

Lake Washington Ship Canal Project Master Plan Environmental Assessment 2026

EAXX-202-00-G3P-1735821983

Appendix C - Tribal Notification Letters to Solicit Comments



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SEATTLE DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 3755
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98124-3755

June 29, 2020

Planning, Environmental, and Cultural Resources Branch

The Honorable Jaison Elkins, Chair
Muckleshoot Tribal Council
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
39015 172nd Avenue Southeast
Auburn, Washington 98092-3312

Subject: Tribal Notification to solicit comments regarding the Lake Washington Ship Canal Master Plan

Dear Chairman Elkins:

The Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is seeking input for updating the Lake Washington Ship Canal (LWSC) Master Plan. The plan includes land management of USACE properties at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks (Ballard Locks) and along the Lake Washington Ship Canal. The Master Plan is a tool for the responsible stewardship of the natural and cultural resources within the area of responsibility of the LWSC.

The scoping period for the Master Plan will end on July 31, 2020, and we are writing to encourage the submission of ideas and comments regarding management of natural and recreational resources that should be included in the Master Plan.

With the current limitations on how information can be distributed due to the COVID-19 public health crises, we are encouraging the public and our partners to review the information available on the LWSC Master Plan webpage at:

<https://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Home/Master-Plans/LWSC-Master-Plan>.

The focus of the LWSC Master Plan revision is tied to the Natural Resources Management Program of the Corps of Engineers. We are accepting public comments on our Recreation, Cultural/Historic Resources and Natural Resources Management programs at LWSC. This plan will not encompass the navigation mission at the LWSC. Topics in the Master plan include:

- Carl S. English Botanical Garden
- Visitor Center
- Fish Ladder viewing Area
- Recreation Management
- Cultural/Historic Properties Management
- Public tours
- Public Use
- Partners
- Commuters
- Special events
- Special use permits
- Facilities

The current Master Plan was approved approximately 20 years ago and must be brought up-to-date. While the overall purpose and running of the Locks and its land has not changed, there have been natural changes to the existing project conditions, the zone of influence, and new special issues and unique concerns identified. The purpose of the Master Plan revision is to reflect the current project conditions and provide the projected future conditions of the project.

To reply with comments or to request any additional information about this project, please contact Ms. Katherine Cousins at (206) 764-6968 or by email at Katherine.L.Cousins@usace.army.mil. For assistance with general information regarding tribal coordination, or to schedule a Government-to-Government meeting, please contact Ms. Lori Morris, Tribal Liaison, at (206) 764-3625 or Frances.Morris@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

BOERNER.LAURA.A.1
251907443

Digitally signed by
BOERNER.LAURA.A.1251907443
Date: 2020.06.29 09:28:39 -07'00'

Laura A. Boerner, LG, LHG
Chief, Planning, Environmental & Cultural
Resources Branch



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SEATTLE DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 3755
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98124-3755

June 29, 2020

Planning, Environmental, and Cultural Resources Branch

The Honorable Leonard Forsman, Chair
Suquamish Tribal Council
The Suquamish Tribe
P.O. Box 498
18490 Suquamish Way
Suquamish, WA 98392

Subject: Tribal Notification to solicit comments regarding the Lake Washington Ship Canal Master Plan

Dear Chairman Forsman:

The Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is seeking input for updating the Lake Washington Ship Canal (LWSC) Master Plan. The plan includes land management of USACE properties at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks (Ballard Locks) and along the Lake Washington Ship Canal. The Master Plan is a tool for the responsible stewardship of the natural and cultural resources within the area of responsibility of the LWSC.

The scoping period for the Master Plan will end on July 31, 2020, and we are writing to encourage the submission of ideas and comments regarding management of natural and recreational resources that should be included in the Master Plan.

With the current limitations on how information can be distributed due to the COVID-19 public health crises, we are encouraging the public and our partners to review the information available on the LWSC Master Plan webpage at:

<https://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Home/Master-Plans/LWSC-Master-Plan>.

