

Lake Washington Ship Canal Project Master Plan Environmental Assessment 2025

EAXX-202-00-G3P-1735821983

**Appendix B - Summary of Design Memorandum 9 Resource Objectives and
Maintenance of Facilities and Area Lands – Lake Washington Ship Canal Project 1994
Master Plan**

1.0 LAND-USE CLASSIFICATION DEFINITIONS USED IN 1994 MASTER PLAN

- **Project Operations** – Lands required for the project structure, operations center, office, maintenance compound and other areas that are used solely for project operations.
- **Recreation** – Lands developed for intensive recreational activities by the visiting public, including developed recreation areas and areas for concession, resort, and quasi-public development.
- **Environmental Sensitive Areas** – Lands of ecological significance. Public use is limited to those activities that do not conflict with preserving fish and wildlife habitat.
- **Multiple Resource Management (MRM)** – Lands managed for one or more of, but not limited to, these activities to the extent that they are compatible with the primary allocation. These are lands managed for one or more of the activities described in the following bullets:
 - **MRM: Recreation-Low Density Use** – Low density recreation activities such as hiking, primitive camping, wildlife observation, hunting, or similar low-density recreational activities.
 - **MRM: Vegetative Management** – Management activities for the protection and development of forest and vegetative cover.
- **Easement Lands** – All lands for which the USACE holds an easement interest but not fee title. Planned use and management of easement lands will be in strict accordance with the terms and conditions of the easement estate acquired for the project.

1.1 1994 MASTER PLAN RESOURCE OBJECTIVES

1.1.1 *Project-wide*

- (1) To establish and maintain close, ongoing coordination with interested Federal, State and local agencies, and citizen groups and organizations in managing the natural and humanmade resources and cultural features associated with the LWSC Project.
- (2) To protect, preserve, and conserve the project's natural and humanmade resources to ensure their continued availability for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.
- (3) To preserve and rehabilitate the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and Lake Washington Ship Canal Historic District consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.
- (4) To preserve, enhance and protect habitat on project land which is used by wildlife in the project area.
- (5) To cooperate with fish and wildlife agencies in controlling nuisance wildlife and plant species on project lands.
- (6) To broaden public understanding and appreciation of the role of the USACE in the development and administration of water resource projects, the purpose and operation of the Lake Washington Ship Canal Project, and the management of the project's natural and humanmade

resources and cultural features, through the use of interpretive programs and facilities.

1.1.2 Site-Specific by Land-use Classification

Operations: Locks and Spillway Dam and Appurtenant Structures

- (1) The primary objective is to continue to operate and maintain the locks, spillway dam, appurtenant structures, and residence in accordance with established and coordinated operating procedures and criteria.
- (2) The secondary objective is to preserve the **craftsman style** used in the original construction of the locks, spillway dam, and accessory buildings.

Operations: Lock Walls and Spillway Dam Walkway

- (3) The primary objective is to maintain safe access to the lock walls and facilities on both north and south shores of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks.
- (4) The secondary objective is to preserve the **craftsman style** used in the original construction of the locks and spillway dam.

Operations: Administrative Building

- (5) The primary objective is to conduct administrative and clerical activities integral to operation of the Lake Washington Ship Canal project.
- (6) The secondary objective is to preserve the second renaissance revival style architectural character used in the original construction.
- (7) The tertiary objective is to encourage continued public access to the Administration Building lobby and to the basement as a means to foster appreciation of the unique second renaissance revival style architectural character and qualities of the building and of the purpose and operations of the dewatering pumps located in the basement.

Operations: Parking Area

- (8) Manage the parking area for weekday use by government employees and for overflow parking by evening and weekend project visitors.

Operations: Operations and Maintenance Area

- (9) The primary objective is to conduct necessary operation and maintenance functions integral to the operation of the project.
- (10) The secondary objective is to preserve the classical tradition conforming to the utilitarian style of the original group of accessory structures.

Operations: James B. Cavanaugh House and Grounds

- (11) The primary objective is to preserve the original spirit of craftsman style bungalow construction typified by the James B. Cavanaugh House while maintaining the house as official residence of the District Engineer.
- (12) The second objective is to maintain buffer planting which enhances privacy from the public.

