 2025, there is currently only one outgrant in place at Conant Brook Dam, which is an easement.

The demand for real estate outgrants at Conant Brook Dam ranks fairly low among all USACE lake projects in terms of the total number and complexity of real estate outgrants. Management actions related to outgrants include routine inspections to ensure compliance with the terms of the outgrant, public safety requirements, and

environmental compliance such as proper solid waste disposal and storage of pesticides. Additional actions include review of maintenance and construction proposals made by grantees. Easements, licenses, and leases are generally inspected annually for overall compliance. The management of outgrants is a major responsibility shared by the Operations and Real Estate Division of the New England District.

2.14.2 Guidelines for Property Adjacent to Public Land

It is the policy of the USACE to manage the natural, cultural, and developed resources of Conant Brook Dam to provide the public with safe and healthful recreational opportunities, while protecting and enhancing those resources. While private exclusive use of public land is not permitted, property owners adjacent to public lands do have all the same rights and privileges as any other citizen on their own property. Therefore, the information contained in these guidelines is designed to acquaint the adjoining landowner and other interested persons with the types of property involved in the management of Government land at Conant Brook Dam.

2.14.3 Trespass and Encroachment

Government property is monitored by USACE personnel to identify and correct instances of unauthorized use, including trespasses and encroachments. The term "trespass" includes unauthorized transient use and occupancy, such as mowing, tree cutting and removal, livestock grazing, cultivation and harvesting crops, and any other alteration to Government property done without the USACE approval. Unauthorized trespasses may result in a Title 36 citation requiring violators to appear in Federal Magistrate Court, which could subject the violator to fines or imprisonment (See 36 C.F.R. Part 327 Rules and Regulations Governing Public Use of Water Resources Development Projects Administered by the Chief of Engineers). More serious trespasses will be referred to the USACE Office of Counsel for enforcement under state and federal law, which may require restoration of the premises and collection of monetary damages.

The term "encroachment" pertains to an unauthorized structure or improvement on Government property. When encroachments are discovered, project personnel will attempt to resolve the issue at the project level. Where no resolution is reached, or where the encroachment is a permanent structure, the method of resolution will be determined by the USACE Real Estate Division, with recommendations from Operations Division and Office of Counsel. The USACE's general policy is to require removal of encroachments, restoration of the premises, and collection of appropriate administrative costs and fair market value for the term of the unauthorized use.

The most common trespass are unauthorized mowing and paths, unauthorized structures such as fences and temporary structures, grazing, storage of personal property on USACE lands, and tree and vegetation removal. Trash dumping is an especially difficult and expensive problem at many USACE lakes. Encroachments can be prevented. Identifying the USACE fee boundary line and flowage easement

designation are critical elements for the public who are planning for any type of activity near a USACE fee boundary.

CHAPTER 3 – RESOURCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The terms “goal” and “objective” are often defined as synonymous, but in the context of this Master Plan goals express the overall desired end state of the Master Plan whereas resource objectives are specific task-oriented actions necessary to achieve the overall Master Plan goals.

3.2 RESOURCE GOALS

The following statements, taken from EP 1130-2-550, Chapter 3, express the goals for the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan:

GOAL A. Provide the best management practices to respond to regional needs, resource capabilities and suitability, and expressed public interests consistent with authorized project purposes.

GOAL B. Protect and manage the project’s natural and cultural resources through sustainable environmental stewardship programs.

GOAL C. Provide public outdoor recreation opportunities that support project purposes and public demands created by the project itself while sustaining the project’s natural resources.

GOAL D. Recognize the particular qualities, characteristics, and potentials of the project.

GOAL E. Provide consistency and compatibility with national objectives and other State and regional goals and programs.

In addition to the above goals, USACE management activities are guided by USACE-wide Environmental Operating Principles (EOPs) as follows:

- Foster sustainability as a way of life throughout the organization.
- Proactively consider environmental consequences of all USACE activities and act accordingly.
- Create mutually supporting economic and environmentally sustainable solutions.
- Continue to meet our corporate responsibility and accountability under the law for activities undertaken by USACE, which may impact human and natural environments.
- Consider the environment in employing a risk management and systems approach throughout the life cycles of projects and programs.
- Leverage scientific, economic and social knowledge to understand the environmental context and effects of USACE actions in a collaborative manner.
- Employ an open, transparent process that respects views of individuals and groups interested in USACE activities.

3.3 RESOURCE OBJECTIVES

Resource objectives are defined as clearly written statements that respond to identified issues and that specify measurable and attainable activities for resource development and/or management of the lands and waters under the jurisdiction of the New England District, Conant Brook Dam Project Office. The objectives stated in this Master Plan support the goals of the Master Plan, the USACE EOPs, and applicable national performance measures. They are consistent with authorized project purposes, federal laws and directives, regional needs, resource capabilities, and they take public input into consideration. Recreational and natural resources carrying capacities are also accounted for during development of the objectives found in this Master Plan, as well as regional and state planning documents including:

- Massachusetts Wildlife Action Plan
- Massachusetts SCORP

The objectives in this Master Plan are intended to provide project benefits, meet public needs, and foster environmental sustainability for Conant Brook Dam to the greatest extent possible. Tables 3.1 through 3.4 list the objectives for Conant Brook Dam.

Table 3.1 Recreational Objectives

Recreational Objectives	Goals				
	A	B	C	D	E
Consider existing and future potential recreational opportunities for multiple user groups while ensuring visitor safety.	*		*	*	*
Provide opportunities for day use activities, especially picnicking and trail improvements.	*		*		
Seek out partnerships and provide technical guidance to lease partners on the management of recreation facilities in accordance with public demand.	*		*		
Consider flood/conservation pool to address potential impact to recreational facilities (trails, parking lots, etc.).	*	*	*	*	
Ensure consistency with USACE NRM Strategic Plan.					*
Monitor the Massachusetts SCORP to ensure that USACE is responsive to outdoor recreation trends, public needs and resource protection within a regional framework. All plans by others will be evaluated considering USACE policy and operational aspects of Conant Brook Dam.			*		*

Table 3.2 Natural Resource Management Objectives

Natural Resource Management Objectives	Goals				
	A	B	C	D	E
Give priority to the preservation and improvement of open space in public use planning, design, development, and management activities.	*	*		*	*
Work with Tribal Nations to provide access to any culturally significant natural resources.		*		*	*
Actively manage and conserve fish and wildlife resources, especially threatened and endangered species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need, by implementing ecosystem management principles. Key among these principles is the use of native species adapted to the Lower Worcester Plateau/Eastern Connecticut Upland.	*	*		*	*
Optimize resources, labor, funds, and partnerships for protection and restoration of fish and wildlife habitats.		*			*
Minimize activities which disturb the scenic beauty and aesthetics of the project.	*	*	*	*	
Work with partners to identify the needs for timber harvests, and removal of targeted species as a management tool to promote the vigor and health of forests, woodlands, and grasslands.	*	*			*
Deter unauthorized use and damage of public lands through utilization of Title 36 CFR authorities, as well as state and local rules and regulation related to the protection of natural resources.	*	*	*	*	*
Manage lands and waters to reduce the spread of invasive, non-native, and aggressively spreading species.	*	*		*	*
Protect and restore important native habitats such as grasslands, forests, riparian zones, and wetlands where they occur or historically occurred on project lands. Special emphasis should be placed on protection and/or restoration of special or rare plant species. Emphasize promotion of pollinator habitat, migratory bird habitat, and habitat for birds listed by USFWS as BCC.	*	*		*	*

*Denotes that the objective helps to meet the specified goal.

Table 3.3 Visitor Information, Education, and Outreach Objectives

Visitor Information, Education, and Outreach Objectives	Goals				
	A	B	C	D	E
Create opportunities for communication with partner agencies, special interest groups, and the general public. Utilize social media as a platform to share information with visitors and stakeholders.	*			*	*
Provide educational, interpretive, and outreach programs at the project. Topics to include history, project purpose (flood risk management), recreation, natural resource management, water safety, cultural resources, and USACE missions.	*	*	*	*	*

Visitor Information, Education, and Outreach Objectives	Goals				
Educate adjacent landowners on real estate requirements to reduce encroachment actions.	*	*	*	*	*
Work with local communities to engage the public and provide educational and informational opportunities.	*	*	*	*	*

*Denotes that the objective helps to meet the specified goal.

Table 3.4 Cultural Resources Management Objectives

Cultural Resources Management Objectives	Goals				
	A	B	C	D	E
Maintain the Cultural Resources Management Plan to manage cultural resources at Conant Brook Dam.	*	*		*	*
Monitor and enforce Title 36 and ARPA to prevent unauthorized excavation and removal of cultural resources.		*		*	*
Provide access to Tribal Nations to any cultural resources, sacred sites, or other Traditional Cultural Properties.	*	*			
Preserve and protect cultural resources sites in compliance with existing federal statutes and regulations.	*	*	*	*	*
Work with the State Historic Preservation Office to inventory and protect historic and archeological resources.	*	*		*	*

*Denotes that the objective helps to meet the specified goal.

CHAPTER 4 – LAND ALLOCATION, LAND CLASSIFICATION, WATER SURFACE, AND PROJECT EASEMENT LANDS

4.1 LAND ALLOCATION

All lands at USACE water resource development projects are allocated by USACE into one of four categories in accordance with the congressionally authorized purpose for which the project lands were acquired: Operations, Recreation, Fish and Wildlife, and Mitigation. At Conant Brook Dam, the land allocation category that applies is Operations. Operations is defined as those lands that are required to operate the project for the primary authorized purposes of flood risk management, water supply, recreation, water quality, and fish and wildlife. The remaining allocations of Recreation, Fish and Wildlife, and Mitigation would apply only if lands had been acquired specifically for these purposes.

4.2 LAND CLASSIFICATION

4.2.1 General

The objective of classifying project lands is to identify how a given parcel of land shall be used now and in the foreseeable future. Land classification is a central component of this plan, and once a particular classification is established any significant change to that classification would require a formal process including public review and comment.

4.2.2 Prior Land Classifications

The previous version of the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan included land classification criteria that were similar, but not identical to the current criteria. In the years since the previous Master Plan was published, wildlife habitat values, surrounding land use, and regional recreation trends have changed giving rise to the need for revised classifications. Table 4.1 identifies land classification changes from the 1998 Master Plan to the 2025 Master Plan.

The previous land-use categories identified in the 1998 Master Plan were as follows:

- **Project Operations:** Project Operations acres are those where USACE-operated facilities are located, including the dam and outlet works, operations buildings, and spillway as well as any maintenance and laydown areas. Incidental recreation often occurs within these Operation Areas but are ancillary to the primary purpose of project operations for flood risk management. The 1998 Master Plan described a picnic area and scenic outlook within the Operations Area.
- **Recreation Lands:** Land developed for intensive recreational activities by the visiting public.
- **Mitigation:** Land acquired or designated specifically for mitigation.

- **Multiple Resources Management (MRM):** Lands managed for one or more of, but not limited to, the following activities:
    - Recreation – Low Density
    - Wildlife Management General
    - Vegetative Management
    - Inactive and/or Future Recreation Areas
- **Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA):** Areas where scientific, ecological, cultural or aesthetic features have been identified.

Table 4.1 Change from 1998 Land Classifications to 2025 Proposed Land Classification

Prior Land Classifications (1998)	Acres	Proposed Land Classifications (2025)	Acres	Net Difference
Project Operations	21	Project Operations (PO)	32	11
Recreation Lands	1	High Density Recreation (HDR)	-	(1)
Multiple Resources Management (MRM)	410	Multiple Resource Management Lands (MRML)	-	(410)
–	–	Wildlife Management (MRML-WM)	400	400
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	5	Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	5	0
LAND TOTAL	**437**	**LAND TOTAL**	**437**	**0**

*1998 acres are approximate based on digitizing the 1998 land and classification map. Total fee acreage differences from the 1998 totals to the 2025 totals are due to improvements in measurement technology, deposition/siltation, and erosion. Totals also differ due to rounding while adding parcels.

4.2.3 Land Classifications

USACE regulation EP 1130-2-550 requires project lands and waters to be classified in accordance with the primary use for which project lands are managed. There are six categories of classification identified in USACE regulations, including:

- Project Operations
- High Density Recreation
- Mitigation
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Multiple Resource Management Lands
- Water Surface

The land classifications for Conant Brook Dam were established after considering public comments and input from key stakeholders, including elected officials, and city and county governments. Additionally, information from the 2024 Massachusetts SCORP, including public comments, wildlife habitat values, and the trends analysis were used in decision making. Maps showing the various land classifications can be found in Appendix A. The following paragraphs provide acreages and descriptions of allowable uses for each of the land classifications.

Project Operations (PO)

The PO classification includes the lands managed for operation of the dam, project office, spillway, dikes, and maintenance yards, all of which must be maintained to carry out the authorized purpose of flood risk management. In addition to the operational activities taking place on these lands, limited recreational use may be allowed for activities such as public access to the shoreline for fishing. Regardless of any limited recreation use allowed on these lands, the primary classification of PO will take precedent over other uses. There are 32 acres of PO land specifically managed for this purpose.

High Density Recreation (HDR)

HDR lands are developed for intensive recreational activities for the visiting public, including day use areas, campgrounds, marinas, and related concession areas. Recreational areas operated by lessees on USACE lands must follow policy guidance contained in USACE regulations at ER 1130-2-550, Chapter 16. That policy includes the following statement:

> "*The primary rationale for any future recreation development must be dependent on the project's natural or other resources. This dependency is typically reflected in facilities that accommodate or support water-based activities, overnight use, and day use such as marinas, campgrounds, picnic areas, trails, swimming beaches, boat launching ramps, and comprehensive resort facilities. Examples that do not rely on the project's natural or other resources include theme parks or ride-type attractions, sports or concert stadiums, and standalone facilities such as restaurants, bars, motels, hotels, non-transient trailers, and golf courses. Normally, the recreation facilities that are dependent on the project's natural or other resources, and accommodate or support water-based activities, overnight use, and day use, are approved first as primary facilities followed by those facilities that support them. Any support facilities (e.g., playgrounds, multipurpose sports fields, overnight facilities, restaurants, camp stores, bait shops, comfort stations, and boat repair facilities) must also enhance the recreation experience, be dependent on the resource-based facilities, [and] be secondary to the original intent of the recreation development…*"

Lands classified for HDR are suitable for the development of comprehensive resorts. The regulation cited above defines Comprehensive Resort as follows:

"*Typically, multi-faceted developments with facilities such as marinas, lodging, conference centers, golf courses, tennis courts, restaurants, and other similar facilities.*"

There are no acres at Conant Brook Dam classified as HDR. The brief description and resource management plan for each HDR area is described briefly in Chapter 5 and mapped in Appendix A.

Mitigation (MG)

The MG classification is used only for lands allocated by Congress for mitigation for the purpose of offsetting losses associated with the development of the project. There are no lands at Conant Brook Dam with this classification.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)

ESAs include scientific, ecological, cultural, and aesthetic features identified and in need of preservation. At Conant Brook Dam, there are 5 acres with this classification.

