PEER REVIEW PLAN
FOR
FEASIBILITY PHASE STUDY
OF
WISTER LAKE, LEFLORE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

October 2007

Peer Review Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

Wister Lake is located on the Poteau River approximately 2 miles south of the Town of Wister in LeFlore County, Oklahoma (Figure 1). The Poteau River originates in Scott County, Arkansas and flows westward into eastern Oklahoma, through portions of Haskell, Latimer, and LeFlore counties, where it forms the eastern arm of Wister Lake. The Fourche Maline Creek flows from the west to form the western arm of Wister Lake. Downstream of the dam at Wister Lake, the Poteau River flows in a northeasterly direction to its confluence with the Arkansas River near Ft. Smith, Arkansas. In Oklahoma, Wister Lake lies within the jurisdiction of Senators James Inhofe and Tom Coburn and Representative Dan Boren (2nd District).

The purpose of this feasibility study is to investigate the causes of aquatic ecosystem degradation within Wister Lake and to develop a plan to restore a major portion of the aquatic ecosystem within the lake.

During the feasibility study the study team will identify and evaluate the restoration opportunities within Wister Lake and along the lake shoreline. The study will document a recommended a solution to restore the impaired aquatic ecosystem of Wister Lake, separate from the watershed. Since the lake is a manmade reservoir, it is not possible to restore the aquatic ecosystem to pristine conditions and still maintain the existing benefits the lake currently provides. However, important opportunities exist to restore ecosystem functions and processes to create and sustain natural aquatic habitats.

This feasibility study is intended to complement efforts made by Oklahoma state resource agencies as they develop a watershed management plan on the Poteau River Basin. The Corps envisions that the solution(s) recommended in this feasibility study will be integrated into the watershed management plan being prepared by others. The watershed management plan will focus on problems associated with non-point sources in the watershed. The watershed management plan does not address the degraded conditions within the aquatic ecosystem of Wister Lake.

Implementation of the watershed management plan which is currently being developed by Oklahoma state resource agencies would be expected to eventually reduce nutrient loading in the Poteau River watershed and subsequently Wister Lake. However, it is estimated that 30 to 50 years will pass before the results of implementing the watershed management plan will affect the lake. The watershed management plan will not include in-lake solutions to restore the aquatic habitat within Wister Lake. Funding for the watershed management plan is provided through a Federal (USEPA)/State (Oklahoma) matching grant program in accordance with the Clean Water Act, Section 319 Non-Point Source Pollution Program. In keeping with guidance from the EPA, the watershed management plan will be implemented in cycles and will focus primarily on

the non-point sources originating in the sub-basins in the watershed. Under the Section 319 program, the watershed management plan will address non-point sources of pollution and will consist of four components: assessment, planning, education, and implementation/demonstration. The long-term success of the watershed management plan relies strongly on the voluntary participation of local stakeholders throughout the process. As such, the first cycle of the watershed management plan focuses on a sub-watershed within the basin so as to increase the likelihood of detectable success. Subsequent cycles would then be expanded to the entire watershed and initiated sequentially as stakeholders volunteer and funding becomes available.

The solutions ultimately recommended in this aquatic ecosystem restoration feasibility study would be expected to provide improved aquatic habit by addressing habitat degradation caused by problems in the lake. Successful in-lake solutions that restore the aquatic ecosystem would be expected to complement future efforts in the watershed.

1.2 Peer Review Plan

The purpose of the peer review plan is to assign the appropriate level and review independence, establish the procedures, and assign responsibilities for conducting the independent technical reviews (ITRs) of all applicable decision documents to ensure the quality and credibility of all decision documents developed during the study. This plan is compliant with EC 1105-2-408 *Peer Review of Decision Documents*, 31 May 2005, section 6, parts a. through j.

The feasibility cost sharing agreement between the Tulsa district and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) was executed on December 3, 2004. The study is cost shared $200,000 Federal and $200,000 OWRB. The OWRB share of the study cost is 100% in-kind services. Federal funding was suspended during FY06 and work by Tulsa District was stopped until additional Federal funds were received in May 2007 for the 2007 fiscal year. The OWRB fiscal year begins in July. OWRB funding has been suspended as of July 2007. Tulsa District must stop work when the Federal expenditures are equal to the OWRB expenditures of $150,000.

The project delivery team is presented in Table 1. The project manager is the main point of contact at Tulsa District for more information about this project and the peer review plan.