Operations: Fish Ladder

- (13) Manage and operate the fish ladder for migration of anadromous fish between Puget Sound and the rivers and streams within the Lake Washington basin.

Recreation: Visitor Center

- (14) Preserve the classical architectural style conforming to the utilitarian style of the original group of accessory structures while maintaining Visitor Center programs to provide a multi-faceted interpretive services program, including exhibits, brochures, and guided and self-guided tours.

Recreation: North Entry Area

- (15) The entryway is reserved for pedestrian use only. The gates separating the pedestrian thoroughfare and the service entry/employee parking lot will only be opened for access by authorized maintenance and emergency vehicles. Periodically, ambulances use this entryway to respond to emergency calls.

Recreation: Formal Promenade

- (16) Maintain the promenade as the thoroughfare between the main visitor features of the Locks, i.e., visitor center, botanical garden, administration building, and locks.

Recreation: Loop Road

- (17) The Loop Road provides access to the garden, west side overlook, and serves as an exercise trail. Its function and integrity must be preserved to support the use of the garden and project grounds.

Recreation: South Entry Area

- (18) The south entry is the **only access** to the fish ladder¹, fish viewing gallery, and locks from the south.

Recreation: Public Comfort Station

- (19) The Locks accommodates approximately one million visitors annually. This the primary public restroom facility at the Locks.

Recreation: Fish Viewing Gallery

- (20) Anadromous fish are an important ecological, cultural, and economic resource to the Pacific Northwest region. The public viewing gallery provides an educational opportunity for visitors from within and outside this region.

Environmental Sensitive Areas: Channel Tidelands

- (21) Preserve the habitat quality of the Seattle and Ballard Tidelands for fish and wildlife use.

MRM: Recreational-Low Density: Fremont Cut (North Shore)

- (22) The primary objective is to maintain and improve the historical colonnade created by the existing Lombardy poplars along the narrow canal while maintaining the cut for navigational purposes.
- (23) The secondary objective is to maintain coordination with the city of Seattle, adjacent property owners, the Fremont community and other

¹ The public can also access the fish ladder by walking across the spillway dam walkway from the north.

interested groups, organizations and individuals to accommodate and enhance public access to and use of the north shore.

- (24) The third objective is to replace barren or overgrown areas with new landscaping.

MRM: Recreational-Low Density: Fremont Cut (South Shore)

- (25) The primary objective is to maintain and improve the historical colonnade created by the existing Lombardy poplars along the narrow canal while maintaining the cut for navigational purposes.

- (26) The secondary objective is to maintain coordination with the city of Seattle, adjacent property owners, the Queen Anne community and other interested groups, organizations and individuals to accommodate public access and use of the south shore of the ship canal.

- (27) The third objective is to replace barren or overgrown areas with new landscaping.

MRM: Vegetative Management: Carl S. English, Jr. Botanical Garden

- (28) Manage the Garden to retain the garden style and heritage developed by Mr. English during his 43 years of stewardship at the Locks, and to preserve their significant aspects and how those aspects relate within the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and Lake Washington Ship Canal Historic District.

MRM: Vegetative Management: South Entryway Buffer Zone

- (29) The primary objective is to maintain and protect existing vegetative cover which provides a pleasing visual backdrop to the south entryway and fish ladder area.

- (30) The secondary objective is to preserve and provide wildlife habitat for nongame wildlife species.

Easement Lands: Montlake Cut (North Shore)

- (31) The primary objective is to maintain the existing indefinite term license granted to the UW which allows the University to use, maintain, operate, and repair the University's in-place structures and to maintain landscaping within the ship canal right-of-way on the north side of the Montlake Cut, and maintain public access to the area while maintaining the area to support the navigational channel.

- (32) Protect and maintain the historic resource of the original concrete embankments. Implement conservation methods which ensure retention and preservation of the terrain and significant landscape features.

Easement Lands: Montlake Cut (South Shore)

- (33) The primary objective is to maintain and preserve the Montlake Cut Waterside Trail, associated features, and landscape plantings to ensure retention of its designation as a National Recreation Trail while maintaining the area to support the navigational channel.