Multiple Resource Management Lands (MRML)

This land classification is divided into four sub-classifications: Low Density Recreation, Wildlife Management, Vegetative Management, and Future/Inactive Recreation Areas. A given tract of MRML land is classified using one of these sub-classifications, with the primary sub-classification reflective of the dominant use of the land. Typically, MRMLs support only passive, non-intrusive uses with very limited facilities or infrastructure. Where needed, some areas may require basic facilities that include, but are not limited to, minimal parking spaces, a small boat launch, and/or primitive sanitary facilities. There are 400 acres of MRML lands at Conant Brook Dam. The following sections describes each sub-classification, the number of acres, and primary uses for each designation.

Low Density Recreation (LDR)

LDR lands support passive public recreational use (e.g., fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, natural surface trails, hiking, etc.). There are no acres under this land classification at Conant Brook Dam.

Wildlife Management (WM)

The WM land classification applies to lands managed primarily for the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat. These lands generally include comparatively large contiguous parcels of land for passive recreation uses such as natural surface trails, fishing, hunting, and wildlife observation, unless restrictions are necessary to protect sensitive species or to promote public safety. There are 400 acres of land included in this classification at Conant Brook Dam.

Vegetative Management (VM)

VM lands are designated for stewardship of forest, grassland and other native vegetative cover. Passive recreation activities previously described may be allowed in these areas. There are no acres of land included in this classification at Conant Brook Dam.

Future or Inactive Recreation (FOIR)

FOIR lands have site characteristics compatible with HDR development. These are areas where HDR development was anticipated in prior land classifications, but the development either never took place or was minimal. These areas are typically closed to vehicular traffic and are managed as MRML until development takes place. There are no acres of land included in this classification at Conant Brook Dam.

4.2.4 Water Surface Classifications

USACE regulations specify the possible classifications for the water surface, which are intended to promote public safety, protect resources, or protect project operational features such as the dam and spillway. These areas are typically marked by the USACE with navigational or informational buoys, signs, or denotations on public maps and brochures. The Conant Brook Dam is not designed nor authorized to maintain a permanent pool therefore there are no water surface classifications.

4.2.5 Project Easement Lands

Project Easement Lands are primarily lands on which easement interests were acquired. Fee title was not acquired on these lands, but the easement interests convey to the federal government certain rights to use and/or restrict the use of the land for specific purposes. Easement lands are typically classified as Operations Easement, Flowage Easement, and/or Conservation Easement. At Conant Brook Dam, Slope and Embankment Easement lands are the only type of easements present. The slope and embankment easements, in general, grant to the government the right to construct, maintain, repair, operate, patrol and replace slopes and embankments extending beyond the limits of the Wales Road Relocation, together with the right to remove underbrush, obstructions, and other vegetation, structures, or obstacles. A total of 455.58 acres of fee and embankment and slope easements over 2.21 acres are currently held at Conant Brook Dam according to the New England District Real Estate records.

CHAPTER 5 – RESOURCE PLAN

5.1 MANAGEMENT BY CLASSIFICATION

This chapter describes the management plans for each land use classification within the Master Plan. The classifications that exist at Conant Brook Dam are Project Operations, Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Multiple Resource Management Lands, which consists of Wildlife Management. The management plans describe how these project lands and water surface will be managed in broad terms. A more descriptive plan for managing these lands can be found in the Conant Brook Dam OMP.

5.2 PROJECT OPERATIONS

PO lands are associated with the dam, spillway, dikes, maintenance facilities, and other areas solely for the operation of the project. There are 32 acres of lands under this classification, all of which are managed by the USACE. The management plan for the PO area is to continue providing physical security necessary to ensure sustained operations of the dam and related facilities, including restricting public access in hazardous locations near the dam and spillway. Limited and passive recreation use such as bank fishing and hiking is currently allowed within some areas classified as PO, but USACE considers this use to be incidental and may prohibit such use without notice for project operational or security needs. The Dam Site Overlook Parking Area and Conant Brook Dam Nature Trail are within the PO area at Conant Brook Dam. Public vehicular traffic is currently not allowed on the road traversing the crest of the dam. USACE maintains the road across the dam structure.

Recommended future actions for these areas include facility upgrades as funding and personnel allow. Implementing low impact design into future building, parking and site developments will continue to be emphasized. Opportunities to incorporate environmental stewardship objectives for land management such as invasive species control and wildlife management through use of food or pollinator plots will be implemented as appropriate.

5.3 HIGH DENSITY RECREATION (HDR)

This classification is used for developed and intensive-use recreation areas for the visiting public, including day use areas, boat launches, and access points. There are no acres at Conant Brook Dam under this classification.

5.4 MITIGATION

This classification is used for lands that were acquired specifically for the purpose of offsetting losses associated with development of the project. There are no acres at Conant Brook Dam under this classification.

5.5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS (ESA)

There are 5 acres of ESA-designated land at Conant Brook Dam. These are 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 NHPA, or applicable state statutes. The primary management objective for ESAs is to allow existing uses to continue but to protect sensitive resources from intensive development, use, or disturbance beyond that which currently exists. In general, these areas must be managed to ensure that they are not adversely impacted. With the exception of natural surface pedestrian trails and minimal visitor parking areas, limited or no development of public use facilities is allowed on these lands and no real estate outgrants for easements should be granted unless disturbance can be confined to the boundaries of existing easements. No agricultural or grazing uses are permitted on these lands unless necessary for a specific resource management benefit, such as habitat restoration and management. An ESA classification provides the highest level of ecological protection among the various land use classifications.

The ESA listed and described in Table 5.1 provide the number of acres for the ESA and a brief description of the ESA. See Appendix A for the map that identifies the ESA at the project.

Table 5.1 ESA Listing

ESA#	Acres	Location
ESA 1	5	ESA acres include a Duck Pond and a buffer zone around the pond. The ESA will contribute to the protection of one or more rare, threatened or endangered species.

5.6 MULTIPLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT LANDS

The 400 acres of Multiple Resource Management Lands are organized into four sub-classifications. These sub-classifications are LDR, WM, VM, and FOIR. The following is a description of each sub-classification's resource objectives, acreages, and description of use.

5.6.1 Low Density Recreation (LDR)

LDR lands are generally associated with primitive access points including trails and non-powered boating access points. Development is typically limited to unpaved parking, natural surface boat launches, and trails. Future management of these lands calls for minimal development to maintain a healthy, ecologically adapted vegetative cover to reduce erosion and improve aesthetics. The general public may use these lands for bank fishing, hiking, and for access to the shoreline. Future uses may include additional designated multipurpose, natural surface trails. There are no acres classified as LDR at Conant Brook Dam.

5.6.2 Wildlife Management (WM)

These are lands designated for the stewardship of fish and wildlife resources and are managed by USACE. There are currently 400 acres of land under this classification

at Conant Brook Dam. Management efforts focus on protecting native wildlife food and habitat.

The broad objective of fish and wildlife management is to conserve, maintain and improve the fish and wildlife habitat to produce the greatest dividend for the benefit of the general public. Implementation of a fish and wildlife management plan is the first step toward achieving the goals of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (Public Law 85-624). The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG) manages the Commonwealth of Massachusetts game lands and wildlife primarily through enforcement of laws and regulations and establishing seasons and bag limits for game species. Future management plans for wildlife areas include continued cooperation with partners and managing and improving wildlife management areas under this land classification.

There are 11 federally listed migratory birds and 4 known state-listed species that could utilize habitat within the Conant Brook Dam. Therefore, any work conducted on this project will be in accordance with the Endangered Species Act and will be appropriately coordinated with the USFWS and state resource agencies. These species (Table 2.6 and 2.7) will continue to receive attention to ensure they are managed in accordance with their habitat needs.

Non-game wildlife is also managed. The following list of non-game programs is being or will be pursued as funds become available.

- Early detection and prevention of introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species
- Invasive species management
- Vegetation restoration where needed using native species
- Fish spawning and habitat structures
- Food/habitat plots for various native wildlife
- Pollinator plots
- Wildlife friendly fencing

5.6.3 Vegetative Management (VM)

These are lands that have vegetative types considered to be sensitive and needing special classification to ensure success. There are no acres currently identified at Conant Brook Dam for vegetative management purposes.

5.6.4 Future/Inactive Recreation Areas (FOIR)

These are areas with site characteristics compatible with potential future recreational development or recreation that are closed. Until there is an opportunity to develop or reopen these areas, they will be managed for multiple resources. There are no acres classified under this sub-classification at Conant Brook Dam.

5.7 WATER SURFACE

There is no permanent pool at Conant Brook Dam. The flood storage area of the project, which covers 158 acres, is normally empty and only utilized to store floodwaters.

5.8 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a multi-pronged aspect of responsible stewardship of USACE lands. The outcome of sustainability initiatives is to have a program that is able to adapt to fiscal challenges, safeguards the environment, and continues to provide high quality recreational opportunities for the public. As the nation's largest provider of outdoor recreation, managing 12 million acres of lands and waters across the country, USACE is committed to implementing initiatives that link people to water.

The recreational mission of USACE is to manage and conserve natural resources, while providing quality public outdoor recreation opportunities to serve the needs of the present and future generations. This is in line, and indeed the underpinning, of all the goals and objectives for Conant Brook Dam resources and management. The national USACE 2021 Natural Resources Management Strategic Plan identifies several goals and related objectives designed to build a more robust environmental and recreational program on USACE managed lands. The four primary goals are Workforce Development, Improved Communication. Resourcing, and Program Delivery. Under the umbrella goal of Program Delivery, several objectives center specifically on promoting environmental sustainability in all aspects of natural resources management. This includes integrating EOPs and other environmental regulations and initiatives into day-to-day decision making and long-range planning. Other objectives include using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified personnel and projects in facility design and maintenance, adopting Sustainable Sites Initiative criteria where applicable on land-based recreation areas, and updating project Master Plans to include environmental sustainability elements.

Meeting the public's needs and continuing to provide a full range of outdoor recreation opportunities will require collaboration. In support of that, USACE will maintain and enhance existing rapports while seeking new and innovative types of relationships with federal, state, and local agencies, volunteers, non-government organizations, cooperators, and others to provide certain recreation services and opportunities to the public. Besides pursuing and maintaining partnerships, it is important to continue to identify, analyze, and evaluate authorities and policies such as fee collection and retention, and increased partnership capabilities. Areas identified for changes to meet the goals and objectives of this strategy include authorities for fee collection and retention without budgetary offset, and policies that pertain to funding schedules for partnership projects.

Through creativity, innovation, strong partnerships, and environmentally sustainable stewardship, quality recreational opportunities will continue to be available to the public. This will be done while simultaneously protecting the water, environment, and cultural resources for current and future generations.

CHAPTER 6 – SPECIAL TOPICS/ISSUES/CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 COMPETING INTERESTS OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Conant Brook Dam is a multi-purpose project with numerous authorized purposes. The authorized purposes accommodate the needs of federal, state, and municipal users which have developed over time and have contractual rights that must be honored. The benefits provided by virtue of authorized purposes are critical to the local and regional economies and are of great interest to the public. There are many competing interests for the utilization of federal lands including recreational users, adjacent landowners, those who own mineral rights, utility providers, and all entities that provide and maintain public roads. A growing population and increasing urbanization places additional stress on these competing interests through increased demand for water resources and recreation spaces as well as diminishing quality and space for natural habitat and open spaces. Balancing the interests of each of these groups to ensure that valid needs are met while at the same time protecting natural and cultural resources is a challenge. The purpose of this Plan is to guide management into the foreseeable future to ensure responsible stewardship and sustainability of the project's resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

6.2 UTILITY CORRIDORS

USACE policy allows for the establishment of designated corridors on project lands, where feasible, to serve as the preferred location for future outgrants such as easements for roads or utility lines. After obtaining public input and examining the location of existing roads and utility lines on project lands, and due to the relatively low demand for easements at Conant Brook Dam, the USACE decided that the creation of utility corridors would not be necessary. The Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, L.L.C. has a Real Estate easement with USACE for a natural gas pipeline right of way across Conant Brook Dam property for the purpose of transporting gas over, across, in, and upon land of USACE. Any entity seeking a utility easement to cross USACE property must research alternate routes around USACE property and demonstrate that a feasible alternative does not exist. Additionally, an evaluation under NEPA would be required.

6.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES AND CONSULTATION WITH TRIBAL NATIONS

It is required for federal agencies to consult with affiliated Federally Recognized Tribes on various activities that take place on federal land under federal guidance including but not limited to Sections 106 and 110 of NHPA; ARPA; NAGPRA; and 36 CFR Part 79, Curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archeological Collections. Implementing regulations for Section 106 of the NHPA and NAGPRA are 36 CFR Part 800 and 43 CFR Part 10, respectively. All cultural resources laws and regulations should be addressed under the requirements of NEPA as amended. USACE summarizes the guidance provided in these laws in ER and EP 1130-2-540.

Additionally, EO 13007 states that each federal agency with responsibility for the management of federal lands shall accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Native American sacred sites by religious practitioners and avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites.

The New England District takes its responsibilities for consultation on a government-to-government basis very seriously and consulted extensively with Federally Recognized Tribes on the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan. The Tribes USACE consulted with during the development of this Master Plan were the Narragansett Tribe, Stockbridge-Munsee Community, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, and the Delaware Tribe. The New England District consulted with Tribes primarily on developing best practices and ensuring areas of Tribal concern were addressed. This process has allowed Tribes to become more familiar with USACE property at Conant Brook Dam, and has increased USACE staff awareness of Tribal histories, sites, and concerns in the area. This exchange of knowledge from developing the Master Plan will allow USACE staff to better engage with Tribes on future projects at Conant Brook Dam and will likely lead to more efficient reviews and better outcomes meeting objectives for both parties. More information about the consultation can be found in Section 7.4.

6.4 PRIVATE ACTIVITIES AND SHORELINE MANAGEMENT

It is the policy of the USACE to protect and manage shorelines of all civil works water resource development projects to promote the safe and healthful use of these shorelines by the public while maintaining environmental safeguards to ensure a quality resource for use by the public. The objectives of all management actions will be to achieve a balance between permitted private uses and resource protection for general public use. Public pedestrian access to and exit from these shorelines shall be preserved. The New England District generally does not permit private exclusive uses by adjacent landowners. Private exclusive use (often called private shoreline use) is defined in ER 1130-2-406 as “Any action, within the context of this regulation 36 CFR Part 327.30, which gives a special privilege to an individual or group of individuals on land or water at a Corps project, that precludes use of those lands or waters by the general public, is considered to be private shoreline use.” The Master Plan does not concern private use of federal property; instead, private use is managed per guidance in ER 1130-2-406 at the discretion of the New England District and project manager. See Section 2.14 for more information about Real Estate including outgrants, trespass, and encroachment.

CHAPTER 7 – PUBLIC AND AGENCY COORDINATION

7.1 PUBLIC, AGENCY, AND TRIBAL COORDINATION OVERVIEW

The USACE is dedicated to serving the public interests in support of the overall development of land uses related to land management of cultural, natural, and recreational resources of Conant Brook Dam. An integral part of this effort is gathering public comment and engaging stakeholders in the process of planning. USACE policy guidance in ER and EP 1130-2-550 requires thorough public involvement and agency coordination throughout the Master Plan revision process including any associated NEPA process. Public involvement is especially important at Conant Brook Dam to ensure that future management actions are environmentally sustainable and responsive to public outdoor recreation needs. The following milestones provide a brief look at the overall process of revising the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan.

