



# PUBLIC NOTICE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT**

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## **Planned Minor Deviation from the Whittier Narrows Dam Water Control Plan**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) proposes to implement a planned minor deviation (PMD) from the Whittier Narrows Dam Water Control Plan from December 15, 2014 through May 30, 2016. The PMD would support water conservation efforts within Los Angeles County.

Whittier Narrows Dam is located approximately 10 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, adjacent to the city of Montebello, Los Angeles County, California. The dam impounds flows from both the Rio Hondo and the San Gabriel River. The total flood control capacity below 228.5 ft (NGVD) is approximately 36,300 acre-feet.

Under normal operations and as conditions permit, the dam is also used to temporarily impound as much as 2,500 acre-feet of water, up to elevation 201.6 ft (NGVD). The impounded water is released via the Rio Hondo into the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works' (County) Rio Hondo Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds located one mile downstream. The spreading grounds are the largest source of groundwater recharge for the Central and West Groundwater Basins which serve 4 million people living in the 270 square mile overlying area. Releases are adjusted to match groundwater recharge and flood risk minimization needs in close coordination with the County.

Under the PMD, the outflow rates would be reduced to increase the buffer pool to 205 ft (NGVD) during the flood season, increasing the storage capacity from about 2,500 acre-feet to about 3,950 acre-feet. The buffer pool would be held slightly longer and higher during the flood season than under the current operation. Impounded water would be released as needed to the Rio Hondo Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds. The PMD would be implemented by the Corps on a case by case basis.

The proposed PMD would increase the amount of water conserved for groundwater recharge without impacting the flood control mission. When inclement weather is forecast, the reservoir would be drawn down to make space for the anticipated inflow, ensuring adequate storage capacity for flood control operations. A pool at elevation 205 ft (NGVD) can be drained to nearly empty in under four hours.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, the Corps will be preparing an environmental assessment (EA). The EA will evaluate impacts of the PMD on environmental resources and determine whether environmental impacts warrant the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; and other interested parties in order to evaluate environmental impacts associated with implementation of the PMD.

Comments will be accepted from November 26, 2014 to December 13, 2013.

Comments should be mailed to: Deborah Lamb, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
915 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: [Deborah.L.Lamb@usace.army.mil](mailto:Deborah.L.Lamb@usace.army.mil)

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## Additional Information:

**Biological Resources:** Along the Rio Hondo, the areas between elevations 201.6 ft.(NGVD) and 205 ft.(NGVD) are primarily composed of disturbed ruderal habitat, annual grasses, and non-native invasive species. A moderate amount of riparian habitat occurs when and where sufficient water exists. The affected area is not considered suitable habitat for the Federally endangered least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*). The vireo have been sighted approximately 1,000 feet up gradient of the inundation footprint. Known vireo populations are located at higher elevations within the basin at or above elevation 209 ft. (NGVD). Thus, the PMD would not affect the vireo and would be in compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

**Cultural Resources:** There are no historic structures that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places within the inundation footprint between elevation 201.6 ft. (NGVD) and elevation 205 ft. (NGVD). As a result, the undertaking has no potential to cause effects. Thus, the PMD would be in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

**Affected Facilities:** No designated recreation areas are within the inundation footprint. However, a few unofficial dirt trails may be temporarily inundated. Temporary closure of Lincoln Avenue from San Gabriel Boulevard to North Rio Del Sol Street is possible during PMD implementation.