- (34) The secondary objective is to protect and maintain the historic resource of the original concrete embankments. Implement conservation

methods which ensure retention and preservation of the terrain and significant landscape features.

1.2 MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES AND AREA LANDS

Tasks included:

- (1) Repair and maintenance of USACE owned buildings
 - Minor roof repair
 - Repainting
 - Electrical repair/replacement
 - Repair/replacement of plumbing
- (2) Road repair
- (3) Recreation Area maintenance and/or repairs

1.2.1 Routine O&M Undertakings

The following types of undertakings that would be considered to have no effect on historic properties are listed in Table 1. These undertakings would be allowed to proceed without a consultation under Section 106 of the NHPA.

Table 1. List of proposed routine O&M Undertakings in 1994 Master Plan.

Item No.	Routine O&M Undertaking
1	Sidewalk replacement or repair
2	Roadway replacement or repair
3	Maintenance of existing landscaping and Garden
4	Interior rehabilitation of Operating Houses, Warehouses, Shop Buildings, Control Tower, Visitor Center, Boathouse and Cavanaugh House*
5	Maintenance of the existing Large and Small Locks and Spillway Dam, Guide Piers, and Waiting Piers
6	Maintenance of the existing fish ladder
7	Maintenance and minor in-kind repair or replacement of the existing concrete walls and landscape colonnade at the Fremont Cut
8	Maintenance and minor in-kind repair or replacement of the existing concrete walls at the Montlake cut
9	Maintenance and minor in-kind repair or replacement of building or site features, elements, or materials within the historic district
10	Repair and replacement of existing utility lines and poles in their present configuration and alignments
*Note that the Administration Building and fish viewing gallery were not included under item No. 4 in the 1994 Master Plan.	

1.2.2 Proposed Development/Design Criteria

The 1994 Master Plan listed specific site criteria development considerations. The landscape identity of each site and its physical elements were appraised so that the most scenic areas would remain undisturbed, to be enjoyed in their most natural states. Facilities were to be designed to blend with the existing vegetation and terrain characteristic to the project area. Only the most adaptable terrain was used for siting of facilities, avoiding cuts and fills to the extent practicable. Physical development of facilities would also avoid impacts or conflicts to significant plant materials, cultural resource areas, and historic preservation area. Specific site consideration details for visitor facilities in the 1994 Mater Plan are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. 1994 Master Plan specific development/design criteria site considerations.

Specific Site Consideration	Detail
Irrigation System	Upgrade or replace, as required, the existing irrigation system throughout the botanical garden for more efficient operation, maintenance, and water use based on project staffing, funding and water supply available. Components of the irrigation system including heads and valves shall be designed and installed discreetly into the plant beds to lessen visual impacts of an essentially modern or non-historical element.
Loop Road	Replace the deteriorated concrete roadway surface with a similar design and material as in the Phase II promenade upgrade. This will provide the visitor a safe and pleasant stroll through the Garden.
Control Tower	Modify the Control Tower to match the style and character of the original Structures.
Site Furnishings	<p>Restore and rehabilitate site furnishings within the garden such as benches, fencing, trash receptacles, and light standards. The existing light standards along the lock walls are replacements to the original concrete standards designed by Bebb and Gould. Future work in accordance with the requirements of the HPMP should include restoration of the light standards to the style and character of the original items.</p> <p>Additional or replacement site furniture/furnishings shall be consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards and LWSC Stewardship Standards. The predominant landscape materials (not including vegetation) found in the Locks reservation are concrete, rock, and wood, concrete being used in the original design and the wood structures added later.</p>
Locks Parking Area (City of Seattle)	Directly outside of the North Entry and along the north boundary line, the city of Seattle maintains a 120-vehicle public parking area on Burlington Northern Railroad (BNRR) property. Within the asphalt paved area, the BNRR maintains an active track running east-west. Coordination with the city on maintenance and potential improvements to the public parking area must be maintained. Such coordination is necessary to ensure the area is retained as free public parking and to ensure that any maintenance or improvements to the parking area are consistent with current use of the entry area as the main visitor entrance. The Locks and historic district are highly utilized by the public, and the main entrance, with its initial visual impact on the visitor, along with the public