The USACE began planning to revise the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan in the spring of 2024. The objectives for the Mater Plan revision are to (1) revise land classifications to reflect changes in USACE land management policies since the 1998 Master Plan, (2) prepare new resource goals and objectives, and (3) revise the Master Plan to reflect new agency requirements for Master Plan documents in accordance with ER 1130-2-550, Change 7, January 30, 2013 and EP 1130-2-550, Change 5, January 30, 2013.

7.2 INITIAL STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

On July 31, 2024, a public open house was held at the Monson Free Library Meeting Room located at 2 High Street, Monson, Massachusetts to inform the public of the intent to revise the Master Plan. The public input period remained open for 30 days from July 31, 2024 to August 31, 2024. At the public information meeting a presentation was given that included the following topics:

- What is a Master Plan?
- What a Master Plan is Not
- Why Revise a Master Plan?
- Overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
- Master Planning Process
- Instructions for submitting comments

The USACE received 2 comments for the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan revision. These comments and the USACE response can be found in Appendix E.

7.3 PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW OF DRAFT MP, EA, AND FONSI

This section will be completed after the public comment period for the Draft MP, EA, and FONSI.

7.4 TRIBAL CONSULTATION

In 2024, the USACE consulted with the appropriate Tribal Nations on the notice of availability for the scoping effort for this Master Plan and Environmental Assessment seeking their comments and confirmation of interest. A sample letter is included in Appendix B.

The following recognized Tribal Nations were consulted in 2024 prior to the initial open house:

- Narragansett Tribe
- Stockbridge-Munsee Community
- Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
- Delaware Tribe
- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

For the Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, the same group of recognized Tribal Nations were consulted to notify of the Open House the availability of the draft documents.

CHAPTER 8 – SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 SUMMARY OVERVIEW

The preparation of this Master Plan for Conant Brook Dam followed the USACE master planning guidance in ER 1130-2-550 and EP 1130-2-550, both dated 30 January 2013. Three major requirements set forth in the guidance include the preparation of contemporary resource objectives, classification of project lands using the approved classification standards, and the preparation of a resource plan describing in broad terms how the land in each of the land classifications will be managed into the foreseeable future. Additional important requirements include rigorous public involvement throughout the process, consideration of regional recreation and natural resource management priorities identified by other federal, state, and municipal authorities, and consultation with local Tribal Nations.

The study team endeavored to follow this guidance to prepare a Master Plan that will provide for enhanced recreational opportunities for the public, improve environmental quality, and foster a management philosophy conducive to existing and projected USACE staffing levels at Conant Brook Dam as also reflected in ER 1130-2-540 Change 2 dated July 2005. Factors considered in the Plan development were identified through public involvement and review of regional and statewide planning documents including the current Massachusetts SCORP prepared by the EEA DCS for 2024-2028, EPA Ecoregion Handbook and descriptions, and the USFWS IPaC website. This Master Plan will guide the long-term sustainability of the outdoor recreation program and natural resources associated with Conant Brook Dam.

8.2 LAND CLASSIFICATION

A key component in preparing this Master Plan was examining prior land classifications and addressing the needed transition to the updated land classification standards that reflect how lands are being managed now and will be managed in the foreseeable future. The updated land classification standards will also comply with current USACE standards. Public comment was solicited to assist in making these land reclassification decisions. Consultation was also conducted with Tribal Nations to provide input on cultural and natural resources to help inform the land classification decisions. Chapter 7 of this Plan describes the public involvement process and Appendix E provides a summary of public comments received. After analyzing public comment, examining recreational trends, and taking into account regional natural resource management priorities, USACE team members reclassified the federal lands associated with Conant Brook Dam as described in Table 8.1 and explained in Table 8.2. A map is included in Appendix A to define the areas where proposed changes in land classification were implemented.

Table 8.1 Change from 1998 Land Classifications to 2025 Proposed Land and Classifications[1,2]

Prior Land Classifications (1998)	Acres	Proposed Land Classifications (2025)	Acres	Net Difference
Project Operations	21	Project Operations (PO)	32	11
Recreation Lands	1	High Density Recreation (HDR)	-	(1)
Multiple Resources Management (MRM)	410	Multiple Resource Management Lands (MRML)	-	(410)
–	–	Wildlife Management (MRML-WM)	400	400
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	5	Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	5	0
LAND TOTAL	**437**	**LAND TOTAL**	**437**	**0**

(1) 1998 aces are approximate based on digitizing the 1998 land classification map.
(2) Total fee acreage differences from the 1998 totals to the 2025 totals are due to improvements in measurement technology, deposition/siltation, and erosion. Totals also differ due to rounding while adding parcels.

Table 8.2 Changes and Justifications for Proposed Land Classifications (1,2)

Land Classification	Description of Changes (2)	Justification
Project Operations (PO)	Net increase in PO lands from 21 to 32 acres.	All lands classified as PO are managed and used primarily in support of critical operational requirements related to the primary mission of flood risk management. Approximately 12 acres of Multiple Resource Management were reclassified to PO. These areas include the land around the Moores Cross Road and Dam Road.
High Density Recreation (HDR)	Net decrease in HDR from 1 acre to 0 acres.	A northern sliver of approximately 0.2 acres was reclassified as PO. A southern area of approximately 0.8 acres was reclassified as MRML-WM.
Multiple Resources Management (MRM)	Net decrease in MRM from 410 acres to 0 acres	The decrease in acres is due to the new naming of land classifications. Approximately 400 acres were reclassified MRML-WM.
Multiple Resource Management Lands – Wildlife Management (MRML-WM)	Net increase in MRML-WM of 400 acres.	Approximately 400 acres were previously classified as MRM and are now reclassified as MRML-WM. This is due to the updated naming of the classification. The remainder of the acres within MRML-WM were previously classified as Recreation.
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	No change.	The acres of ESA did not change from the 1998 Master Plan. ESA acres include a Duck Pond and a buffer zone around the pond. The ESA will contribute to the protection of rare, threatened and/or endangered species.

(1) The land classification changes described in this table are the result of changes to individual parcels of land ranging from a few acres to several hundred acres. New acreages were measured using more accurate GIS technology, thus total changes will not equal individual changes. The acreage numbers provided are approximate.
(2) Acreages are based on GIS measurements and may vary from net difference detailed in Table 8.1.

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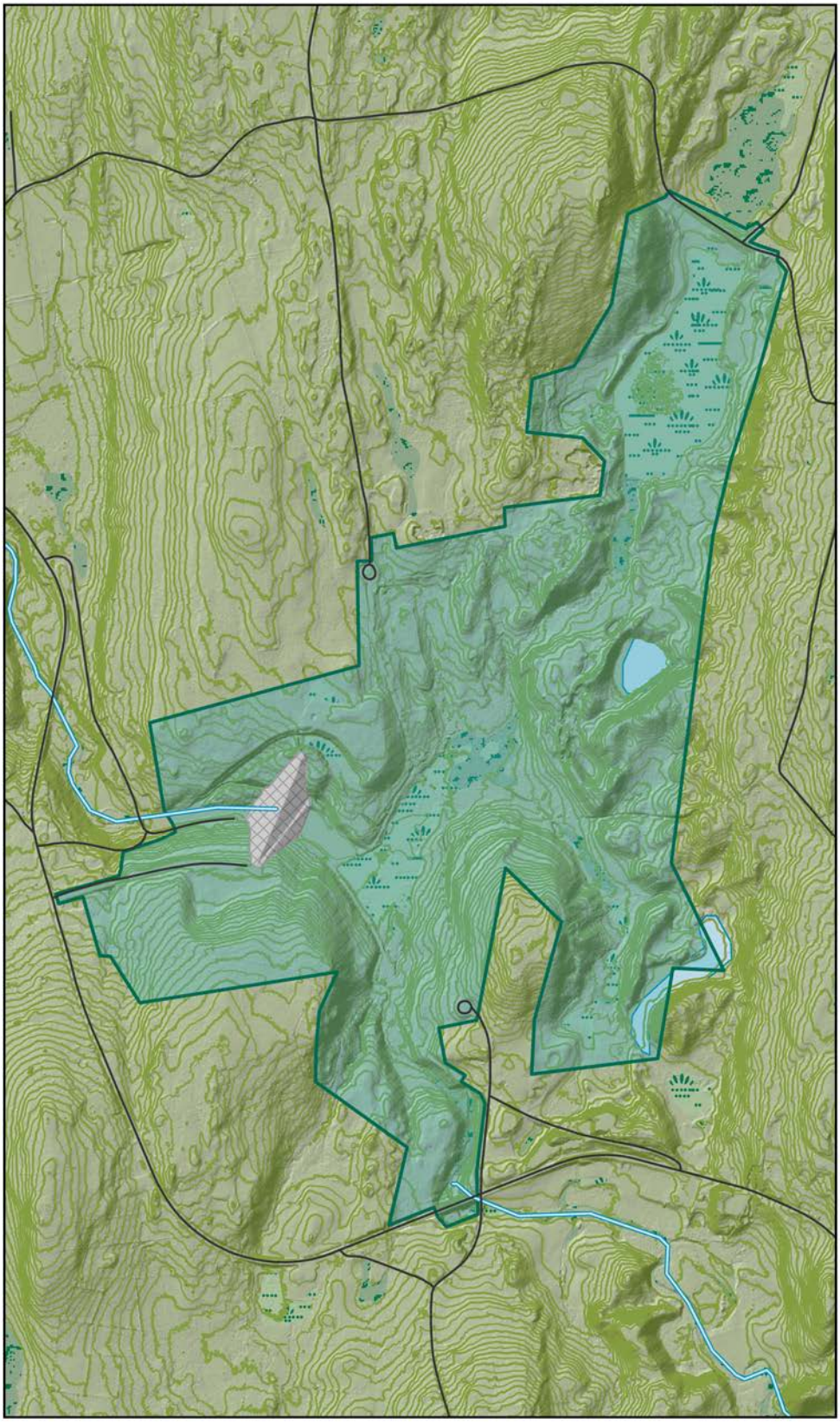
APPENDIX A – LAND CLASSIFICATION, MANAGING AGENCIES, AND RECREATION MAPS

US Army Corps of Engineers®
New England District

CONTANT BROOK DAM

2025 MASTER PLAN REVISION

SHEET INDEX (0.1)