TABLE 1.
FEASIBILITY PHASE PROJECT DELIVERY TEAM

Discipline	Office/Agency
Project Manager	CESWT-PP-C
Planning Center of Expertise	CEMVD
Program Analyst	CESWT-PP-C
Plan Formulation	CESWT-PE-P
Report Formatting/Editing	CESWT-PE-P
NEPA Coordinator	CESWT-PE-E
Cultural Resources	CESWT-PE-E
Environmental Engineering	Contract
Biology/ Limnology	CESWT-PE-E
Civil Design	CESWT-EC-DC
Mapping/GIS/Modeling	CESWT-PE-E
Hydraulics & Hydrology	OWRB
Cost Engineering	Contract
Real Estate	CESWT-RE
Office of Counsel	CESWT-OC
Co-Sponsor PM	OWRB

2. PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

The Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment are not likely to develop or contain influential scientific information or to be an influential scientific assessment. Therefore, the documents (i.e, the without project report, the with-plan report, and the Draft Feasibility Report) and major engineering products (e.g., sediment management plan) will only be reviewed by an ITR team. An external peer review will not be conducted.

3. REVIEW SCHEDULE

ITRs will be conducted for all new technical work done to support the study documents (Environmental and civil engineering design, with project conditions for final alternatives, CE/ICA, AFB documents, draft report). Numerous reports have been done on the conditions at Wister Lake. Early formulation efforts have focused on evaluating existing documents and screening applicable restoration measures to determine the direction of the remainder of the study. The feasibility scoping meeting support document does not include new technical work and therefore will not require ITR (Exhibit G-3 ER-1105-2-100).

4. EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW

An external peer review will not be conducted as the study is not likely to develop or contain influential scientific information and is not expected to be an influential scientific or controversial assessment.

5. PUBLIC REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

The public has been invited to comment directly to the PDT through the public scoping meeting, which was held September 9, 2005. A public review of the draft EA is included in the feasibility schedule. A public review of the final EA and feasibility report will not be conducted unless the final document is significantly different from the draft, which is not expected.

6. AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS TO ITR TEAM

Public input from the NEPA workshop will be available to the ITR members. However, the draft EA will be independently reviewed prior to the public comment period, and, therefore, these comments will not be available to the ITR members. In the event that the final EA and report is significantly revised from the draft, another ITR will be scheduled and public comment on the draft will be available to the reviewers.

7. ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF REVIEWERS

The current ITR plan is to include 3 to 5 independent reviewers, not including the study sponsor. This number is based on the disciplines required to develop the feasibility products and the draft and final EA and feasibility report. The review cost is limited to $10,000 for the total effort.

8. PRIMARY DISCIPLINES AND EXPERTISE NEEDED FOR THE ITR

The disciplines and expertise required for the ITR team are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2.
PROPOSED INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW TEAM

Discipline	Reviewer
Review Team Leader	TBD
Plan Formulation	TBD –Coordinated with Planning CX
Biological Analysis	TBD –Coordinated with Planning CX
Civil Design	TBD
Cost Engineering	TBD
Hydraulics and Hydrology	TBD
Sponsor (OWRB)	TBD

This information will be updated as funds allow.

The Independent Technical Review Team will be selected on the basis of having the proper knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to perform the task and their lack of affiliation with the development of the study. The review team is primarily drawn from contract personnel. All ITRs will be completed through DRCHECKS where comments and comment resolution are captured.

Technical reviewers will use appropriate analytical methods for each technical area. Technical review will rely on periodic technical review team meetings to discuss critical plan formulation or other project decisions, and on the review of the written feasibility report documentation and files. Independent technical review will ensure that:

- the feasibility report and EA are consistent with current criteria, procedures and policy
- clearly justified and valid assumptions that are in accordance with established guidance and policy have been utilized, with any deviations clearly identified and properly approved
- concepts, features, analytical methods, analyses, and details are appropriate, fully coordinated, and correct

- problems/issues are properly defined and scoped
- conclusions and recommendations are reasonable.

9. EXTERNAL PEER REVIEWERS

An external peer review will not be conducted as the study is not likely to develop or contain influential scientific information and is not expected to be an influential scientific or controversial assessment of the conditions in Wister Lake.

10. PUBLIC SELECTION OF PEER REVIEWERS

Public recommendation or selection of ITR or other reviewers is not anticipated at this time.