Specific Site Consideration	Detail
	parking lot, should be managed as a highly visually element which a visitor would feel is part of the Locks complex. Pursue a more effective city operation and maintenance of the parking lot or acquire railroad property in fee. Coordinate with any city of Seattle and BNR maintenance and potential improvements to the public parking area outside the North Entry.
Fremont Cut Vegetative Management Plan	Develop a vegetative management plan for landscape maintenance at the Fremont Cut to guide USACE and property lessees' activities. The Lombardy poplars, which are at their life expectancy, shall be replaced in-kind on an as needed basis. Replacement of poplars shall be consistent with the Secretary of Interior guidelines for the treatment of Historic Landscapes.
Montlake Cut (Southside) Waterside Trail Surface	Replace the existing gravel surface of the southside Waterside Trail along the south shore of the Montlake Cut with a more stable and durable surface consistent with designation as a National Recreation Trail. Additionally, eliminate the dead end in the upper walkway near the bridge by connecting the upper and lower trails with a stairway.
Handrails at Montlake Cut (Northside)	The USACE shall extend safety handrails along concrete revetment on the north shore west from the Montlake Bridge to the end of the revetment. The current situation poses a visitor safety hazard, especially to the nearby University child development center.
Nursery Area	Transform the nursery staging/garden maintenance area into a plant propagation and educational area.
Operations and Maintenance Area at Boathouse	If the project is going to continue tours of historic vessels, a dock and pier area for mooring historic vessels should be established near the existing Boathouse. Public access to the vessels shall be limited.
Botanical Garden	Preserve, maintain, and restore the garden in the style set forth by Carl S. English, Jr. The following are recommended developments within the garden: (1) Remove elements which are inconsistent with the Historic District and Secretary of Interior's Standards as described in the 1989 Historic Grounds Report Continue to actively pursue replacement of historically significant plant materials, which have died or been removed, with in-kind species. Tree species should be replaced as soon as feasible due to their impact upon the visual and physical structure of the garden.

Specific Site Consideration	Detail
	<p>The following are ongoing activities recommended to continue: (1) Preserve the botanical diversity of the garden by supplementing existing plant beds with new or experimental plant species which fit the character and style of the garden. Original sizes and shapes of plant beds shall be maintained to the extent possible and not necessarily expanded for these purposes. (2) Maintain accurate records of plant material loss and replacement dates; collection, purchasing, or propagation of replacement plants; and routine vegetative management performed within the garden. (3) Enhance visitor enjoyment and understanding of the garden by identifying and labeling major/significant plants within the garden. Tagging system shall be durable and readable, yet inexpensive to purchase, install, and maintain.</p>
Light Standards	Replace existing standards with near original design.
Facilities for Persons with Disabilities	To the extent practical, facilities will provide universal accessibility in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Public Law 101-336).
Fences	Perimeter fences shall either be of green vinyl coated chain link, 9 feet high, or wrought iron design matching the main entryway. Low fences or retaining walls within the Locks grounds shall either be of concrete, rockery, or wood.
Emergency Water Access at the Montlake and Fremont Cuts	Install ladders at the Cuts to allow emergency entry to and exit from the water.

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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,

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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.

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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
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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.

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Sincerely,

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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,



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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.

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

Lake Washington Ship Canal Project Master Plan Environmental Assessment 2025

EAXX-202-00-G3P-1735821983

Appendix D – DRAFT Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
Lake Washington Ship Canal Project Master Plan
EAXX-202-00-G3P-1735821983
King County, Washington

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District (USACE) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) dated **20 February 2025**, for the Lake Washington Ship Canal Project (LWSC) addresses an update to the Project's Master Plan in the City of Seattle, King County, Washington.

The Draft EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated various alternatives to provide strategic comprehensive management and development of all project recreational, natural, and cultural resources throughout the life of the LWSC Project. There is one major Federal action requiring NEPA compliance and analyzed in the EA summarized below.

a. Proposed Action: 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 (Section 2.4.3 of the draft EA). 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:

- (1) 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;
- (2) 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;
- (3) To preserve and rehabilitate the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and LWSC Historic District consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation; and,
- (4) 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 nine recommendations for improving the Natural Resource Manager’s education and outreach program; and recommends to produce a 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 will 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.