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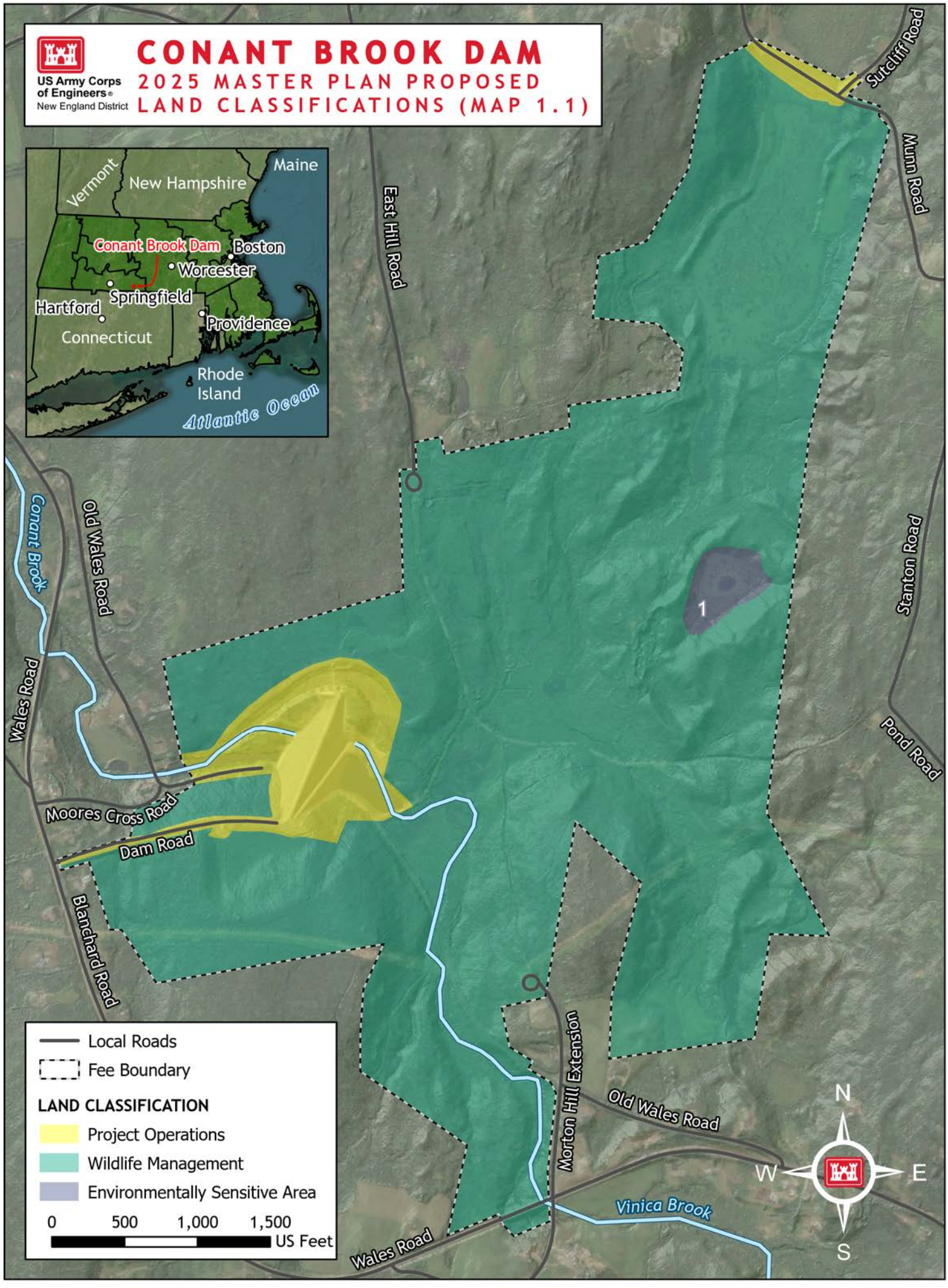
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Hartford
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Rhode Island
Atlantic Ocean
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Sutcliff Road
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Old Wales Road
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Morton Hill Extension
Old Wales Road
Vinica Brook
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Fee Boundary
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Project Operations
Wildlife Management
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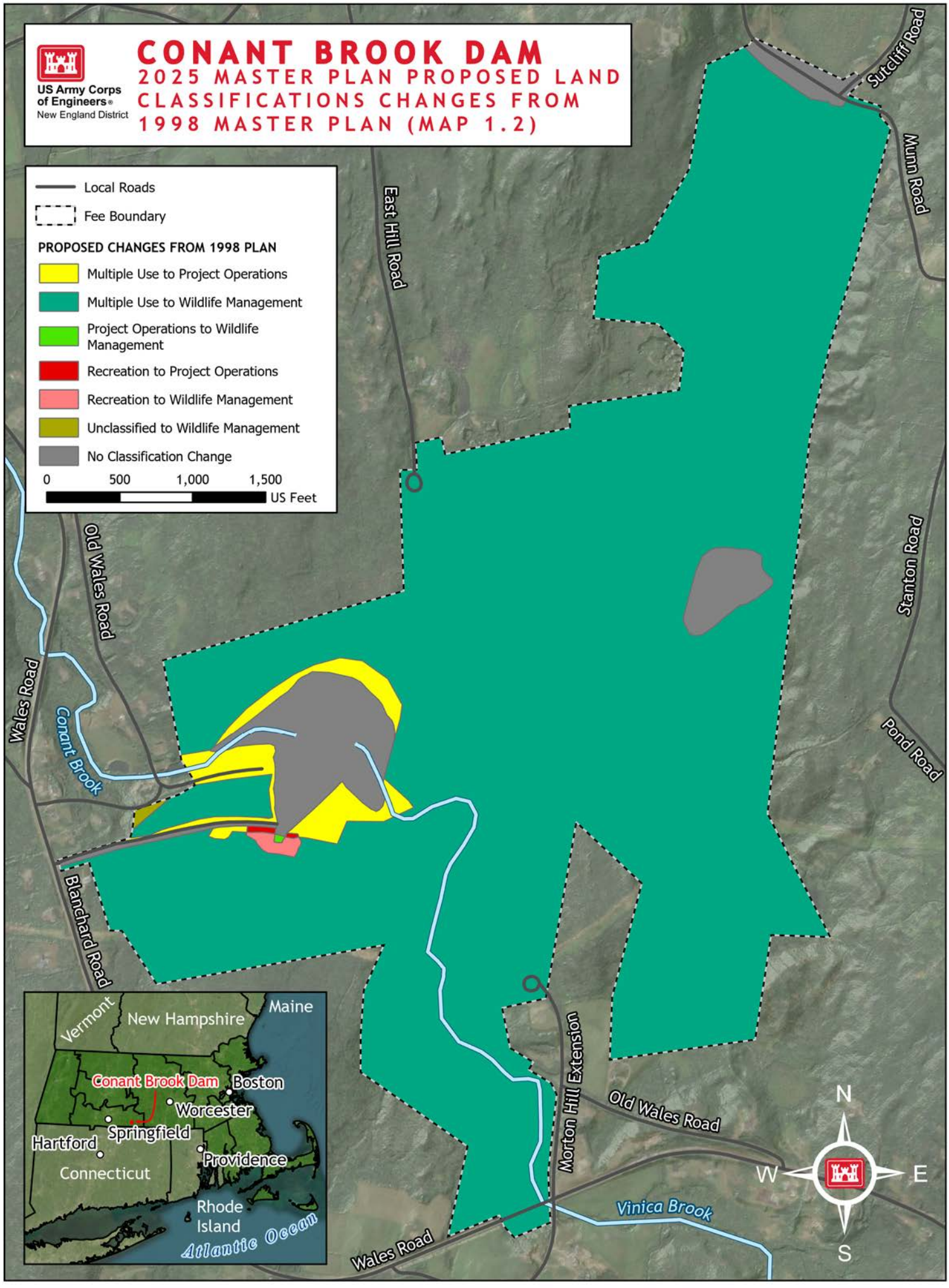
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Multiple Use to Project Operations
Multiple Use to Wildlife Management
Project Operations to Wildlife Management
Recreation to Project Operations
Recreation to Wildlife Management
Unclassified to Wildlife Management
No Classification Change
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Sutcliff Road
Munn Road
Stanton Road
Pond Road
Old Wales Road
Wales Road
Conant Brook
Blanchard Road
Morton Hill Extension
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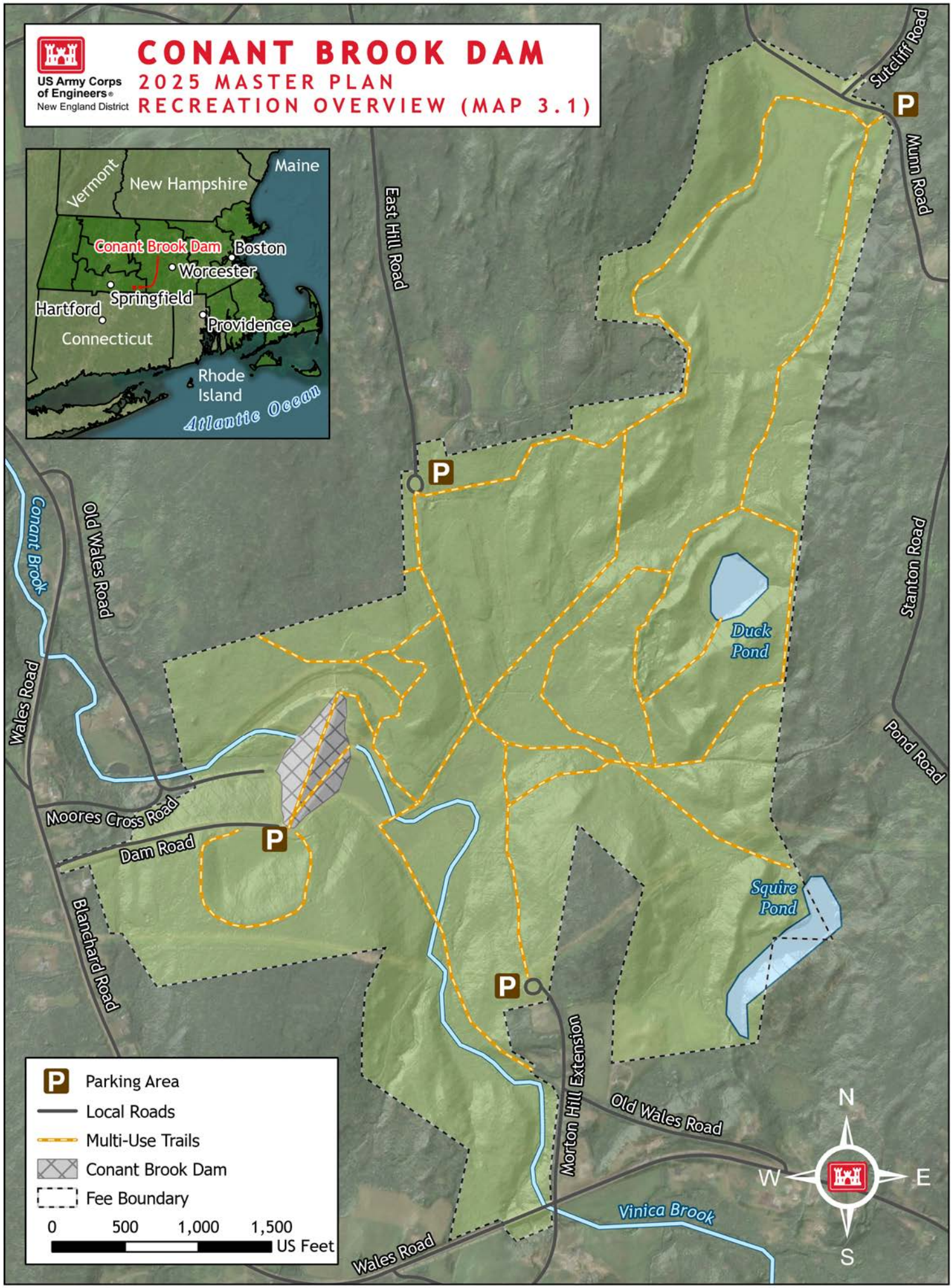
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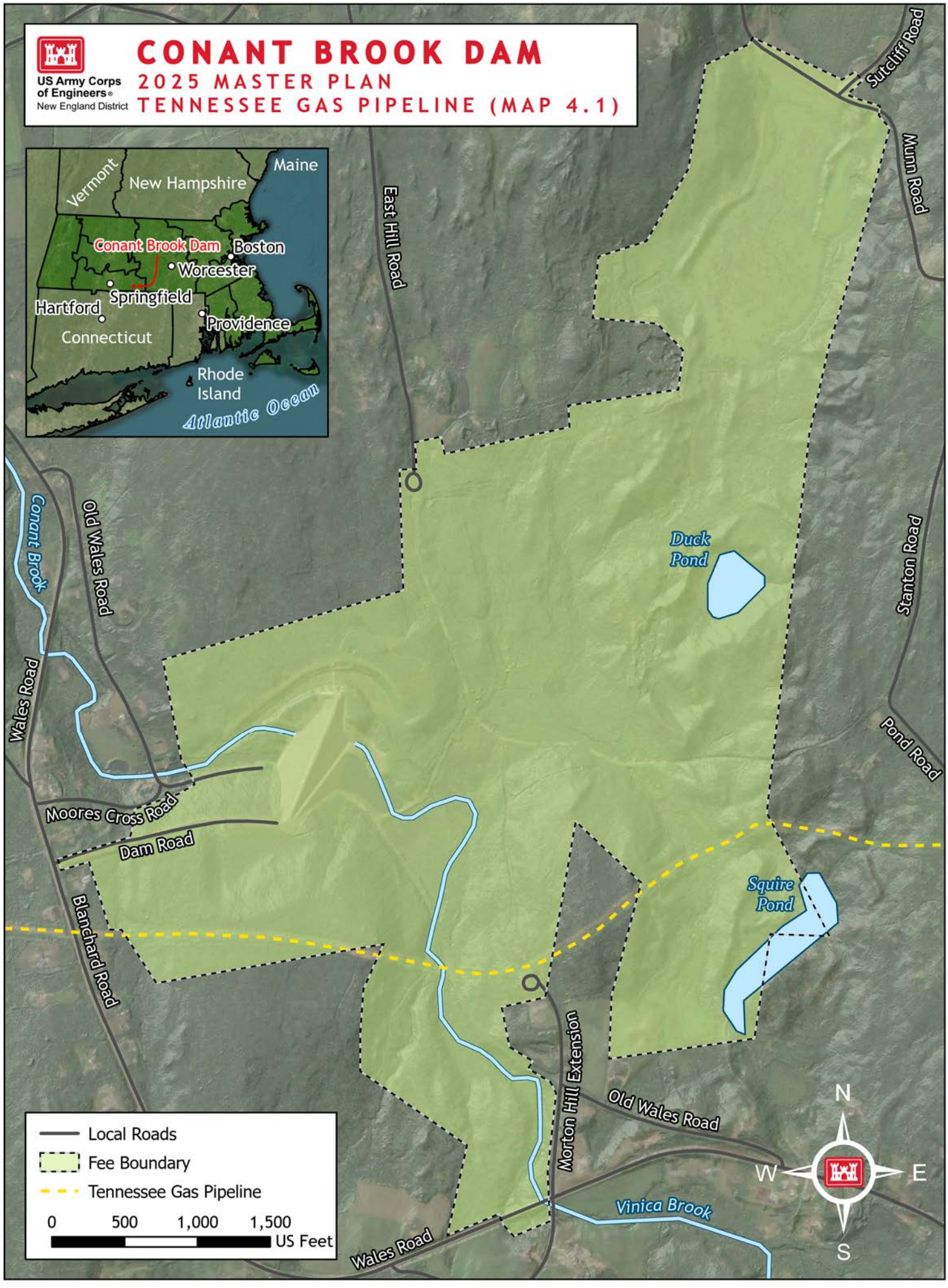
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Fee Boundary
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APPENDIX B – NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) DOCUMENTATION

DRAFT Environmental Assessment &
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Conant Brook Dam
Master Plan Revision

Monson, Massachusetts

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
New England District

June 2025

DRAFT

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DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT v

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCC	Birds of Conservation Concern
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CWA	Clean Water Act
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
EP	Engineer Pamphlet
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
ER	Engineer Regulation
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FPPA	Farmland Protection and Policy Act
GHG	Greenhouse Gas

HDR	High Density Recreation
HTRW	Hazardous, Toxic, Radioactive Wastes
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation (USFWS)
LDR	Low Density Recreation
MESA	Massachusetts Endangered Species Act
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MP	Master Plan
MRML	Multiple Resource Managed Lands
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NGVD	National Geodetic Vertical Datum
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NHESP	National Heritage and Endangered Species Program
PO	Project Operations
RPEC	Regional Planning and Environmental Center
SGCN	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SGCN	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WM	Wildlife Management

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DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment for the 2025 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan Revision

Conant Brook Dam Monson, Massachusetts

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District, and the Regional Planning and Environmental Center (RPEC), propose to revise, adopt, and implement the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan, as required by Engineering Regulation 1130-2-550 and Engineering Pamphlet 1130-2-550.

The Conant Brook Dam Master Plan is a strategic land use management document that guides the efficient, cost-effective, comprehensive management, development, and use of current ecological, socio-demographic, and outdoor recreation trends that are affecting Conant Brook Dam, as well as those anticipated to occur within the planning period of 2025 to 2050.

USACE has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. USACE is fully revising the 1998 Master Plan to reflect current ecological, socio-demographic, and outdoor recreation trends that are impacting the project, as well as those anticipated to occur within the next 25 years.

The revised 2025 Master Plan includes updated land classifications, resource goals and objectives. The land classifications include increases in Project Operations and Wildlife Management and decreases in High Density Recreation areas.

I find that based on the evaluation of environmental effects discussed in the EA, this action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment. The EA includes an evaluation of the affected environment and the geographical context and intensity of the direct and indirect, long-term and short-term effects of the action. The effects of the proposed action relative to significance criteria are summarized below. None are implicated to warrant a finding of NEPA significance.

i. <u>The degree to which the action may adversely affect public health and safety</u>. The action is expected to have long-term beneficial effects on public health and safety.

ii. <u>The degree to which the action may adversely affect unique characteristics of the geographic area such as historic or cultural resources, parks, Tribal sacred sites, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas</u>. The action will have no adverse effects to unique characteristics of the

geographic area such as Tribal sacred sites, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. The action will have no adverse effects on historical and cultural resources.

iii. Whether the action may violate relevant Federal, State, Tribal, or local laws or other requirements or be inconsistent with Federal, State, Tribal, or local policies designed for the protection of the environment. The action will not violate federal, state, tribal or local laws or policies for the protection of the environment.

iv. The degree to which the potential effects on the human environment are highly uncertain. The action effects are not uncertain. USACE has revised numerous master plans.

v. The degree to which the action may adversely affect resources listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The action will have no adverse effects on historic properties eligible or listed on the NRHP.

vi. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat, including habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The action will not adversely affect any federal or state threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat for such species.

viii. The degree to which the action may adversely affect rights of Tribal Nations that have been reserved through treaties, statutes, or Executive Orders. The action will not adversely affect rights of Tribal Nations that have been reserved through treaties, statutes, or Executive Orders.

Based on my review and evaluation of the environmental effects as presented in the EA, I have determined that the revision, implementation, and adoption of the 2025 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment and is therefore exempt from requirements to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

_____DRAFT_____ _____DRAFT_____

Date

Justin R. Pabis, P.E.
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to analyze the potential environmental effects associated with the adoption and implementation of the 2025 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan (MP). This MP is a programmatic document that is subject to evaluation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and all appropriate federal and state environmental regulations, laws, and executive orders.

The 2025 MP is a strategic land use management plan that provides direction to preserve, conserve, restore, maintain, manage, and develop all natural, cultural, and recreational resources of a USACE water resource project, which includes all government-owned lands in and around a dam and reservoir. It is a vital tool for responsible stewardship and sustainability of the project's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Methods used to evaluate the environmental resources of the area include the characterization of biological resources, review of available information, and coordination with the appropriate environmental agencies and knowledgeable persons. All actions carried out by USACE, other agencies, and individuals granted leases to USACE lands must be consistent with the 2025 MP. Engineer Pamphlet (EP) 1130-2-550 requires a revision of an MP that no longer serves its intended purpose due to a combination of age and substantial changes to the project. Therefore, the revised MP is being adopted and implemented to provide effective guidance in USACE decision-making.

Conant Brook Dam is a multi-purpose project located in the town of Monson, Massachusetts. It was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1960 for flood risk management within the Connecticut River Basin flood control system and the dam construction was completed in June 1966. The project area sits along Conant Brook, a tributary of Chicopee Brook, which flows to the Quaboag River. Although the project does not have a permanent pool, it can store up to 1.22 billion gallons of water within 158 acres for flood control purposes. It is currently managed by the New England District of USACE for flood control, wildlife habitat, forest production, watershed protection, and outdoor recreation. The Conant Brook Dam project area contains 437 acres of property and over 10 miles of multi-use trails. For more information on the Conant Brook dam, spillway, outlet, dike, and drainage system, please refer to Chapter 1.5 of the 2025 MP. The existing land classifications from the 1998 Conant Brook Dam MP are presented alongside the proposed land classifications for the 2025 Conant Brook Dam MP in Table 1. Descriptions of each land classification are included at the beginning of Section 2 of this EA.

SECTION 2: PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

During the alternative development process, the Project Delivery Team (PDT) utilized an iterative process to evaluate land classifications for each parcel of USACE land at Conant Brook Dam. This evaluation included consideration of the multiple

Congressionally authorized missions of the project, public and agency comments, USACE staff knowledge, and potential impacts to social, cultural, and environmental resources. USACE regulations specify five possible categories of land reclassification: Project Operations (PO), High Density Recreation (HDR), Mitigation, Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), and Multiple Resource Managed Lands (MRML). MRML are divided into four subcategories: Low Density Recreation (LDR), Wildlife Management (WM), Vegetation Management (VM), and Inactive/Future Recreation (IFR) Areas.

Two alternatives, a No Action Alternative and a Proposed Action Alternative, were developed and evaluated. The Proposed Action Alternative is the culmination of the iterative evaluation process and best meets the purpose and need identified in Section 1 of this document and Chapter 1.4 of the 2025 MP revision. The No Action Alternative does not meet the purpose and need but serves as a benchmark of existing conditions against which federal actions can be evaluated.

The goals for the 2025 MP include the following:

GOAL A. Provide the best management practices to respond to regional needs, resource capabilities and suitability, and expressed public interests consistent with authorized project purposes.

GOAL B. Protect and manage the project's natural and cultural resources through sustainable environmental stewardship programs.

GOAL C. Provide public outdoor recreation opportunities that support project purposes and public demands created by the project itself while sustaining the project's natural resources.

GOAL D. Recognize the particular qualities, characteristics, and potentials of the project.

GOAL E. Provide consistency and compatibility with national objectives and other state and regional goals and programs.

In addition to the above goals, USACE management activities are guided by USACE-wide Environmental Operating Principles as follows (USACE n.d.):

- Foster sustainability as a way of life throughout the organization.
- Proactively consider environmental consequences of all USACE activities and act accordingly.
- Create mutually supporting economic and environmentally sustainable solutions.
- Continue to meet our corporate responsibility and accountability under the law for activities undertaken by USACE, which may impact human and natural

environments.

- Consider the environment in employing a risk management and systems approach throughout the life cycles of projects and programs.

- Leverage scientific, economic and social knowledge to understand the environmental context and effects of USACE actions in a collaborative manner.

- Employ an open, transparent process that respects views of individuals and groups interested in USACE activities.

Specific resource objectives to accomplish these goals can be found in Chapter 3 of the 2025 MP. This EA will not address the flood risk management authorized purpose of Conant Brook Dam under either the No Action or Proposed Action alternatives. During the alternative development workshop, project lands were classified to identify how a given parcel of land shall be used now and in the foreseeable future. Table 1 catalogs each change proposed by the 2025 MP and the associated justification for that change.

Land classifications to be used in the 2025 MP are defined as follows:

- Project Operations (PO): Lands required for operation of the dam, spillway, outlet, dike, offices, maintenance facilities, and other areas used for the operation of Conant Brook Dam. These lands allow for limited recreational use such as public access to the shoreline for fishing, but the primary classification of PO will take precedent over other uses.

- Multiple Resource Managed Lands (MRML): Allows for the designation of a predominate use with the understanding that other compatible uses may also occur on these lands.

    - Wildlife Management (WM): Lands designated for stewardship of fish and wildlife habitat that permit passive recreation unless restrictions are necessary to protect sensitive species or promote public safety.

- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA): Areas where scientific, ecological, cultural, or aesthetic features have been identified and are in need of preservation.

Table 1. Changes and Justifications for Proposed Land Classifications [1]

Land Classification	Description of Changes [2]	Justification
Project Operations (PO)	Net increase in PO lands from 21 to 32 acres.	All lands classified as PO are managed and used primarily in support of critical operational requirements related to the primary mission of flood risk management. Approximately 12 acres of Multiple Resource Management were reclassified to Project Operations. These areas include the land around the Moores Cross Road and Dam Road.
High Density Recreation (HDR)	Net decrease in HDR from 1 acre to 0 acres.	A northern sliver of approximately 0.2 acres was reclassified as PO. A southern area of approximately 0.8 acres was reclassified as MRML-WM.
Multiple Resources Management (MRM)	Net decrease in MRM from 410 acres to 0 acres	The decrease in acres is due to the new naming of land classifications. Approximately 400 acres were reclassified MRML-WM.
Multiple Resource Management Lands – Wildlife Management (MRML-WM)	Net increase in MRML-WM from 0 to 400 acres.	Approximately 400 acres were previously classified as MRM and are now reclassified as MRML-WM. This is due to the updated naming of the classification. The remainder of the acres within MRML-WM were previously classified as Recreation.
Environmentally Sensitive (ESA)	No change.	The acres of ESA did not change from the 1998 Master Plan. ESA acres include a Duck Pond and a buffer zone around the pond. The ESA will contribute to the protection of the endangered species Golden Club.

(1) The land classification changes described in this table are the result of changes to individual parcels of land ranging from a few acres to several hundred acres. New acreages were measured using more accurate GIS technology, thus total changes will not equal individual changes. The acreage numbers provided are approximate.
(2) Acreages are based on GIS measurements and may vary from net difference detailed in Table 1.

2.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative serves as a basis for comparison to the anticipated effects of the other action alternatives. Under the No Action Alternative, USACE would not

adopt and implement the 2025 MP. Instead, USACE would continue to manage Conant Brook Dam's natural resources as set forth in the 1998 MP. The 1998 MP would continue to be the only source of comprehensive management guidelines and philosophy.

2.2 ALTERNATIVE 2: PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the Proposed Action, USACE will adopt and implement the 2025 MP, which guides and articulates USACE responsibilities pursuant to federal laws to preserve, conserve, restore, maintain, manage, and develop the land, water, and associated resources at Conant Brook Dam. The 2025 MP will provide an updated management plan sustaining the project's natural resources and providing recreational opportunities for the next 25 years through the planning horizon of 2050. The Proposed Action will meet regional goals associated with good stewardship of land, water, and recreational resources; address identified recreational trends; and allow for continued use and development of project lands without violating national policies or public laws. The 2025 MP will also reclassify all of Conant Brook Dam's land into management categories that will define uses of federal property that meet the definition of the assigned category and ensure the protection of natural resources and environmental stewardship while allowing maximum public enjoyment of the resources. Table 2 shows the prior land classifications from the 1998 MP, the proposed land classifications from the 2025 MP, and the net difference between the two.

Table 2. Change from 1998 Land Classifications to 2025 Proposed Land Classifications

Prior Land Classifications (1998)	Acres	Proposed Land Classifications (2025)	Acres	Net Difference
Project Operations	21	Project Operations (PO)	32	11
Recreation Lands	1	High Density Recreation (HDR)	-	(1)
Multiple Resources Management (MRM)	410	Multiple Resource Management Lands (MRML)	-	(410)
–	–	Wildlife Management (MRML-WM)	400	400
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	5	Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	5	0
LAND TOTAL	437	LAND TOTAL	437	0

*1998 acres are approximate based on digitizing the 1998 land classification map. Total fee acreage differences from the 1998 totals to the 2025 totals are due to improvements in measurement technology, deposition/siltation, and erosion. Totals also differ due to rounding while adding parcels.

SECTION 3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section describes the natural, cultural, and social resources found within the Conant Brook Dam fee boundary and the environmental consequences associated with the No Action and Proposed Action Alternative. A description of the existing conditions of resources can be found in Chapter 2 of the 2025 MP. Only those resources that have the potential to be affected by implementation of either alternative will be considered in this EA. Impacts described in this section are evaluated in terms of type (positive/beneficial or adverse), context (setting or location), intensity, and duration.

3.1 LAND USE

Please refer to Chapters 1.5 and 2.6 of the 2025 MP for existing land use information at the Conant Brook Dam project area.

3.1.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will result in moderate, adverse long-term impacts on land use. Under the No Action Alternative, the 2025 MP would not be implemented, and existing land use management would not reflect current and future needs. The operation and maintenance at Conant Brook Dam would continue to follow the 1998 MP. Land use management would not meet operational and recreational needs identified through scoping efforts. As a result, land use management would be inefficient due to conflicting guidance and management of USACE lands.

3.1.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will result in moderate, long-term beneficial impacts to land use. The 1998 MP classified the majority of the project land as MRML which allowed many uses but was primarily maintained for LDR. The 2025 MP splits the MRML land into WM and ESAs, no longer maintaining land for LDR. The other land classification is for PO. Management plans for the reclassification are in Chapter 5 of the 2025 MP. A description of the change in acres of land per classification can be found in Table 2. A justification of the land changes can be found in Table 1.

Project Operations (PO)

The proposed action will result in a net increase of PO land, which must be maintained to carry out the authorized purpose of flood risk management. In addition to operation activities, limited recreational use may be allowed.

High Density Recreation (HDR)

The proposed action will remove HDR land from Conant Brook Dam project area. The previously categorized HDR land will be divided between PO and WM.

Wildlife Management (WM)

The proposed action will result in a net increase of WM land, since this classification did not exist in the 1998 MP. WM land allows passive recreation uses such as natural surface trails, fishing, hunting, and wildlife observation, unless restrictions are necessary to protect sensitive species or to promote public safety. Any work conducted on this project will be in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et. seq.). Non-game wildlife is also managed, and the following non-game programs are or may be pursued, as applicable: early detection and prevention of aquatic invasive species, invasive plant management, native vegetation restoration, fish spawning and habitat structures, food/habitat plots, pollinator gardens, wildlife-friendly fencing. Future management actions include managing and improving WM areas.

Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)

The proposed action will result in no change to ESAs. This land classification restricts activities not aligned with preservation. Management of ESAs allows existing uses to continue but protects sensitive resources from intensive development, use, or disturbance beyond that which currently exists. Except for natural surface pedestrian trails and minimal visitor parking areas, limited or no development of public use facilities is allowed. No agricultural uses are permitted unless necessary for a specific resource management benefit (e.g. prairie restoration, forage for wildlife).

3.2 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, AND SOILS

Please refer to Chapter 2.6 of the 2025 MP for more information on existing conditions for topography, geology, and soils at Conant Brook Dam.

3.2.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

Because the 1998 MP would not be revised, the No Action Alternative will have minor, long-term adverse impacts to topography, geology, or soils. The 1998 MP management of these resources would continue without benefiting from land reclassifications or updated management methods (i.e., increased habitat protection, reduced erosion).

3.2.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action takes into consideration the various topographical, geological, and soil aspects of Conant Brook Dam project lands. The removal of HDR land and the increase of PO and WM lands will help to promote long-term preservation and stabilization of soils within Conant Brook Dam project lands. Maintenance and

development activities related to nature trails, hunting/fishing access, and basic facilities (minimal parking spaces; primitive sanitary facilities) may occur on WM and PO land and could result in some ground disturbing activities which would cause minor, short-term negative impacts to soils. However, these activities would support recreation or conservation goals at Conant Brook Dam. The proposed action will not impact the topography.

3.3 WATER RESOURCES

Please refer to Sections 2.1, 2.3, and 2.7.6 in the 2025 MP for more information on existing conditions for hydrology, water quality, and wetlands, respectively.

3.3.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

Implementation of the No Action Alternative would not impact water resources since there would be no changes or additions to the existing 1998 MP that would affect these resources.

3.3.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The 2025 MP would present minor, long-term beneficial impacts to water resources due to the removal of HDR land and an increase in WM land. The redistribution of HDR to PO and WM would serve to reduce anthropogenic disturbance to habitat and vegetation across the project area, and help to conserve, protect, and manage habitat and vegetation that reduce erosion due to shoreline stabilization. Increased shoreline stabilization and decreased erosion may also improve water clarity and therefore quality.

3.4 CLIMATE AND GREENHOUSE GASES

For more information on existing conditions for climate, please refer to Chapter 2.5 of the 2025 MP.

3.4.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will not result in any changes or impacts to climate or greenhouse gases at Conant Brook Dam. Continued management under the 1998 MP would have no impact on existing or future climate conditions.

3.4.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The 2025 MP will have minor, long-term beneficial impacts to climate in the region. These benefits will come from the promotion of land management practices and design standards that promote sustainability.

3.5 AIR QUALITY

For more information on existing conditions for air quality at Conant Brook Dam and the surrounding area, please refer to Chapter 2.4 in the 2025 MP.

3.5.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will result in no changes to existing air quality at Conant Brook Dam. The 1998 MP would remain in compliance with the Clean Air Act as no project activities would result in the contribution of NAAQ criteria pollutants.

3.5.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

In 2023, Hampden county was in attainment for all national pollutant standards. The Proposed Action will not result in any change to current and reasonably foreseeable air quality in the region and will not implement any activities that directly or indirectly produce NAAQ criteria pollutants. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Action will remain compliant with the Clean Air Act and the State Implementation Plan, and is not subject to a conformity determination. Minor development and improvement projects related to facilities, nature trails, access, and project operations are anticipated to have a negligible impact on emissions and air quality. Long-term, negligible air quality benefits may be realized as a result of the net increase in WM land and the removal of HDR land. The added protection these reclassifications provide will benefit native vegetation communities that filter and sequester air pollutants.

3.6 NATURAL RESOURCES

For more information on the existing conditions for natural resources (including fish and wildlife resources and vegetation resources), please refer to Chapters 2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.5, and 2.7.6 of the 2025 MP.

3.6.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will result in minor, adverse long-term impacts to natural resources. The 2025 MP would not be implemented, and land management would not be updated to reflect current natural resources management policies and needs at Conant Brook Dam.

3.6.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will result in moderate short and long-term beneficial impacts to natural resources. The Proposed Action would bring land management policies up to date with current needs and natural resource requirements at Conant Brook Dam project area. The implementation of the proposed land classifications will allow project

lands to further support USACE and Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) missions for wildlife and fishery conservation. The 2025 MP resource goals and objectives aim to further enhance, conserve, and protect natural resources at Conant Brook Dam, Massachusetts Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), and federally listed species.

The removal of HDR land and increase in WM will help protect and conserve natural resources from various types of adverse impacts (i.e., disturbance and habitat fragmentation). Future maintenance or minor development projects may include invasive plant species management, native vegetation restoration, and restoration of fish and wildlife habitats. These activities would provide moderate short and long-term benefits to natural resources.