The focus of the LWSC Master Plan revision is tied to the Natural Resources Management Program of the Corps of Engineers. We are accepting public comments on our Recreation, Cultural/Historic Resources and Natural Resources Management programs at LWSC. This plan will not encompass the navigation mission at the LWSC. Topics in the Master plan include:

- Carl S. English Botanical Garden
- Visitor Center
- Fish Ladder viewing Area
- Recreation Management
- Cultural/Historic Properties Management
- Public tours
- Public Use
- Partners
- Commuters
- Special events
- Special use permits
- Facilities

The current Master Plan was approved approximately 20 years ago and must be brought up-to-date. While the overall purpose and running of the Locks and its land has not changed, there have been natural changes to the existing project conditions, the zone of influence, and new special issues and unique concerns identified. The purpose of the Master Plan revision is to reflect the current project conditions and provide the projected future conditions of the project.

To reply with comments or to request any additional information about this project, please contact Ms. Katherine Cousins at (206) 764-6968 or by email at Katherine.L.Cousins@usace.army.mil. For assistance with general information regarding tribal coordination, or to schedule a Government-to-Government meeting, please contact Ms. Lori Morris, Tribal Liaison, at (206) 764-3625 or Frances.Morris@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

BOERNER.LAURA.
A.1251907443

Digitally signed by
BOERNER.LAURA.A.1251907443
Date: 2020.06.29 09:31:10 -07'00'

Laura A. Boerner, LG, LHG
Chief, Planning, Environmental & Cultural
Resources Branch



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SEATTLE DISTRICT
4735 EAST MARGINAL WAY SOUTH, BLDG 1202
SEATTLE, WA 98134-2388

February 14, 2025

Planning, Environmental, and Cultural Resources Branch

The Honorable Jaison Elkins, Chair
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
39015 172nd Avenue Southeast
Auburn, Washington 98092-3312

Subject: Tribal Notification and Review for the Lake Washington Ship Canal Project
Master Plan in King County, Washington

Dear Chairman Elkins,

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District (USACE) proposes to update the Lake Washington Ship Canal (LWSC) Project Master Plan at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks (Locks). This letter is intended to provide notification of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public notice and to request review and comments from the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe as USACE moves forward with this action.

The 1994 Master Plan for the LWSC Project located in Seattle, Washington needs updating as it is no longer current. The purpose of the LWSC Master Plan is to guide USACE to preserve, conserve, restore, maintain, manage, and develop USACE project lands and associated resources in accordance with USACE guidance. Master Plans are to be kept current and be reviewed every five years. The Master Plan prepared in 1994 is over 25 years old and does not reflect current recreation and public use, cultural resource status, invasive and endangered species, wildlife habitat value, and other features like the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden (Garden). The Garden is an important feature of the LWSC National Historic District. An updated Master Plan would incorporate new USACE land use classification standards, include contemporary requirements mandated by Federal environmental laws, and better reflect USACE's Environmental Operating Principles, natural resource management mission, environmental stewardship, and ecosystem management principles.

In accordance with NEPA, the USACE has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed Master Plan. The EA describing the alternatives and anticipated effects will be circulated to solicit comments from interested persons, groups, tribes, and agencies on the proposed action under NEPA. We would like to offer the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe the opportunity to review the proposed alternatives and solicit your input regarding tribal resources considerations.

After soliciting scoping comments in 2020, USACE conducted a preliminary evaluation of the alternatives that would fulfill the purpose and need for the project. Four alternatives have been identified, including the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1). In addition to a “no action” plan, and the preferred alternative, two other alternatives were identified, but were removed from further consideration. Alternative 3 proposed an updated Master Plan that would maximize natural resource preservation while Alternative 4 proposed an updated Master Plan that would maximize recreation. Alternative 3 would not meet the public demands created by the project itself while sustaining balance with project natural resources, and for this reason was not considered further. Alternative 4 would place more emphasis on developing recreational programs over that of providing for natural resources. Also, Alternative 4 would not consider project-wide resource capability and suitability and would not be consistent with multiple use authorized project purposes, and so was eliminated from further consideration. The following is a summary of the proposed action alternative.

The preferred alternative (Alternative 2) seeks to replace the 1994 Master Plan, outlining changes and updates necessary to improve recreation/visitor use while preserving the historic qualities of the LWSC Project and conserving the natural resources. The proposed action would address important updates in response to changes in regional demographics, recreation use and demand, amenities within the project, current environmental conditions, and pertinent laws and policies. The proposed action would provide strategic comprehensive management and development of all project recreational, natural, and cultural resources throughout the life of the project. It would also guide planning for efficient and cost-effective management and development for comprehensive use, responsible stewardship, and sustainability.

Under the proposed action, the updated Master Plan organization is by management area with site-specific resource objectives and recommended development needs. Thirty-eight of the development needs were identified as routine/small scale actions. The project-wide resource objectives for the LWSC Project were revised as follows:

- a. To establish and maintain close, ongoing coordination with interested federal, state, Tribes, local agencies, and citizen groups and organizations in managing the natural and engineered resources and cultural features associated with the LWSC;
- b. To protect, preserve, and conserve the LWSC Project's natural and engineered resources to ensure their continued availability for use, enjoyment and recreation by present and future generations;
- c. To preserve and rehabilitate the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and LWSC Historic District consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation; and,

d. To preserve, enhance and protect habitat on LWSC Project land that is used by fish and wildlife in the LWSC Project area.

The proposed action recommends verifying boundary surveys and marking of Federal property; outlines recommendations for improving the Natural Resource Manager's education and outreach program; and recommends producing an LWSC partnership guide to describe the roles of partners and how they work together with the USACE. The importance for the USACE to sustain beneficial partnerships and foster others within the local community is highlighted.

The proposed action recommends the development of a Project-wide Vegetation Management Plan to unite all vegetated areas under a single plan. Land Classifications will be revised to reflect changes to the land classification definitions in 2013 (ER 1130-2-550). With the adoption of the updated Master Plan, land classifications at the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden, South Entryway Buffer Zone and Fish Viewing Area will change; however, how the land is used would not change. The Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden and the vegetation located at the South Entryway Buffer Zone will be classified as Environmentally Sensitive Areas. This change in land classification will ensure the Garden is managed not just for vegetative cover but also for public display and scientific study. The Loop Road and lawn areas within the botanical garden will be classified as Multiple Resource Management (MRM)-Low Density Recreation while the fish viewing gallery and South Entryway Buffer Zone turf area and sidewalks will be classified as High-Density Recreation.

USACE is requesting comments on the proposed LWSC Project Master Plan. We are interested in your comments and will fully consider any comments we receive. A copy of this letter has been sent to Ms. Isabel Tinoco, Fisheries Director, Mr. Mike Mahovlich, Harvest Management Manager, Mr. Eric Warner, Fisheries Biologist, Ms. Nancy Rapin, Lead Fisheries Habitat Scientist. To reply with comments or to request any additional information about this project, please contact Ms. Katie Whitlock at (206) 764-3576 or kaitlin.e.whitlock@usace.army.mil. For assistance with general information regarding tribal coordination, or to schedule a Nation-to-Nation meeting, please contact Ms. Melissa Leslie at (206) 764-3625 or Melissa.L.Leslie@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by
PEPI.VANESSA.ELISABETH.10990
17712
Date: 2025.02.14 11:10:10 -08'00'

VANESSA E. PEPI
Chief, Planning and Environmental and
Cultural Resources Branch



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, SEATTLE DISTRICT
4735 EAST MARGINAL WAY SOUTH, BLDG 1202
SEATTLE, WA 98134-2388

February 14, 2025

Planning, Environmental, and Cultural Resources Branch

The Honorable Leonard Forsman, Chair
Suquamish Indian Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation
P.O. Box 498
18490 Suquamish Way
Suquamish, WA 98392

Subject: Tribal Notification and Review for the Lake Washington Ship Canal Project
Master Plan in King County, Washington

Dear Chairman Forsman,

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District (USACE) proposes to update the Lake Washington Ship Canal (LWSC) Project Master Plan at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks (Locks). This letter is intended to provide notification of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public notice and to request review and comments from the Suquamish Indian Tribe as USACE moves forward with this action.

The 1994 Master Plan for the LWSC Project located in Seattle, Washington needs updating as it is no longer current. The purpose of the LWSC Master Plan is to guide USACE to preserve, conserve, restore, maintain, manage, and develop USACE project lands and associated resources in accordance with USACE guidance. Master Plans are to be kept current and be reviewed every five years. The Master Plan prepared in 1994 is over 25 years old and does not reflect current recreation and public use, cultural resource status, invasive and endangered species, wildlife habitat value, and other features like the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden (Garden). The Garden is an important feature of the LWSC National Historic District. An updated Master Plan would incorporate new USACE land use classification standards, include contemporary requirements mandated by Federal environmental laws, and better reflect USACE's Environmental Operating Principles, natural resource management mission, environmental stewardship, and ecosystem management principles.

