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USACE hosts open house July 30 in Uxbridge, Mass., for West Hill Dam Master Plan revision

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District will host an open house July 30, 2024, in Uxbridge, Mass., to kick off a process to revise the 2011 West Hill Dam Master Plan for the West Hill Dam project in Uxbridge.

The open house will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. at Valley Chapel located at 14 Hunter Road in Uxbridge. 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 West Hill Dam Master Plan was last approved in 2011 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 West Hill 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 30 and end August 30. 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 West Hill Dam Master Plan revision website at <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/missions/recreation/west-hill-dam/west-hill-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).

The West Hill Dam project is located along the West River in the Blackstone River Basin. This is a multi-purpose project built and maintained by USACE. Construction of West Hill Dam began in June 1959 and was completed in June 1961 at a cost of \$2.3 million. The dam consists of earthfill with stone slope protection. It has a length of 2,400 feet and a height of 48 feet. West Hill Dam helps to reduce flooding in Uxbridge and in towns downstream along the Blackstone River, including Woonsocket and Providence.

USACE manages the natural resources at West Hill Dam for multiple uses to include flood risk management, wildlife habitat, forest production, watershed protection and outdoor recreation. While the main purpose of West Hill Dam is to provide flood risk management, the project over the years has become a recreational draw for approximately 80,000 visitors a year. With over 12 miles of trails, 567 acres of land, a beautiful scenic river, picnic shelters, and a mountain bike skills course, the project can accommodate all kinds of outdoor enthusiasts.

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

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