

Appendix B – Big Mesa MDWCA Source Water Protection Plan

Comments submitted to the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) for the Conchas Lake Master Plan Revision, June 2020 by Martha Graham (Source Water Protection, NMRWA). Responses from Andrew Wastell (Natural Resource Specialist, ACE)

Comment	Response
1 The Master Plan document begins with a 1990 memo. Was there any work done in response to that memo? Is it publicly available?	The 1990 Memo was a request to update the Master Plans. No work was done on a master plan in response to that memo and funding was not available until now to do these revisions. The most current version of the master plan is available on the project website.
2 I have the map showing land use - is there also a map showing water use? I am wondering whether there are places designated for swimming vs. boating, for example, and if areas around intakes are treated differently from other parts of the reservoir.	At the time of the current master plan, the water surface was not classified. However, The New Mexico State Parks Division and USACE enforce no boat areas around water intakes and in front of the dam and no wake areas around boat ramps. There are no designated swim beaches. The revised master plan will have the water surface classified into one of the following possibilities: Restricted, No Wake, Fish and Wildlife Sanctuary, or Open Recreation.
3 I understand from the video presentation that water quality is not part of the Master Plan. However, will the plan address that Conchas Lake is the source of drinking water for at least 2 public water systems (Big Mesa MDWCA and Conchas Dam State Park). Am I correct in thinking that the ACE also has an intake at Conchas Dam for the main office and visitor center's drinking water? Where do the private residences in the fee area get their drinking water from? I assume this is the area surrounded in red on the Master Plan Land Use Map and referenced in the 1976 Master Plan on page 72.	The subject of water quality is only addressed informationally in the master plan. USACE has an intake and uses water for operations functions, such as water for the visitor center, office, and landscape irrigation. Water for residents is supplied by Big Mesa MDWD.
4 Based on my reading of the founding legislation for the dam, drinking water might have been a part of its intent (though not at the level of priority as flood control or irrigation). Anecdotal, this appears to have changed, but has it legally? Or does it apply only to domestic water used in the fee area? This might be the same question - Were there limits to where drinking water was to be provided (e.g., during phases of construction, or for ACE and/or State recreational facilities)?	Water supply is not a primary mission at Conchas Lake and there are no plans to add it as a primary mission at this time.

5	Will the Plan take into account climate change? Will the Plan include contingencies for drought and extreme temperatures? (Drought was only mentioned once in the 1976 Master Plan.) From the ACE and USGS, it appears water levels are dropping fairly steadily - is that right?	The subject of water supply is not part of the master plan. USACE addresses issues of climate change, droughts, and floods in terms of environmental and cultural resource impacts at Conchas. For more information on historic water levels you can contact our water manager for the Canadian Basin: Roberta.J.Ball@usace.army.mil
6	Is comparative information about the lake available for the public? E.g., the 1976 Master Plan states that the mean depth of light penetration is 7.3 feet. Has this changed? How frequently is this measurement taken?	Water management is not part of the master plan. Water level will be discussed in terms of its environmental impact and its effect on land use. Note that monthly water sampling is done during recreation season to evaluate water quality and aquatic invasive species. We can include general information on depth of light penetration in the water quality section of the revised Master Plan.
7	It appears that, to date, Conchas Lake hasn't experience water quality issues due to plant growth or algal blooms – is that correct? Even at the Lake's lowest levels during extreme drought?	Conchas Lake has not experienced algae blooms to date.
8	What proportions of the Master Plan address recreation vs. conservation or environmental considerations of dam and reservoir health? Does one drive the other?	The master plan balances land use to support current users as well as protect the cultural and environmental resources for future generations while fulfilling its primary missions of flood mitigation and irrigation.
9	I understand that there used to be a fueling station close to the lake's edge, and that houseboats were, but no longer, allowed on the Lake. Can you give me a little more information about these matters?	Fuel was permitted under USACE. At the closing of the marina, fueling stations were removed from the lake. The fueling station on the north dock was removed due to poor upkeep by the owner.
10	Is there a glossary of terms I can look at? For example, I can guess at what a "fee boundary" is, but the formal definition publicly available somewhere? Again, I probably have a rough, common sense idea of what it means to refer to a "pool" but would like to know more about this term and how it is used in the context of a lake or reservoir.	A glossary of terms will be included in the revised master plan. Fee boundary is the property owned by USACE. The conservation pool is the designed regular lake level.