



PUBLIC STUDY UPDATE

9 FEBRUARY 2016



NEW YORK DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
26 FEDERAL PLAZA
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10278-0090
CENAN-PL-E

STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
401 EAST STATE STREET
TRENTON, N.J. 08608

RAHWAY RIVER BASIN ESSEX AND UNION COUNTIES, NEW JERSEY FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT FEASIBILITY STUDY

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) New York District (District) has undertaken coordination with its Dam Safety Center of Expertise regarding vegetation management zones for dams and their associated embankments as required by the USACE Engineering Technical Letter (ETL) 1110-2-583 *Guidelines for Landscape Planting and Vegetation Management at Levees, Embankment Dams and Appurtenant Structures*. Under the current guidance, flood risk management alternatives utilizing the Orange Reservoir, Lenape Park Dam and Embankments and the Middlesex Reservoir would require, at a minimum, a 50 foot vegetation management zone along the length of the embankments.

The purpose of the vegetation free zone is to keep the dam and embankments structures clear from root intrusion so the stability of the structure is not undermined or compromised as well to provide access for inspection, maintenance and emergency vehicles. Only maintained and approved grasses are permitted within the vegetation free zone.

As part of the current feasibility study, alternatives being evaluated involve modifications to the Orange Reservoir, the Lenape Park dam and associated embankments, and the Middlesex Reservoir. The feasibility study will assume a minimum 50 foot vegetation management zone. Because the Lenape Park dam structure is considered a dry embankment dam, the vegetation free zone must be applied to both sides of the embankments.

The District is in the process of evaluating the impact of the required clearing. The District is currently coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine Endangered Species Act compliance requirements for the federally Endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federally threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Endangered and Non-Game Species Program to determine compliance requirements for state endangered, threatened and special concern species.

In addition, the USACE will coordinate with the NJDEP Green Acres Program to determine compliance requirements with Green Acres Program regulations for all sites as well. The results of all compliance coordination will be included in the study's draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will be available for public review later this year.

Any comments related to the vegetation free zone policy or general questions about the Rahway River Basin Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study can be directed to Ms. Rifat Salim, Project Manager, Rifat.Salim@usace.army.mil, 917-790-8215.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be fully considered during the preparation of the draft EIS and will be included in the public review of the draft EIS. All written comments, including names and

address, will be made a part of the administrative record, available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The Administrative Record, or portions thereof, may also be posted on a Corps of Engineers internet web site. Due to resource limitations, this office will normally not acknowledge the receipt of comments or respond to individual letters of comments.