In accordance with NEPA, the USACE has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed Master Plan. The EA describing the alternatives and anticipated effects will be circulated to solicit comments from interested persons, groups, tribes, and agencies on the proposed action under NEPA. We would like to offer the Suquamish Indian Tribe the opportunity to

review the proposed alternatives and solicit your input regarding tribal resources considerations.

After soliciting scoping comments in 2020, USACE conducted a preliminary evaluation of the alternatives that would fulfill the purpose and need for the project. Four alternatives have been identified, including the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1). In addition to a “no action” plan, and the preferred alternative, two other alternatives were identified, but were removed from further consideration. Alternative 3 proposed an updated Master Plan that would maximize natural resource preservation while Alternative 4 proposed an updated Master Plan that would maximize recreation. Alternative 3 would not meet the public demands created by the project itself while sustaining balance with project natural resources, and for this reason was not considered further. Alternative 4 would place more emphasis on developing recreational programs over that of providing for natural resources. Also, Alternative 4 would not consider project-wide resource capability and suitability and would not be consistent with multiple use authorized project purposes, and so was eliminated from further consideration. The following is a summary of the proposed action alternative.

The preferred alternative (Alternative 2) seeks to replace the 1994 Master Plan, outlining changes and updates necessary to improve recreation/visitor use while preserving the historic qualities of the LWSC Project and conserving the natural resources. The proposed action would address important updates in response to changes in regional demographics, recreation use and demand, amenities within the project, current environmental conditions, and pertinent laws and policies. The proposed action would provide strategic comprehensive management and development of all project recreational, natural, and cultural resources throughout the life of the project. It would also guide planning for efficient and cost-effective management and development for comprehensive use, responsible stewardship, and sustainability.

Under the proposed action, the updated Master Plan organization is by management area with site-specific resource objectives and recommended development needs. Thirty-eight of the development needs were identified as routine/small scale actions. The project-wide resource objectives for the LWSC Project were revised as follows:

- a. To establish and maintain close, ongoing coordination with interested federal, state, Tribes, local agencies, and citizen groups and organizations in managing the natural and engineered resources and cultural features associated with the LWSC;
- b. To protect, preserve, and conserve the LWSC Project's natural and engineered resources to ensure their continued availability for use, enjoyment and recreation by present and future generations;

c. To preserve and rehabilitate the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and LWSC Historic District consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation; and,

d. To preserve, enhance and protect habitat on LWSC Project land that is used by fish and wildlife in the LWSC Project area.

The proposed action recommends verifying boundary surveys and marking of Federal property; outlines recommendations for improving the Natural Resource Manager's education and outreach program; and recommends producing an LWSC partnership guide to describe the roles of partners and how they work together with the USACE. The importance for the USACE to sustain beneficial partnerships and foster others within the local community is highlighted.

The proposed action recommends the development of a Project-wide Vegetation Management Plan to unite all vegetated areas under a single plan. Land Classifications will be revised to reflect changes to the land classification definitions in 2013 (ER 1130-2-550). With the adoption of the updated Master Plan, land classifications at the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden, South Entryway Buffer Zone and Fish Viewing Area will change; however, how the land is used would not change. The Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden and the vegetation located at the South Entryway Buffer Zone will be classified as Environmentally Sensitive Areas. This change in land classification will ensure the Garden is managed not just for vegetative cover but also for public display and scientific study. The Loop Road and lawn areas within the botanical garden will be classified as Multiple Resource Management (MRM)-Low Density Recreation while the fish viewing gallery and South Entryway Buffer Zone turf area and sidewalks will be classified as High-Density Recreation.

USACE is requesting comments on the proposed LWSC Project Master Plan. We are interested in your comments and will fully consider any comments we receive. A copy of this letter has been sent to Mr. Casey Schmidt, Director of Natural Resources, Ms. Alison O'Sullivan, Ecosystem Program Manager, and Mr. Rod Malcom, Ecosystem Recovery. To reply with comments or to request any additional information about this project, please contact Ms. Katie Whitlock at (206) 764-3576 or kaitlin.e.whitlock@usace.army.mil. For assistance with general information regarding tribal coordination, or to schedule a Nation-to-Nation meeting, please contact Ms. Melissa Leslie at (206) 764-3625 or Melissa.L.Leslie@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by
PEPI.VANESSA.ELISABETH.10990
17712
Date: 2025.02.14 11:10:56 -08'00'

VANESSA E. PEPI
Chief, Planning and Environmental and
Cultural Resources Branch