



U.S. ARMY



US Army Corps
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New England District

PUBLIC NOTICE

In Reply Refer to: Barbara Blumeris
Email: Barbara.R.Blumeris@usace.army.mil

Planning Division

Date: 01/27/2025

Comment Period Closes: 02/25/2025

30 DAY PUBLIC NOTICE MODIFICATION OF WATERBURY DAM WATERBURY DAM MODIFICATION STUDY WATERBURY, VERMONT

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District, plans to perform work for the modification of the Waterbury Dam in Waterbury, Vermont subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management (Attachment 2). The modifications will address the possibility of poor performance of the gated spillway section during frequent and extreme flood events. The work involves replacements and repairs to existing spillway structures, the construction of temporary construction access roads, and a temporary precautionary reservoir drawdown (Attachment 3 and 4). The project is being conducted under the authority provided by Section 1177 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016, as amended. Attachment 1 lists pertinent laws, regulations, and directives.

Project Description:

The recommended risk management plan includes a complete replacement of the two 20-ft gates and rehabilitation of the newer 35-ft gate. The existing service bridge would be rebuilt, new hoisting equipment installed, and appropriate electrical upgrades made. The proposed plan also includes repairs of degraded concrete on the spillway weirs, piers, and the training wall on the right abutment. In addition to the gates, a 100-ft wide concrete scour apron would be installed downstream of the gated spillway sections.

During construction, the existing gates will be removed, as well as the existing bridge and hoist equipment. This will significantly reduce available flood storage. Therefore, a temporary precautionary drawdown during construction will be implemented to provide flood control lost while the tainter gates are inoperable. This will reduce the risk of the reservoir pool overtopping the gated spillway sections which would cause downstream flooding during a storm. A 30-ft to 60-ft drawdown is currently being considered. The extent, duration, and timing of the drawdown will be determined during the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) phase of the project.

Development of construction access roads within the footprint of the dam will be needed to access all areas of the spillway during construction. This construction measure will require some tree removal/limbing along the spillway left abutment. Removal of partially detached and loose bedrock in the spillway channel will also be required.

Purpose of Work: The project will address risks identified during studies on the spillway in 2005. USACE Baltimore District conducted an evaluation of the structural integrity of the existing steel tainter gates and determined that the gates were at risk of buckling if fully loaded during flood operations. The project also has a history of alkali-silica reaction (ASR) concrete degradation that impacts its integrity. The DSMS study identified continuing erosion of the unlined spillway channel as an additional concern.

Waterbury Dam provides flood risk management to downstream communities including Waterbury, Richmond, Essex Junction, South Burlington, and Winooski. Failure of the gated spillway's Tainter gates would impact the project's ability to provide flood risk management. The project would rehabilitate the spillway project tainter gates to reduce the risk of failure and resulting loss of the gates for flood risk mitigation and address bedrock erosion of the unlined rock channel at the toe of the gated spillway to improve project resilience.

Alternatives: In addition to the Proposed Action, the Environmental Assessment evaluated the No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, no modifications to Waterbury Dam would occur.

Additional Information: Additional information may be obtained from the Planning Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Project Manager, Barbara Blumeris, email at Barbara.R.Blumeris@usace.army.mil; or the Project Biologist, Kelsie Dakessian, email at Kelsie.Dakessian@usace.army.mil.

Coordination: The proposed work has, or will be coordinated with the following agencies:

Federal

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

State

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VT SHPO)

Municipal Officials and Local Stakeholder Organizations

Green Mountain Power

Town of Waterbury

Waterbury Historical Society

Tribes

Narragansett Indian Tribe

Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe

Environmental Impacts: A draft environmental assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared for this project. These documents are available for public review at <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/missions/projects-topics/waterbury-dam-vermont-dam-safety-modification-study/>. I have made a preliminary determination that an environmental impact statement for the proposed modification of Waterbury Dam is not required under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This determination will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice.

Other Information:

- a. **Local Sponsor:** State of Vermont, Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation (VT DEC)
- b. **Floodplain Management:** In accordance with Executive Order 11988, USACE has determined that the proposed work will not contribute to negative impacts or damages caused by floods.
- c. **Endangered Species:** It is our preliminary determination that the project is not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species. USACE is in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed activity will not significantly affect any species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844).
- d. **Cultural Resources:** USACE is in coordination with the Vermont State Historic Preservation Office, Waterbury Historical Society, Narragansett Indian Tribe, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you know to be interested in this project. Comments are invited from all interested parties and should be directed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751, ATTN: Barbara Blumeris; or emailed to Barbara.R.Blumeris@usace.army.mil within 30 days of this notice.

27 JAN 2025

Date



Wendy Gendron
Chief, Planning Division

Attachment 1

PERTINENT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND DIRECTIVES

Clean Water Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-667e)

Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a, et seq.)

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.)

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

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

Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460L-12 et seq.)

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (54 U.S.C. 200302 et seq.)

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977

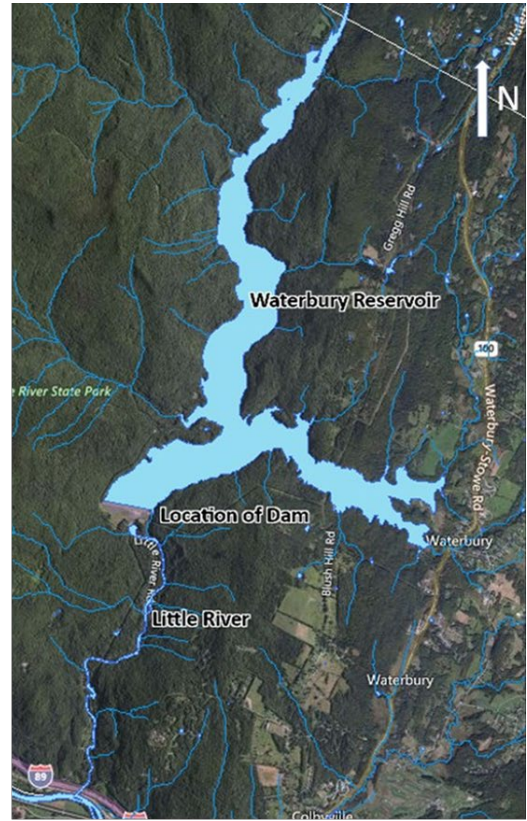
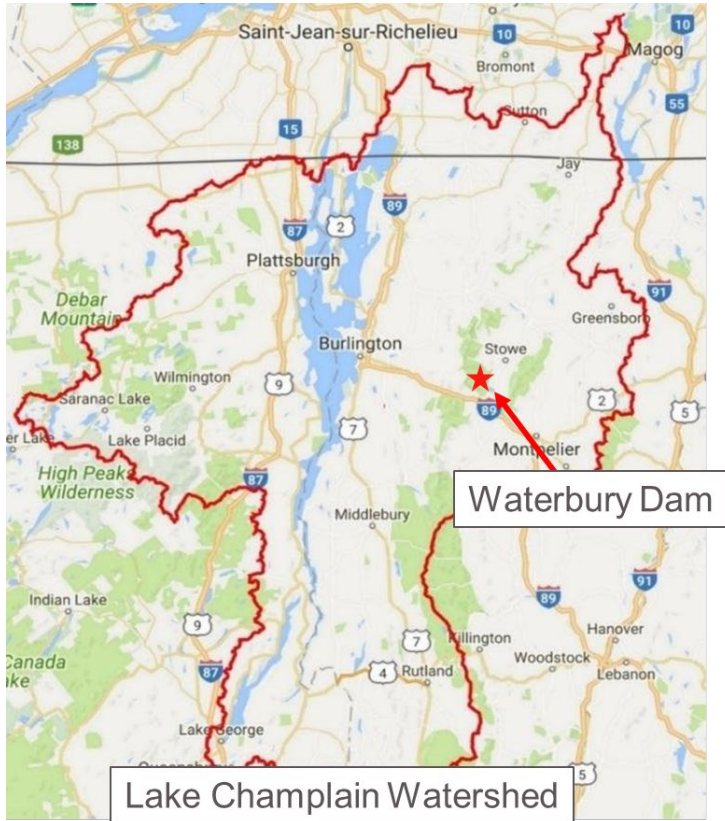
Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, 11 February 1994

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, 21 April 1997

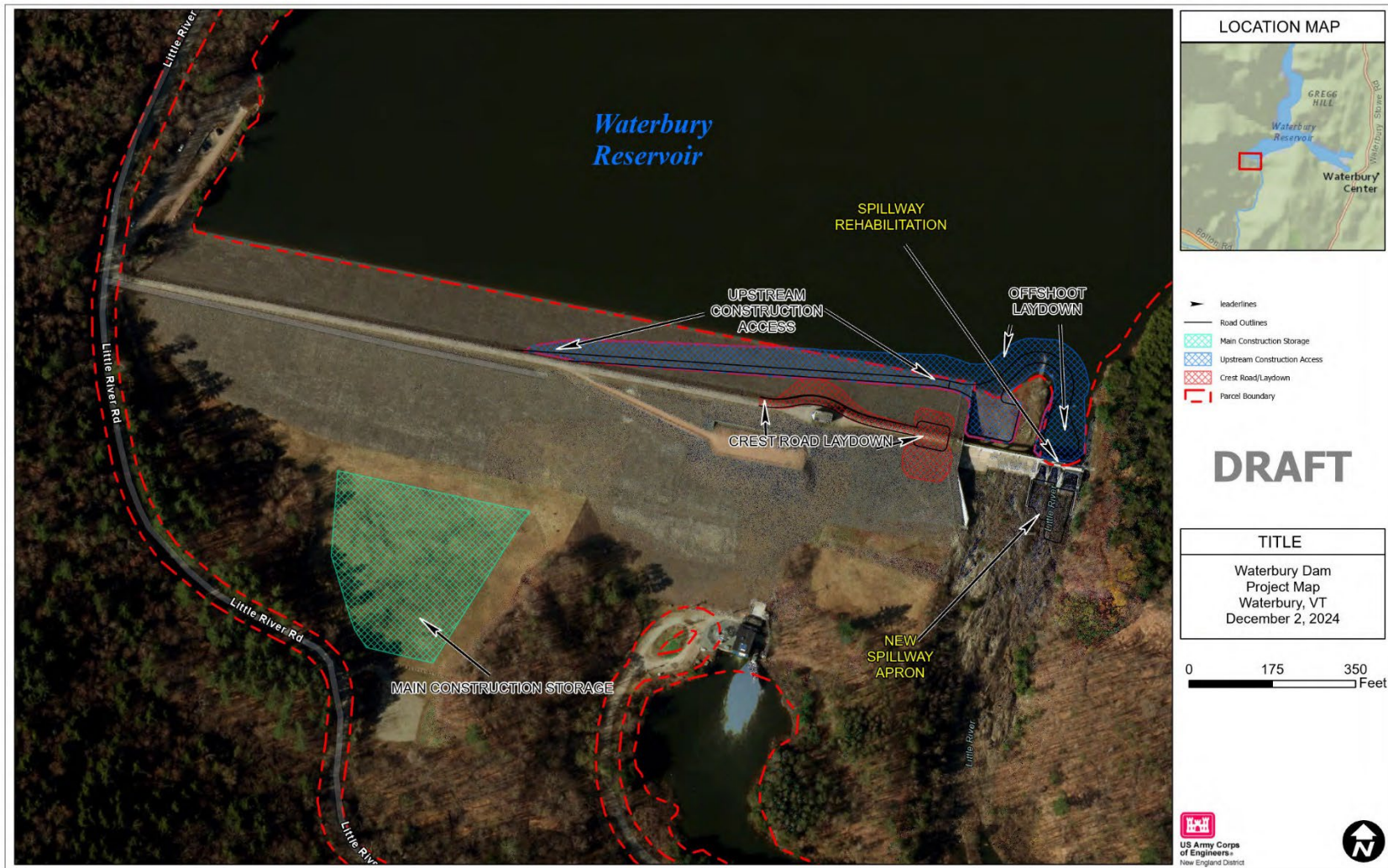
Attachment 2

Location of Waterbury Dam and Reservoir



Attachment 3

Aerial View of Recommended Risk Management Plan and Temporary Construction Access Road



Attachment 4

Waterbury Reservoir Pool Levels for Considered Drawdown Levels