3.7 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Endangered Species Act defines an endangered species as one “in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range” and a threatened species as one “likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.” Proposed species are those that have been proposed to be listed under Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act. Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act states that all federal departments and agencies shall ensure that any actions authorized, funded, or carried out by them do not jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

Using the Information for Planning and Consultation tool (IPaC), an official species list was obtained on March 18, 2025, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) New England Field Office. A copy of this list is available in Appendix C. The project area was surveyed in 2008 and 1997 for state-listed species according to MassWildlife’s Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) database (CME 2008; NHESP 1997). Table 3 describes these state-listed species found during the surveys, along with federally listed threatened and endangered species, Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) species. No federally designated critical habitats for threatened and endangered species were identified in the project area.

Table 3. Surveyed State-Listed Species and Federally Listed Protected Species Potentially Occurring at Conant Brook Dam (NHESP 1997; CME 2008)

Species	Federal Status	State Status
Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)	Endangered	-
Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)	Proposed Threatened	-
Small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*)	Threatened	-
Golden club (*Orontium aquaticum*)	-	Endangered
Slender blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium mucronatum*)	-	Endangered
Spring blue darner (*Rhionaeshna mutata*)	-	Special Concern (SGCN)
Comet darner (*Anax longipes*)	-	Special Concern (SGCN)
Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)	BGEPA Protected	-
Blue-winged warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*)	BCC	-
Canada warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*)	BCC	-
Prairie warbler (*Setophaga discolor*)	BCC	-
Scarlet tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)	BCC	-
Black-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*)	BCC	-
Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)	BCC	-
Chimney swift (*Chaetura pelagica*)	BCC	-
Rusty blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*)	BCC	-
Wood thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)	BCC	-
Eastern whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*)	BCC	

3.7.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will have no effect on any threatened and endangered species that occur at Conant Brook Dam project area. Bird species protected under the MBTA and the BGEPA would not be adversely affected. Federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species, BCC, and bald and golden eagles would continue to be managed with existing USACE guidelines established under the 1998 MP, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the MBTA, the BGEPA, and the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

3.7.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will result in minor, long-term beneficial impacts to federal and state-listed species. The implementation of the 2025 MP will allow for better cooperation with USFWS and MassWildlife that will help to preserve, enhance, and protect vegetation and wildlife habitat resources that are essential to various protected species that may be found within Conant Brook Dam project lands. The land reclassifications in the 2025 MP restructures the management, creating 400 acres strictly for WM that was otherwise largely reserved for low-density recreation.

The resource objectives, outlined in Table 3.2 of the 2025 MP, requires that protected species are managed by various ecosystem management principles. Any future activities that could potentially result in impacts to federally listed threatened, endangered, or BCC species will be coordinated with USFWS through Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and any impacts to state-listed species will be coordinated with MassWildlife. Within the context of the Endangered Species Act, USACE has determined that the adoption and implementation of the Proposed Action will have No Effect on any federally listed species.

3.8 INVASIVE SPECIES

Please refer to Chapter 2.7.4 for information on the existing condition of invasive species at Conant Brook Dam in the 2025 MP.

3.8.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will have a long-term, minor, adverse effect on invasive species management. The 1998 MP would not be updated and no changes to policies or guidelines at Conant Brook Dam concerning invasive species would occur.

3.8.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will result in minor, long-term beneficial impacts to invasive species management. The 2025 MP land reclassifications and improvement of resource management objectives will allow better management of invasive species in the Conant Brook Dam project area. The original 410 acres of “multiple resource managed” lands in

the 1998 MP were divided, with 400 acres reclassified specifically for WM. The new land classifications results in a net increase in WM land and the continued maintenance of ESAs, which will allow better protection of native species. These areas will also receive updated invasive species management efforts. The resource goals and objectives will require monitoring and reporting of invasive species, as well as actions to prevent and/or reduce the spread of these species.

3.9 CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The earliest evidence of anthropogenic occupation of Conant Brook Dam project area dates back to 5,500 BC, varying from indigenous populations to colonial Europeans and early Americans. Many artifacts have been found in the project area from both pre-contact and post-contact archaeological sites. Section 2.11 of the 2025 Master Plan provides prehistoric and historic background discussions for the Conant Brook Dam area as well as a summary regarding previous cultural resources investigations.

3.9.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will result in no impacts to existing cultural, historical, or archaeological resources. Conant Brook Dam would continue to be managed according to the 1998 Master Plan and the 1997 Historic Properties Management Plan. No direct or indirect impacts on cultural, historical, or archaeological resources is anticipated as a result of implementing the No Action Alternative.

3.9.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Impacts to historic properties were considered during the refinement processes of land reclassifications. However, due to the sensitive nature of historic properties, the locations of these resources were not included in the land reclassification. Since the MP is primarily administrative, it does not supersede cultural resources compliance under Sections 106 and 110 of the NHPA, NAGPRA, ARPA, or the 1997 Historic Properties Management Plan. Furthermore, due to the nature of the MP, there are no ground disturbing activities or other proposed project activities associated with the revision of the MP. No direct or indirect impacts are expected to occur to historic properties at Conant Brook Dam because of the Proposed Action. Therefore, the USACE has determined that the Proposed Action has no potential to affect historic properties. Any future proposed activities that could potentially result in impacts will be coordinated with Massachusetts's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and reviewed under Section 106 of the NHPA. USACE invited the Narragansett Tribe, the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), the Delaware Tribe, and the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to participate in the scoping and review of this EA.

3.10 SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHICS

For more information on the existing conditions of socioeconomics and demographics, please refer to Chapter 2.12 of the 2025 MP.

3.10.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative will have no impacts on socioeconomics or demographics. The 2025 MP would not be implemented, and Conant Brook Dam would continue to be managed based on the 1998 MP and subsequent updates.

3.10.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will result in no impacts to existing socioeconomics or demographics since no construction or changes that could affect local socioeconomic/demographic factors would occur. No activities proposed in the 2025 MP would impact the changes the local economy or local populations in any perceivable way.

3.11 HAZARDOUS, TOXIC, AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE

For information on the existing conditions of hazardous, toxic, and radioactive waste (HTRW) at Conant Brook Dam, please refer to Chapter 2.8 of the 2025 MP.

3.11.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

There will be no impacts to HTRW resources as a result of the No Action Alternative, as there would be no changes to the existing 1998 MP, and no known HTRW resources or facilities in the immediate vicinity of Conant Brook Dam would be affected by not revising the 1998 MP.

3.11.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action will result in no impacts to HTRW resources. Maintenance and minor development activities noted in the 2025 MP will not result in any releases of HTRW.

3.12 HEALTH AND SAFETY

For information on the existing conditions of health and safety at Conant Brook Dam, please refer to Chapter 2.9 of the 2025 MP.

3.12.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

There will be no impacts to health and safety as a result of implementing the No Action Alternative, as there would be no changes made to the 1998 MP. Health and safety would continue to be managed and follow guidelines from the 1998 MP.

3.12.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

No impacts to health and safety are anticipated as a result of implementing the Proposed Action.

3.13 RECREATION

For information on the existing conditions of recreation and the zone of influence for Conant Brook Dam, please refer to Chapter 2.13 of the 2025 MP.

3.13.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would keep the 1998 MP in place, which would cause moderate, long-term adverse impacts to recreation. These impacts would result from lack of updates in land management as well as land classifications related to recreation that would not reflect current recreation needs at Conant Brook Dam project area.

3.13.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would result in moderate, long-term beneficial impacts to recreation. The Proposed Action would implement the 2025 MP, which provides updates to both recreation policies and goals, as well as large-scale changes to recreation land classifications. The 2025 MP would split the previous 1 acre of HDR land into WM and PO. However, low-impact recreational activities such as hiking, biking, and fishing would still be able to occur on WM and PO lands. The long-term benefit to recreation results from updated and more effective management of recreation land and the inclusion of future maintenance activities. These future management activities may include maintenance or development of nature trails, fishing and hunting access, and basic facilities (e.g. minimal parking spaces, primitive sanitary facilities). These activities would accommodate visitors and the increasing recreation trends.

3.14 AESTHETICS RESOURCES

For information on the existing conditions of aesthetic resources at Conant Brook Dam, please refer to Chapter 2.10 of the 2025 MP.

3.14.1 Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

There will be no impacts on aesthetic resources as a result of the No Action Alternative, as there would be no changes to the existing 1998 MP.

3.14.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The Proposed Action may have negligible, long-term, beneficial impacts to aesthetic resources due to an increase in WM lands. Benefits to aesthetic resources may occur due to less overall disturbance of aesthetic nature areas.

SECTION 4: COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL FEDERAL STATUES AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS

This EA has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of all applicable federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders. The adoption and implementation of the 2025 MP is consistent with USACE's Environmental Operating Principles. The following is a list of applicable environmental laws and regulations that were considered in the planning of this project and the status of compliance with each:

Federal Statutes

1. Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended, 16 U.S.C 470aa et seq.
Compliance: In compliance. Prior to any work being done as part of this action, the area will be surveyed for the presence of any archaeological resources.

2. Preservation of Historic and Archeological Data Act of 1974, as amended, 54 U.S.C. 312501-312508.

Compliance: USACE notified the Narragansett Tribe, the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), the Delaware Tribe, and the SHPO of the proposed action by email dated July 5th, 2024. No comments were received.

3. American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, 42 U.S.C. 1996.

Compliance: This action will not impede access by Native Americans to sacred sites, possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.

4. Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.

Compliance: Existing operation and management of the dam is compliant with the Clean Air Act and will not change with the 2025 MP. A General Conformity Determination is not required since the emissions of either alternative are negligible and are otherwise de minimis.

5. Clean Water Act of 1977 (Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of

1972) 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.

Compliance: The Proposed Action complies with the Clean Water Act regulations and requirements. There will be no change in the existing management of the reservoir that will impact water quality, and minor, long-term benefits to water quality are expected from the Proposed Action.

6. Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.

Compliance: Current lists of threatened or endangered species were obtained through the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation tool on March 18, 2025. USACE has determined that no federally listed species or critical habitat would be affected by the Proposed Action. Therefore, no consultation with USFWS is required. See Section 3.7 for additional information.

7. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.

Compliance: Coordination with the USFWS and MassWildlife signifies compliance with this Act.

8. National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 54 U.S.C. 306108 et seq.

Compliance: As detailed in 3.9.2, USACE has determined that the Proposed Action is primarily administrative and does not have the potential to impact historic properties directly or indirectly at Conant Brook Dam. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), USACE has satisfied its responsibilities to consider the effects of the Proposed Action on historic properties and has no further obligations under Section 106 of the NHPA. USACE remains in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

9. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 25 U.S.C. 3001-3013, 18 U.S.C. 1170

Compliance: Regulations implementing NAGPRA will be followed if discovery of human remains and/or funerary items occur during implementation of this action.

10. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.

Compliance: Preparation and issuance of this Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact signifies compliance with NEPA.

11. National Invasive Species Act (NISA), as amended 15 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.

Compliance: Invasive species occur in the project area and are monitored and managed. The project will not promote or cause the introduction or spread of invasive species.

12. Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 669 et seq.

Compliance: The proposed action is not anticipated to affect bald or golden eagles.

Executive Orders

1. Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977 amended by Executive Order 12148, 20 July 1979; subsequently amended by Executive Order 13690, January 30, 2015.

Compliance: This EO directs federal agencies to evaluate the potential impacts of proposed actions in floodplains. The Proposed Action complies with EO 11988 and will not impact to the existing floodplain at Conant Brook Dam.

2. Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977.

Compliance: This EO requires federal agencies to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in executing federal projects. The Proposed Action complies with EO 11990.

3. Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks. 21 April 1997; amended by EO 13296, 18 April 2003.

Compliance: Adoption and implementation of the 2025 MP will not create a disproportionate environmental health or safety risk for children.

4. EO 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, 13 May 1971.

Compliance: A copy of the draft EA will be released to the Massachusetts SHPO.

5. EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, 24 May 1996.

Compliance: Access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners will be allowed and accommodated. No adverse effects to the physical integrity of such sacred sites will occur.

6. EO 13112, Invasive Species, 8 December 2016.

Compliance: The project will not promote or cause the introduction or spread of invasive species.

7. EO 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, 6 November 2000.

Compliance: Consultation with Indian Tribal Governments, where applicable, and consistent with executive memoranda, DOD Indian policy, and USACE Tribal Policy Principles signifies compliance.

8. EO 13186, Migratory Bird Conservation, 10 January 2001.

Compliance: The 2025 MP would not result in a measurable negative effect on migratory bird populations.

Executive Memorandum

1. Memorandum for the Heads of Agencies from CEQ, Analysis of Impacts on Prime or Unique Agricultural Lands in Implementing NEPA, 11 August 1980.

Compliance: The Proposed Action will not impact prime farmland.

2. Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies from the President of the United States, Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments, 29 April 1994.

Compliance: Notification of the action with the Narragansett Tribe, the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and the Delaware Tribe signifies compliance.

SECTION 5: PUBLIC AND AGENCY COORDINATION

In accordance with NEPA, USACE initiated public involvement and agency scoping activities to solicit input on the proposed revision of the 1998 MP, as well as identifying any issues related to the Proposed Action. The initial scoping meeting was a public open house held at the Monson Public Library in Monson, MA on July 31st, 2024, to inform the public of the intent to revise the MP. The public input period remained open for 30 days from July 31st, 2024, to August 31st, 2024. The public input period resulted in 2 comments, which can be found in Appendix E of the 2025 MP.

The purpose of this open house was to provide attendees with information regarding the proposed Master Plan revision as well as to provide them with the opportunity to comment on the proposed Conant Brook Dam Draft Master Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Finding of No Significant Impact. The open house included the following topics:

- What is a Master Plan?
- What a Master Plan is Not
- Why Revise a Master Plan?
- Overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
- Master Planning process
- Proposed Changes to the Master Plan
- Instructions for submitting comment.

A 30-day public notice advertising the availability of the Draft EA will be published. Any comments received and USACE responses will be available in the Final EA.

Attachment A to this EA includes the press release/public notice, 30-day comment form, the notification email to the tribes and SHPO, and the distribution list for all coordination. The EA has been coordinated with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USFWS, United States Geological Survey (USGS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), MassWildlife, and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). USACE has notified the Massachusetts SHPO, Narragansett Tribe, Stockbridge-Munsee Community, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and Delaware Tribe of the proposed action.

SECTION 6: REFERENCES

CME Associates, Inc (CME). 2008. Ecological Studies Final Report Conant Brook Dam, Westville Lake, and East Brimfield Lake.

Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP).1997. Conant Brook Dam Property Rare or Protected Species and Exemplary Natural Communities Survey Pre-Final Report. Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). 1998. Master Plan Conant Brook Dam, Monson, Massachusetts.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). N.d. Environmental Operating Procedures. Accessed on April 2, 2025. https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Environmental-Operating-Principles/.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2024. Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC). Accessed June 2, 2025. https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/.

ATTACHMENT A: PUBLIC AND AGENCY COORDINATION

U.S. ARMY
US Army Corps of Engineers®
New England District

NEWS RELEASE

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:
July 5, 2024
Release No. MA 2024-21

Contact:
Cenae-pa@usace.army.mil

USACE hosts open house July 31 in Monson, Mass., for Conant Brook Dam Master Plan revision

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District will host an open house July 31, 2024, in Monson, Mass., to kick off a process to revise the 1998 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan for the Conant Brook Dam project in Monson.

The open house will be held from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Monson Public Library Meeting Room located at 2 High Street in Monson. 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 Conant Brook Dam 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 Conant Brook Dam project related to flood risk management or the water conservation missions of the project.

An initial 30-day public comment period will begin July 31 and end August 31. During this time, members of the public can submit comments, suggestions and concerns about the master plan. Comments must be submitted in writing at the open house or digitally via the comment link on the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan revision website at https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Conant-Brook-Dam/Conant-Brook-Dam-Master-Plan/.

-MORE-

Conant Brook Dam/2-2-2

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 September 2025).

Conant Brook Dam is located on Conant Brook, a tributary of Chicopee Brook which flows to the Quaboag River. The Quaboag River is a major tributary of the Chicopee River. The project is situated entirely within the town of Monson in Hampden County. This is a multi-purpose project built and maintained by USACE. Construction of Conant Brook Dam started in June 1964 and was completed in December 1966 at a cost of $3 million. Conant Brook Dam is part of the comprehensive plan for the development of the Lower Connecticut River Basin, but it's operation and maintenance is carried out by project personnel located in the Thames River Basin.

USACE manages the natural resources at Conant Brook Dam for multiple uses to include flood risk management, wildlife habitat, forest production, watershed protection and outdoor recreation. Conant Brook Dam offers a wide array of trails for outdoor recreational purposes to include hiking and mountain biking. Several trails have been modified to best suit equestrian groups. During the winter, visitors can cross country ski and snowshoe on the trails. Hunting is allowed throughout the property during the proper seasons. The project also offers three miles of stream fishing for state-stocked trout along Conant Brook and Vinica Brook.

For more information about Conant Brook Dam, visit the project website at https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Conant-Brook-Dam/.

##

US Army Corps of Engineers®

Comment Form Instructions
Public Meeting July 31, 2024

Master Plan Revision
Conant Brook Dam

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is in the process of revising the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan. The Master Plan revision will guide the land and recreational management of the federally owned property that make up the flood storage area for the next 25 years. Management activities include protecting natural and cultural resources, providing access to public land and water recreation, protecting the public, and ensuring reservoir and dam operations. Pertinent information and a copy of the current master plan and land use map can be found on the USACE website below. To add your comments, ideas, or concerns about the future land and recreational management for the Master Plan, please submit comments using any of the following methods:

- Fill out and return a comment form available below or at the following website: https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Conant-Brook-Dam/Conant-Brook-Dam-Master-Plan/
- Provide comments in an email message or use the comment form and send to: conantbrookmasterplan@usace.army.mil
- Provide comments in a letter or use comment form and send via mail to:

  USACE Conant Brook Dam
  c/o East Brimfield Dam
  Attn: Project Manager Keith Beecher
  24 Riverview Ave.
  Fiskdale, MA 01518
- Drop off or mail written comments to the project office at the address above.

The **30-day comment period is July 31 through August 31, 2024**. Please provide written comments via the methods above. Your input into the Master Plan revision and related environmental concerns under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is key to developing a successful Master Plan for the lake project. Please write your questions, comments, or suggestions in on the next page and mail or e-mail them to the address above during the comment period. **Comments due by August 31, 2024**. Thank you for your participation!

Comment Form
Public Meeting July 31, 2024
Comments due by August 31, 2024

Questions, comments, or suggestions?

Optional Information (used for mailing list to keep you informed and will not be used for any other purpose):

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____

Zip Code: _____ **Email:** _____

Scan QR Code

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, FORT WORTH DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 17300
FORT WORTH, TX 76102-0300

May 20, 2025

(Sample letter for review of draft EA; names and address have been redacted)

Good Afternoon:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will host an open house on Tuesday, June 12, 2025, to share details on a draft revision of the 1998 East Brimfield Lake Master Plan and the 1998 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan. The open house will be held from 5:00 pm-7:00 p.m. at the Sturbridge Town Hall at 308 Main Street, Sturbridge, Massachusetts 01566. The public open house will cover the proposed changes to the current East Brimfield Lake and Conant Brook Dam Master Plans.

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. Both the current East Brimfield Lake Master Plan and Conant Brook Dam Master Plan, were last updated in 1998, need revision to address changes in regional land use, population, outdoor recreation trends, and the USACE management policy.

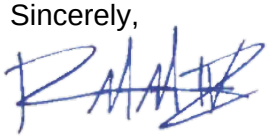
An initial 30-day comment period will begin June 12, 2025, and end July 12, 2025. The Massachusetts Historical Commission can send comments, suggestions, and concerns during this time. Comments must be submitted in writing at the open house or digitally via the comment form on the following Master Plan Revision web pages:

- East Brimfield - https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/East-Brimfield-Lake/East-Brimfield-Lake-Master-Plan/

- Conant Brook - https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Conant-Brook-Dam/Conant-Brook-Dam-Master-Plan/

Please send your requests for additional information to Thomas Lesinski, Archaeologist, Environmental Branch, at Thomas.lesinski@usace.army.mil. If you wish to discuss this via telephone, you can reach Mr. Lesinski at (989) 326-5607.

Sincerely,



Robert Morrow, PMP
Chief, Environmental Branch
Regional Planning and Environmental Center

CONANT BROOK MASTER PLAN REVISION
OPEN HOUSE NEWS RELASE

	Date Sent	Title	Organization/Entity
TOWN	7/5/2024	Town Administrator	Town of Monson
	7/5/2024	Chair, Board of Selectmen	Town of Monson
	7/5/2024	Vice Chair, Board of Selectmen	Town of Monson
	7/5/2024	Chair, Monson Conservation Commission	Town of Monson
	7/5/2024	Conservation Agent, Conservation Commission	Town of Monson
	7/5/2024	Director, Monson Public Library	Monson Library
	7/5/2024	Fire Chief, EM Director	Monson Fire Department
	7/5/2024	Chief of Police	Monson Police Department
STATE	7/5/2024	Admin	MassDEP Central Regional Office
	7/5/2024	Director	MA Div. of Fish & Wildlife
	7/12/2024	Executive Director and SHPO, Massachusetts Historical Commission	MA SHPO
	7/5/2024	Colonel	MA Environmental Police
	7/5/2024	Director	MA Emergency Management
	7/5/2024	Office of Dam Safety	MA Office of Dam Safety
	7/5/2024	Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation
	7/5/2024	Executive Director	Central MA Regional Planning Commission
	7/5/2024	Senior Endangered Species Review Biologist	MA Div. of Fish & Wildlife
	7/5/2024	Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program	MA Div. of Fish & Wildlife
	7/9/2024	Director	Office of Outdoor Recreation
	7/9/2024	Undersecretary of Environmental Justice & Equity	Office of Environmental Justice and Equity
FEDERAL	7/5/2024	Director, Office of Environmental Review	EPA
	7/5/2024	Supervisor, Endangered Species Program/Hydropower Program	USFWS
	7/5/2024	Water Center	USGS
	7/5/2024	National Weather Service Hydrologic Office	NOAA
CONGRESSIONAL	7/5/2024	Governor of Massachusetts	MA State House
	7/5/2024	Senator	MA Senate
	7/5/2024	Senator	MA Senate
	7/5/2024	Representative	US Representative
	7/5/2024	Senator	US Senate
	7/5/2024	Representative	MA House of Representatives
TRIBAL	7/5/2024	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	Narragansett Tribe
	7/5/2024	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	Stockbridge-Munsee Community
	7/5/2024	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
	7/5/2024	Public Relations	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
	7/5/2024	Archaeologist	Delaware Tribe

LOCAL

From:	Conant Brook Dam
To:	Conant Brook Dam
Cc:	Conant Brook Dam
Bcc:	**Notifications were sent to the following tribes and SHPO:** Narragansett Tribe Stockbridge-Munsee Community Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah) Delaware Tribe Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Masschusetts State Historical Preservation Officer
Subject:	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Conant Brook Dam Master Plan Revision Open House on Wednesday, July 31, 2024
Date:	Friday, July 5, 2024 1:45:45 PM
Attachments:	2024-021 NewsRelease_USACE hosts open house July 31 in Monson, Mass., for Conant Brook Dam Master Plan revision.pdf

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Greetings,

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will host an open house on Wednesday, July 31, 2024, to kick off a process to revise the 1998 Conant Brook Dam Master Plan. The open house will be held from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Monson Public Library at 2 High Street in Monson, MA 01057.

During the open house session, there will be no formal presentation. The public is invited to visit at any point during the 4:30-6:30 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.

Please see the attached News Release for more information. Additional information can be found on our website: https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Conant-Brook-Dam/Conant-Brook-Dam-Master-Plan/. Feel free to share this announcement with others. We hope you are able to attend the open house.

Thank you,
Conant Brook Dam Master Plan Revision Team
Thames River Basin
New England District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Email: conantbrookmasterplan@usace.army.mil

APPENDIX C – WILDLIFE DOCUMENTS

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New England Ecological Services Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301-5094
Phone: (603) 223-2541 Fax: (603) 223-0104

In Reply Refer To: 03/18/2025 18:10:29 UTC
Project Code: 2025-0008212
Project Name: Conant Brook Dam Master Plan revision

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

Updated 4/12/2023 - Please review this letter each time you request an Official Species List, we will continue to update it with additional information and links to websites may change.

About Official Species Lists

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Federal and non-Federal project proponents have responsibilities under the Act to consider effects on listed species.

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested by returning to an existing project's page in IPaC.

Endangered Species Act Project Review

Please visit the "**New England Field Office Endangered Species Project Review and Consultation**" website for step-by-step instructions on how to consider effects on listed

species and prepare and submit a project review package if necessary:

https://www.fws.gov/office/new-england-ecological-services/endangered-species-project-review

NOTE Please do not use the **Consultation Package Builder** tool in IPaC except in specific situations following coordination with our office. Please follow the project review guidance on our website instead and reference your **Project Code** in all correspondence.

Northern Long-eared Bat - (**Updated 4/12/2023**) The Service published a final rule to reclassify the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) as endangered on November 30, 2022. The final rule went into effect on March 31, 2023. You may utilize the **Northern Long-eared Bat Rangewide Determination Key** available in IPaC. More information about this Determination Key and the Interim Consultation Framework are available on the northern long-eared bat species page:

https://www.fws.gov/species/northern-long-eared-bat-myotis-septentrionalis

For projects that previously utilized the 4(d) Determination Key, the change in the species' status may trigger the need to re-initiate consultation for any actions that are not completed and for which the Federal action agency retains discretion once the new listing determination becomes effective. If your project was not completed by March 31, 2023, and may result in incidental take of NLEB, please reach out to our office at newengland@fws.gov to see if reinitiation is necessary.

Additional Info About Section 7 of the Act
Under section 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 et seq.), Federal agencies are required to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat. If a Federal agency, or its non-Federal representative, determines that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Federal agency also may need to consider proposed species and proposed critical habitat in the consultation. 50 CFR 402.14(c)(1) specifies the information required for consultation under the Act regardless of the format of the evaluation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

https://www.fws.gov/service/section-7-consultations

In addition to consultation requirements under Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, please note that under sections 7(a)(1) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 et seq.), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species. Please contact NEFO if you would like more information.

Candidate species that appear on the enclosed species list have no current protections under the ESA. The species' occurrence on an official species list does not convey a requirement to

consider impacts to this species as you would a proposed, threatened, or endangered species. The ESA does not provide for interagency consultations on candidate species under section 7, however, the Service recommends that all project proponents incorporate measures into projects to benefit candidate species and their habitats wherever possible.

Migratory Birds

In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity, intentional or unintentional, resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts see:

https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-bird-permit

https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/bald-and-golden-eagle-management

Please feel free to contact us at **newengland@fws.gov** with your **Project Code** in the subject line if you need more information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat.

Attachment(s): Official Species List

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

New England Ecological Services Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301-5094
(603) 223-2541

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2025-0008212
Project Name: Conant Brook Dam Master Plan revision
Project Type: Land Management Plans - NWR
Project Description: 2025 Master Plan revision for Conant Brook Dam.
Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: https://www.google.com/maps/@42.076691049999994,-72.28656840027291,14z

Counties: Hampden County, Massachusetts

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 3 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries[1], as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

MAMMALS

NAME	STATUS
Northern Long-eared Bat *Myotis septentrionalis* No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045	Endangered

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* There is **proposed** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Proposed Threatened

FLOWERING PLANTS

NAME	STATUS
Small Whorled Pogonia *Isotria medeoloides* Population: No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1890	Threatened

CRITICAL HABITATS

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

YOU ARE STILL REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PROJECT(S) MAY HAVE EFFECTS ON ALL ABOVE LISTED SPECIES.

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: Army Corps of Engineers
Name: Nicholas Warner
Address: 696 Virginia rd
City: Concord
State: MA
Zip: 01742
Email nicholas.warner@usace.army.mil
Phone: 9783188223

Appendix C Table 1: Common Bird Species Potentially Occurring at Conant Brook Dam

Common Name / Scientific Name	Common Name / Scientific Name
Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)	Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)
Wood duck (*Aix sponsa*)	Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)	Red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)
American black duck (*Anas rubripes*)	Black-capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*)
Pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)	Downy woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*)
Great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*)	European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
Common merganser (*Mergus merganser*)	Barred owl (*Strix varia*)
Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*)	Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
American robin (*Turdus migratorius*)	Bluejay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)
American goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*)	American tree sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*)
Scarlet tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)	Ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Appendix C Table 2: Common Invertebrate Species Potentially Occurring at Conant Brook Dam

Common Name / Scientific Name	Common Name / Scientific Name
Spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*)	Red-spotted newt (*Notophthalmus viridescens*)
Northern spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*)	Wood frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*)
Northern two-lined salamander (*Eurycea bislineata*)	Common musk turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*)
Eastern American toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*)	Common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*)
American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*)	Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)
Common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)	Eastern racer snake (*Coluber constrictor*)
Eastern milk snake (*Lampropeltis Triangulum*)	Timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*)
Slender spreadwing (*Lestes rectangularis*)	Lesser maple spanworm (*Speranza pustularia*)

Copper underwing (*Amphipyra pyramidoides*)	Variable carpet moth (*Anticlea vasiliata*)
Canada darner (*Aeshna canadensis*)	American emerald (*Cordulia shurtleffii*)

Appendix C Table 3: Common Mammal Species Potentially Occurring at Conant Brook Dam

Common Name / Scientific Name	Common Name / Scientific Name
White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)	Eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)
Eastern grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)	Eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*)
American beaver (*Castor canadensis*)	Groundhog (*Marmota monax*)
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)	Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)
North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*)	American mink (*Neovison vison*)
Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)	Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)
Striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)	Fisher (*Pekania pennanti*)
Eastern meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)	North American porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*)
White-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*)	Masked shrew (*Sorex cinereus*)

Appendix C Table 4: Additional State-Listed Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Potentially Occurring in Monson, MA (MassWildlife n.d.)

Common Name / Scientific Name	Last Recorded	State Listing
Brook snaketail (*Ophiogomphus aspersus*)	2023	Special concern
Climbing fumitory (*Adlumia fungosa*)	2023	Special concern
Creeper (*Strophitus undulatus*)	2014	Special concern
Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*)	2018	Special concern
Eastern hog-nosed snake (*Heterodon platirhinos*)	1996	Special concern
Eastern whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*)	2018	Special concern
Golden-winged warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)	1970s	Endangered
Marcopis cuckoo bee (*Epeoloides pilosulus*)	2023	Threatened
Marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*)	2010	Threatened
Pod-grass (*Scheuchzeria palustris*)	1892	Endangered
Water shrew (*Sorex palustris*)	1989	Special concern
Wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)	2024	Special concern
Wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)	2022	Special concern

APPENDIX D – PERTINENT LAWS

- Antiquities Act of 1906, Public Law 59-209, 34 Stat. 225, 54 U.S.C. Sections 320301-320303: The first Federal law established to protect what are now known as "cultural resources" on public lands. It provides a permit procedure for investigating "antiquities" and consists of two parts: An act for the Preservation of American Antiquities, and Uniform Rules and Regulations.
- Flood Control Act of 1938, Public Law 75-761: This act authorizes the construction, repair, and preservation of certain public works on rivers and harbors for navigation, flood control, and for other purposes.
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. Sections 668-668d: This Act prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from taking bald eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. The Act provides criminal penalties for persons who take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, transport, export or import, at any time or any manner, any bald eagle [or any golden eagle], alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof. The Act defines “take” as pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest, or disturb.
- Flood Control Act of 1944, Public Law 78-534: Section 4 of the act as last amended in 1962 by Section 207 of Public Law 87-874 authorizes USACE to construct, maintain, and operate public parks and recreational facilities in reservoir areas and to grant leases and licenses for lands, including facilities, preferably to Federal, State or local governmental agencies.
- River and Harbor Act of 1946, Public Law 79-525: This act authorizes the construction, repair, and preservation of certain public works on rivers and harbors for navigation, flood control, and for other purposes.
- Flood Control Act of 1954, Public Law 83-780: This act authorizes the construction, maintenance, and operation of public parks and recreational facilities in reservoir areas under the control of the Department of the Army and authorizes the Secretary of the Army to grant leases of lands in reservoir areas deemed to be in the public interest.
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Public Law 85-624: This act, as amended, sets down the general policy that fish and wildlife conservation shall receive equal consideration with other project purposes and be coordinated with other features of water resource development programs. Opportunities for improving fish and wildlife resources and adverse effects on these resources shall be examined along with other purposes which might be served by water resources development.
- An Act to provide for the protection of forest cover for reservoir areas under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Engineers, Public Law 86-717: This act provides for the protection of forest and other vegetative cover for reservoir areas under this jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Engineers.
- River and Harbor Act of 1962, Public Law 87-874: This act authorizes the construction, repair, and preservation of certain public works on rivers and harbors for navigation, flood control, and for other purposes.

- Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, Public Law 88-578: This act established a fund from which U.S. Congress can make appropriations for outdoor recreation. This law makes entrance and user fees at reservoirs possible by deleting the words "without charge" from Section 4 of the 1944 Flood Control Act, as amended.
- Outdoor Recreation Planning and Development Act, Public Law 88-29: Authorized the Secretary of the Interior to inventory and classify outdoor recreation needs and resources and to prepare a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan taking into consideration the plans of the various Federal agencies, State, and other political subdivisions. It also states that the federal agencies undertaking recreational activities shall consult with the Secretary of the Interior concerning these activities and shall carry out such responsibilities in general conformance with the nationwide plan.
- Federal Water Project Recreation Act, Public Law 89-72: This act requires that not less than one-half the separable costs of developing recreational facilities and all operation and maintenance costs at Federal reservoir projects shall be borne by a non-Federal public body. A HQUSACE/OMB implementation policy made these provisions applicable to projects completed prior to 1965.
- Water Resources Planning Act, Public Law 89-80: This act established the Water Resources Council and gives it the responsibility to encourage the development, conservation, and use of the Nation's water and related land resources on a coordinated and comprehensive basis.
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Public Law 89-665, 54 U.S.C. Sections 300101 et seq.: This act provides for: (1) an expanded National Register of significant sites and objects; (2) matching grants to states undertaking historic and archeological resource inventories; and (3) a program of grants-in aid to the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and (4) the establishment of an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Section 106 requires that the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation have an opportunity to comment on any undertaking which adversely affects properties listed, nominated, or considered important enough to be included on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Flood Control Act of 1968, Section 210, Public Law 90-483: Restricted collection of entrance fee at USACE lakes and reservoirs to users of highly developed facilities requiring continuous presence of personnel.
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Public Law 91-190, 42 U.S.C. Sections 4321 et seq.: NEPA declared it a national policy to encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment, and for other purposes. Specifically, it declared a "continuing policy of the Federal Government... to use all practicable means and measures...to foster and promote the general welfare, to create conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans." Section 102 authorized and directed that, to the fullest extent possible, the policies, regulations and public law of the United States shall be

interpreted and administered in accordance with the policies of the Act. It is Section 102 that requires consideration of environmental impacts associated with Federal actions. Section 101 of NEPA requires the federal government to use all practicable means to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony.

Specifically, Section 101 of NEPA declares:

- Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations
- Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings
- Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation risk to health or safety or other undesirable and unintended consequences
- Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain wherever possible an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice
- Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities
- Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources

- River and Harbor Act of 1970 and Flood Control Act of 1970, Public Law 91-611: Establishes the requirement for evaluating the economic, social, and environmental impacts of projects.
- To restore the Golden Eagle program to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, Public Law 92-347: This act revises Public Law 88-578, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, to require Federal agencies to collect special recreation user fees for the use of specialized sites developed at Federal expense and to prohibit the USACE from collecting entrance fees to projects.
- Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, Public Law 92-500: The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 (PL 845, 80th U.S. Congress), as amended in 1961, 1966, 1970, 1972, 1977, and 1987, established the basic tenet of uniform State standards for water quality. Public Law 92-500 strongly affirms the Federal interest in this area. "The objective of this act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Nation's waters."
- Public Law 93-81: This law amends Section 4 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, to require each Federal agency to collect special recreation use fees for the use of sites, facilities, equipment, or services furnished at Federal expense.
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, Public Law 93-205, 16 U.S.C. Sections 1531 et seq.: This law repeals the Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969. It also directs all Federal departments/agencies to carry out programs to conserve endangered and threatened species of fish, wildlife, and plants and to preserve the habitat of these species in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior. This Act establishes a procedure for coordination, assessment, and consultation.

- Water Resources Development Act of 1974, Public Law 93-251: Section 107 of this law establishes a broad Federal policy which makes it possible to participate with local governmental entities in the costs of sewage treatment plan installations.
- Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, Public Law 93-291: The Secretary of the Interior shall coordinate all Federal survey and recovery activities authorized under this expansion of the 1960 act. The Federal Construction agency may transfer up to one percent of project funds to the Secretary with such transferred funds considered non-reimbursable project costs. This amends the Reserve Salvage Act of 1960 (PL-86-523).
- An act to amend the Land Water Conservation Fund Act, as amended, to provide for collection of special recreation use fees at additional campgrounds, and for other purposes, Public Law 93-303: This law amends Section 4 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, to establish less restricted criteria under which Federal agencies may charge fees for the use of campgrounds developed and operated at Federal areas under their control.
- An Act to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, to establish the National Historic Preservation Fund, and for other purposes, Public Law 94-422: Expands the role of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Section 201 amends Section 106 of the National Historical Preservation Act of 1966 to say that the Council can comment on activities which will have an adverse effect on sites either included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended, Public Law 95-217: This Act amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 and extends the appropriations authorization. The Clean Water Act is a comprehensive Federal water pollution control program that has as its primary goal the reduction and control of the discharge of pollutants into the nation's navigable waters. The Clean Water Act of 1977 has been amended by the Water Quality Act of 1987, Public Law 100-4.
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Public Law 95-341: The Act protects the rights of Native Americans to exercise their traditional religions by ensuring access to sites, use and possession of sacred objections, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.
- Endangered Species Act Amendments of 1978, Public Law 95-632: This law amends the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Section 7 directs agencies to conduct a biological assessment to identify threatened or endangered species that may be present in the area of any proposed project. This assessment is conducted as part of a Federal agency's compliance with the requirements of Section 102 of NEPA.
- Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, Public Law 96-95: This Act protects archeological resources and sites that are on public and tribal lands and that fosters increased cooperation and exchange of information between governmental authorities, the professional archeological community, and private individuals. It also establishes requirements for issuance of permits by the Federal land managers to excavate or remove any archeological resource located on public or Indian lands.

- Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1983, Public Law 98-63: This Act authorized the USACE Volunteer Program. The United States Army Chief of Engineers may accept the services of volunteers and provide for their incidental expenses to carry out any activity of the USACE, except policymaking or law or regulatory enforcement.
- Water Resources Development Act of 1986, Public Law 99-662: Provides for the conservation and development of water and related resources and the improvement and rehabilitation of the Nation's water resources infrastructure.
- North American Wetland Conservation Act of 1989, Public Law 101-233: This act directs the conservation of North American wetland ecosystems and requires agencies to manage their lands for wetland/waterfowl purposes to the extent consistent with missions.
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), PL101-336, as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (PL110-325): This law prohibits discrimination based on disabilities in, among others, the area of public accommodations and requires reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Public Law 101-601: This act requires Federal agencies to return Native American human remains and cultural items, including funerary objects and sacred objects, to their respective peoples.
- Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1992 PL 102-580: This act authorizes the USACE to accept contributions of funds, materials and services from non-Federal public and private entities to be used for managing recreational sites and facilities and natural resources.
- Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1993, Public Law 103-66: Day use fees - authorizes the USACE to collect fees for the use of developed recreational sites and facilities, including campsites, swimming beaches and boat ramps.
- WRDA 1996, PL 104-303: authorizes recreation and fish and wildlife mitigation as purposes of a project, to the extent that the additional purposes do not adversely affect flood control, power generation, or other authorized purposes of a project.
- Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, Public Law 104-333: This act created an advisory commission to review the current and anticipated demand for recreational opportunities at lakes or reservoirs managed by the federal government and to develop alternatives to enhance such opportunities for such use by the public.
- Neo-tropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 2000, Public Law106-147: This act promotes the conservation of habitat for neo-tropical migratory birds.

APPENDIX E – PUBLIC COMMENT

INITIAL PUBLIC SCOPING (July 31, 2024 – August 31, 2024)

COMMENT	RESPONSE
Please see the questions, comments, and suggestions below for the update to the CBD Master Plan: 1.) Is the ACOE aware of the zone change that went to annual town meeting (May 2024) which passed for a zone change from Commercial Recreation to Rural Residential on Munn Road? 2.) Maybe highlight the Town-owned land (Map-Parcel ID: 157-004) and State-owned land (Map-Parcel ID: 157-001 & 172-001) on Stanton Road? 3.) Update the brochure so the trail map isn't distorted. CONCUR. 4.) Where can I get copies of the reports used? "Environmental Assessment of the Operation and Maintenance of Conant Brook Dam, Monson, Massachusetts", dated June 1974. "Cultural Resource Reconnaissance for Operation and Maintenance of Conant Brook Dam, Monson, Massachusetts", prepared by the NED staff archaeologist, John S. Wilson, in 1978. "Conant Brook Dam Master Plan for Recreation Resources Development", dated April 1979. 5.) Is there an early version of the 1979 Master Plan? 6.) Please continue to manage endangered species and their habitats, but let's use discretion! Poaching is a problem, especially for the turtle species listed. NHESP barely shares any helpful information with the Monson Conservation Commission to plan for land purchases. 7.) Don't share the specific species of any protected species (turtles). 8.) Maybe don't share the actual location of the Golden Club population in Duck Pond? 9.) Maybe close the trail that leads directly there? 10.) Current Master Plan from 1998 states "Specific protection requirements for Golden Club include maintaining a minimum 100-foot buffer zone around Duck Pond, an isolated wetland. This correlates with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' buffer zone requirements for wetland areas. Public access to this area will also be limited" (p.20). Yet it also states that Duck Pond is a natural pond (p.30). An Inventory of	1.) Noted. 2.) Non-concur. This area is outside of the USACE fee boundary and not a part of the Master Plan update. 3.) Concur. The trail map will be updated. 4.) The majority of the documents noted can be obtained by completing a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, however, a copy of the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan for Recreation Resources Development dated 1979 can be viewed at the East Brimfield Lake Project Office located at 24 Riverview Avenue, Fiskdale, MA 01518. 5.) Noted. The Conant Brook Dam Master Plan for Recreation Resources Development dated April 1979 precedes the Conant Brook Dam Master Plan, dated September 1998, and is the original Master Plan for the project. 6.) Noted. 7.) Non-concur. Species are noted within the Master Plan and Environmental Assessment as baseline data and existing conditions are identified. Locations are not identified. 8.) Noted. 9.) Non-concur. There are currently no plans to close trails at Conant Brook Dam. 10.) Noted. 11.) Concur. The staff at Conant Brook Dam currently coordinates with the Norcross Wildlife Foundation. * Upon receipt of the comment, Conant Brook Dam staff reached

COMMENT	RESPONSE
Natural Resource Sites completed for the Town of Monson from 1972 states it's a glacial kettle pond. 11.) If you have any additional information on this species, please share it with the Monson Conservation Commission. We are working with Ecologists from Norcross Wildlife Foundation and we're trying to see how far back observations go.	out to the commenter to provide a FOIA request to support requests within the comment.
Hello, I attended the Public Meeting forum at the Monson Free Library on 7/31/24 and spoke with Keith Beecher, Project Manager. Thank you for providing this event and information on the Master Plan Revision. The only concern/comment I have presently is that when we have a deluge of rain, the crossing gets somewhat impassable without getting your shoes wet. Is there a way to build up the area somewhat to be able to cross without impeding the overflow of water? I look for flat rocks to add so we can jump frog across. Thank you for your assistance.	Noted. The staff at Conant Brook Dam will consider improving the crossing.

DRAFT MASTER PLAN PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments from Draft Public Open House and Comment Period and USACE Responses will be listed here in the final Master Plan.

APPENDIX F – ACRONYMS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ARPA	Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979
BCC	Bird of Conservation Concern
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CFR	U.S. Code of Federal Regulations
cfs	Cubic Feet per Second
CO2e	Carbon Dioxide equivalent
DFG	Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game
DM	Design Memorandum
EA	Environmental Assessment, NEPA Document
EEA	Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
EO	Executive Order
EOP	Environmental Operating Principles
EP	Engineering Pamphlet
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
ER	Engineering Regulation
ES	Executive Summary
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
°F	Degrees Fahrenheit
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FOIR	Future or Inactive Recreation
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HDR	High Density Recreation
HPMP	Historic Properties Management Plan
HUC	USGS Hydrological Unit Code
HQUSACE	USACE Headquarters
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
LDR	Low Density Recreation
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MA	Massachusetts
MassDEP	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
MassWildlife	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
MP	Master Plan or Master Planning
MRML	Multiple Resource Management Lands
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act, 1969
NGVD/NGVD29	National Geodetic Vertical Datum (1929)
NHPA	National Historic Prevention Act

NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Registry of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OMP	Operations Management Plan for a specific lake Project
PL	Public Law
PO	Project Operations
RPEC	Regional Planning and Environmental Center
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SGCN	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
SHPO	State Historical Preservation Office
TCP	Traditional Cultural Properties
U.S.	United States (also US)
USGCRP	U.S. Global Change Research Program
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VM	Vegetative Management Area
WM	Wildlife Management