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## 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 Free 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/>.

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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 its 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/>.

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