Alternatives: 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 in the document. 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.

For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the proposed action are listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Summary of Potential Effects of the Proposed Action.

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Resource unaffected by action
Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aquatic resources/wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation*	Resource unaffected by action
Invasive species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fish and wildlife habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened/Endangered species/critical habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic properties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floodplains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous, toxic & radioactive waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hydrology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Land use (Land Classification)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Navigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Noise levels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socioeconomics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tribal trust resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Health and Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact Minimization: All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the proposed action. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed in the EA (Section 5) will be implemented, if appropriate, to minimize impacts. BMPs include methods to reduce dust, to avoid or minimize noise, to reduce soil erosion, and to prevent pollutants from reaching the soil, groundwater, or surface water. Any excavation or construction work near the Ship Canal will be scheduled during times when less fish migration occurs (October 15-February 15) unless otherwise coordinated with resource agencies. Construction, clearing and/or grubbing activities will be scheduled to avoid the migratory bird nesting period (April 15-July 31) unless otherwise coordinated with resource agencies. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 10) Pesticide General Permit BMPs would be implemented when applying pesticides.

Mitigation: No compensatory mitigation is proposed for this action as no loss of wetlands, no jeopardy to ESA-listed species, and no significant impacts to commercially important species are anticipated to occur based on the analyses in the EA. USACE will implement BMPs and conservation measures to ensure impacts are no greater than minimal, short-term effects as described in Section 5 of the draft EA.

Public Review: Public review of the draft EA and FONSI was completed on **24 March 2025**. All comments submitted during the public review period are responded to in the Final EA and FONSI.

Treaty Tribes: The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and the Suquamish Tribe were contacted during the public scoping period regarding the proposed action. No comments were received. The USACE requested review of the Master Plan on 20 February 2025 and will continue to coordinate throughout the project to meet Tribal Treaty obligations.

Compliance:

a. Endangered Species Act: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are responsible for the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). A Biological Assessment (BA) for the O&M of the LWSC Project was initially transmitted to NMFS and USFWS, collectively known as the Services, in 2001. The USACE consulted with USFWS and NMFS on the LWSC Project that resulted in Biological Opinions (BiOps) from USFWS in 2007, and NMFS in 2008. The BiOps included incidental take permits for a period of five years from the issuance dates of the BiOps. Since the BiOps and take permits have lapsed, the USACE developed a supplemental BA to reinitiate consultation with the Services. The USACE has been operating the LWSC in accordance with the BiOps during this intervening period. On May 1, 2024, USACE submitted a supplemental Biological Assessment to the Services for their review and to request consultation under the ESA and MSA. As of February 2025, USACE continues to work with the Services towards formally reinitiating LWSC O&M consultation.

Regarding the Master Plan, the USACE evaluated the effects of the recommended development needs proposed under Alternative 2 to Federal ESA-listed species (Chinook salmon, Steelhead salmon, bull trout, North American green sturgeon, Pacific eulachon and the Southern Resident killer whale). USACE identified three routine/small-scale actions (use of chemicals to treat pier surfaces, removal of hazard trees along the Montlake Cut, and the use of pesticides and fertilizers) and two major development needs (repairing/replacing revetments along the cuts and replacing the Montlake Cut walkway) that have the potential to affect ESA-listed species and so will require consultation with the NMFS and USFWS prior to implementation. The USACE determined all other recommended development needs will not affect ESA-listed species. The EA will be reevaluated at the time that a future consultation is complete. If necessary, the EA will be supplemented with necessary and applicable corresponding modifications to the scope and/or nature of the proposed actions, the procedures and practices used to implement the actions, and this FONSI will be reassessed.

b. Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA): The USACE determined that no effect to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) federally

managed fish species in Washington waters will result from the updated Master Plan proposed routine O&M and small-scale actions. The USACE will reevaluate the EA at the time that a future EFH consultation is complete. If necessary, the USACE will supplement the EA with necessary and applicable corresponding modifications to the scope and/or nature of the project, the procedures and practices used to implement the project, and this FONSI will be reassessed.

a. Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA): The USACE determined that the proposed project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved Washington State Coastal Zone Management Program and the CZMA. The proposed project occurs on land owned by the Federal government and is outside the coastal zone [15 CFR 923.33(a)], and will have no direct or indirect effects on coastal land use, water use, or any other coastal zone resource. Because this action does not affect uses or resources of the coastal zone, and is not a development project, no consistency determination is required. A negative determination is not required.

c. Clean Water Act: The USACE has determined that the proposed action will not require or trigger compliance with the Clean Water Act (CWA). No in-water work is proposed, and all proposed routine O&M and small-scale actions are in upland areas removed from the water. Any future proposed site-specific actions would be reviewed for compliance with the Act.

d. National Historic Preservation Act: USACE contacted the Washington State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Suquamish Indian Tribe, City of Seattle Historic Preservation Program, Friends of the Ballard Locks, and the King County Historic Preservation Program during scoping on May 18, 2021. The SHPO provided comments on September 16, 2021. Scoping comments were not received from the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe or Suquamish Indian Tribe. Other scoping comments are summarized in Appendix A to this EA (2025 Draft Master Plan, Attachment F).

The HPMP update is part of mitigation for the replacement of the original large lock center gate. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between USACE and SHPO that describes this mitigation was signed October 2021 for the “Hiram M. Chittenden Locks Large Lock Center Gate Project” (May 2022; available online at <https://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Environmental-Documents/>). One stipulation is for USACE to update the HPMP with new information on historic buildings and structures found while revising and updating the outdated 1978 National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form. In addition, USACE was required to offer the SHPO, Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, at least one opportunity to review and comment on any HPMP revisions. The USACE incorporated comments provided by the SHPO via email into the HPMP in October 2022, which fulfills the MOA stipulation.

The Master Plan and HPMP are planning and guidance documents, and only undertakings resulting from the Master Plan would undergo Section 106 review and SHPO consultation as appropriate. Therefore, the draft Master Plan and HPMP are in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

Determination:

a. Results of the Environmental Analysis: The probable consequences (impacts and effects) of the proposed action (Alternative 2) on the LWSC Project natural, cultural, and recreational resources were evaluated in the EA. Under Alternative 2, future management changes will improve management programs and process, resulting in beneficial impacts for vegetation, wildlife, water quality, and aesthetics. Beneficial effects of strategic project planning will result in maximization of project funds. Although major work is not proposed in the future, improving some existing facilities, a number of small-scale actions or developments, are proposed under the proposed action. The proposed action will enable more efficient land management and the recreation needs of the public will be better accommodated. Future recommendation will be based on review of existing facilities, resource suitability, carrying capacity, environmental and social effects, trends and forecast of future demands. Beneficial impacts on recreation will come from modernization and upgrading existing facilities while keeping with the appearance and landscapes that are contributing elements to the Historic District. Impacts of the proposed routine O&M and small-scale actions will be minor, short-term, and temporary, and will have minor or no impacts when using BMPs and conservation measures outlined in Section 5 of the EA. All proposed actions occur in upland areas removed from waterways.

b. Summary of Impacts and Compliance: The proposed action will seek to replace the 1994 Master Plan balancing recreation and visitor use with conservation of natural resources. The updated Master Plan will 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 will provide strategic comprehensive management and development of LWSC Project lands and their associated recreational, natural, and cultural resources. It will also guide planning for efficient and cost-effective management and development for comprehensive use, responsible stewardship, and sustainability. No in-water work or shoreline work is proposed and so the proposed action complies with the CWA and the CZMA. No effects to federally-listed species or to their critical habitats will occur as a result of the proposed action, and so the project is in compliance with ESA and MSA. The project complies with the National Historic Preservation Act and the USACE has coordinated the work with the Washington SHPO and affected Indian Tribes.

Finding: All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Based on the analysis presented in the EA, which has incorporated or referenced the best information available; the reviews by other Federal, State and local agencies, Tribes; input of the public; and

the review by my staff, it is my determination that the recommended plan would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date

Kathryn P. Sanborn, PhD, PE, PMP
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander